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MARXISM IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF “ANNALES” IN THE OPINION OF ITS CREATORS AND CRITICS

The role of Marxism in the historiography of the “Annales” group has many times been discussed not only by the French researchers. The subject has been taken up among others by Traian Stoianovich¹, Hervé Couteau-Bégarie², Guy Bois³, and Philippe Carrard⁴. The latter said that the connections of “Annales” with Marxism were difficult and ambiguous — just as in the case of structuralism, the non-classic French historians made use of some methodological solutions of historical materialism, without, however (with rare exceptions), taking over the doctrine as a whole. This interesting and complicated issue deserves closer analysis.

The present article does not aspire even partly to discuss the role of Marxism in the works of the “Annales” milieu. I focus on a more narrow problem: that of the opinion of the critics and sympathizers of this movement, as well as its creators, about the influence of Marxism on the shaping of this milieu. Actually, discussions of this issue arose at the very moment of the birth of the famous periodical in 1929 and continue to this day.

Apart from the literature, my information comes from the interviews with the French historians from the “Annales” group, as well as from research into the archival materials of École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS).

¹ T. Stoianovich, *French Historical Method. The Annales Paradigm*, Ithaca-London 1976, pp. 134–153.

² H. Couteau-Bégarie, *Le phénomène “Nouvelle Histoire”. Stratégie et idéologie “des nouveaux historiens”*, Paris 1983, pp. 225–243.

³ G. Bois, *Marxisme et histoire nouvelle*, in: *La Nouvelle Histoire*, ed. J. Le Goff, R. Chartier, J. Revel, Paris 1978, pp. 375–393.

⁴ P. Carrard, *Poétique de la Nouvelle Histoire. Le discours historique en France de Braudel à Chartier*, Lausanne 1998, pp. 177–178.

The debate devoted to the role of Marxism in the works of the “Annales” group has frequently taken a black-and-white character. Jean Bouvier, a French historian connected with the communist left, argues that the French inter-war socio-economic historiography was under the greatest influence of Karl Marx and François Simiand⁵, but his view seems to be oversimplified⁶. On the other hand, one cannot entirely agree with Gérard Noiriel’s⁷ contention that the milieux showing a Marxist tendency before the war — even the groups centred round “La Pensée”, or “La Nouvelle Pensée”, more radical than “Annales” — were critical of Marxism. For them, he claims, Marxism was a kind of flag, an anti-rightist declaration, and not an authentic ideology or scientific method⁸.

The oversimplified character of both these statements comes to light upon an analysis of more insightful opinions of Polish and French researchers about the attitude to historical materialism of two “Father-Founders” of “Annales”, Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre.

Marian Henryk Serejski, in his review of L. Febvre’s *Combats pour l’histoire*⁹ of 1965, said clearly that this French scholar as well as his colleague M. Bloch were far from dialectical materialism¹⁰. Nevertheless, the Polish researcher tried to enter into a tentative polemic with the Stalinist ban on the whole output of French “bourgeois” historiography, and argued that “it would be an oversimplification to say, as we used to do recently, that all the changes in bourgeois scholarship in the period of imperialism arose from the necessity to oppose Marxism”¹¹. While still classifying L. Febvre with the “bourgeois

⁵ F. Simiand (1873–1935), graduate of École Normale, philosopher and sociologist, co-editor of “L’Année Sociologique”, author, among other books, of *Statistique et expérience. Remarques de méthode*, Paris 1922.

⁶ J. Bouvier, *Tendances actuelles des recherches d’histoire économique et sociale en France*, in: *Aujourd’hui, l’histoire*, ed. A. Casanova, F. Hincke, Paris 1974, p. 133.

⁷ G. Noiriel, b. 1950, research worker of EHESS, author, among other books, of *Population, immigration et identité nationale en France (XIXe-XXe siècle)*, Paris 1992.

⁸ Information gained from G. Noiriel’s lecture delivered at the Centre de Culture Française of Warsaw University in 2004.

⁹ L. Febvre, *Combats pour l’histoire*, Paris 1953.

¹⁰ M. H. Serejski, *Przeszłość a terażniejszość. Studia i szkice historiograficzne (Past and Present. Historiographic Studies and Essays)*, Wrocław-Warszawa 1965, pp. 188–189.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

left", he argued that this scholar, in some of his statements "partly agreed with", or "approached" the Marxist position — for example, in his proposals for planning scientific research, or for taking the material factors into consideration in the analysis of historical processes, etc.¹²

Thus M. H. Serejski emphasized the fact that L. Febvre, without being a Marxist, was not an enemy of Marxism. If we consider the conditions under which the Polish scholar had to write, it becomes obvious that he was convinced of the convergence of the materialist and annalist approaches.

His opinion, however, was in the minority; what the majority of Polish and foreign participants in the debate perceive to this day are mainly differences in the approach to history represented by the "Fathers of the Annales School" and Marxists. Six years after Serejski's article, his pupil, Andrzej Feliks Grabski, reached the conclusion that L. Febvre "zealously contested the unilaterally economic approach to social phenomena", and opposed the adherents of the theory of historical materialism¹³. Even more telling is the statement of Peter Burke, an English historian, close to the "Annales" movement. He said: "neither Febvre nor Bloch took a great interest in the ideas of Karl Marx"¹⁴. As we will be able to see, this opinion is oversimplified, too.

A. F. Grabski's and P. Burke's theses are complemented by the theoretical deliberations of Jerzy Topolski who makes a clear distinction between possibilist interactionism (in his opinion marking the "Annales" paradigm) and Marxism, and accuses "Annales" creators of an inability to describe historical changes and of focussing exclusively on stable structures¹⁵. Was it so that in the communist reality J. Topolski had no possibility of expressing an unequivocal praise of a non-Marxist scientific school in an official academic textbook of historical methodology? It seems that in 1973, when the book was published, he could have by-passed such a limitation.

The research of the French scholars on the role of historical materialism in the works of "the first generation of Annales"

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ A. F. Grabski, *Marc Bloch — człowiek i uczoney* (*M. Bloch — Man and Scholar*), in: M. Bloch, *Spoleczeństwo feudalne*, Warszawa 1981, p. 39.

¹⁴ P. Burke, *The French Historical Revolution. The Annales School, 1929–1989*, Cambridge 1990, p. 54.

¹⁵ J. Topolski, *Metodologia historii* (*Methodology of History*), Warszawa 1973, pp. 149–150.

shows more discrimination. They do not try to pose a definite thesis about the attitude of M. Bloch and L. Febvre to Marxism. André Burguière¹⁶ says that the academic milieu of the 1940s classified "Annales" as a Marxist movement, and several lines later that the inclination to socio-economic history mainly resulted from the French tradition of research conducted by such men as Augustine Thierry, Edgar Guinet, François Guizot and Jules Michelet, and not from the thought of Karl Marx¹⁷.

The ambiguous relations of L. Febvre with Marxism are stressed by Maurice Aymard who says that although the author of *Rabelais* argued that everybody in his era knew the fundamentals of Marxism, yet he never openly expressed his opinion about the suitability or unsuitability of Marx's theses to historical methodology¹⁸. According to M. Aymard, L. Febvre only generally emphasized the significance of Marx for the development of the issues of capitalism and the Reformation, and admitted he had read both Marx and Lenin¹⁹. L. Febvre happened to write that economy determined politics, thought and the spiritual sphere, and in the same text might say that capitalism was the product of the Reformation²⁰. At the same time he clearly formulated his objections to some Marxist theses, pointing out, for example, Marx's attempts to appraise history²¹, or deriding the historical value of Engels's *The Peasants' War in Germany*²².

Most researchers are of the opinion that M. Bloch was intellectually closer to Marxism. The only exception was Witold Kula — in his introduction to the Polish edition of *The Eulogy of History (Pochwała historii)*, the Polish scholar emphasized that despite methodological similarities (e.g. "the class approach to

¹⁶ A. Burguière, research worker of VI Section (EHESS), from 1969 onwards on the editorial staff of "Annales", author of *Bretons de Plözévet*, Paris 1975.

¹⁷ A. Burguière, *École des Annales*, in: *Dictionnaire des sciences historiques*, ed. idem, Paris 1986, p. 48.

¹⁸ M. Aymard, *The Impact of the Annales School in Mediterranean Countries*, "Review" 1, 1978, 3/4, p. 62.

¹⁹ L. Febvre, *Pour une histoire à part entière*, Paris 1962, pp. 350–366, see F. Dosse, *L'histoire en miettes. Des Annales à la "Nouvelle Histoire"*, Paris 1987, pp. 59–60.

²⁰ L. Febvre, *Pour une histoire*, pp. 364–365, see F. Dosse, *op. cit.*, pp. 89–90.

²¹ L. Febvre, *Combats pour l'histoire*, p. 109; see F. Dosse, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

²² F. Dosse, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

the societies under analysis"), M. Bloch was not a Marxist²³. A. Burguière, however, argues that the co-founder of the famous periodical inscribed himself fully in classic Marxism, since he was against separating social mentality and consciousness from the social and material context, and was convinced that material factors are the basis of human needs and emotions²⁴. M. Bloch himself admitted: *j'ai personnellement pour Karl Marx l'admiration la plus vive*, adding, however, *est-ce que cependant assez pour que ses leçons servent éternellement de gabarit à toute doctrine?*²⁵.

At the same time A. Burguière notes that M. Bloch, while reviewing some English work on the economic basis of medieval religiousness, said that it would perhaps have been more useful to analyse the influence of religious attitudes on the medieval economy²⁶. This is a complete reversal of the scheme of thinking proposed by Marx.

It is also worth emphasizing that the traditions of research on mentality and human communities are much earlier than Marxism and go back at least as far as Voltaire's descriptions of the monarchy of Louis XIV. Moreover, M. Bloch had never agreed with the teleological Marxian vision of progress and the rigid, deterministic scheme according to which the structure of ownership of the means of production shapes the mentality of social classes²⁷. This view was shared by others, for teleology was the main objection raised to the methodology of historical materialism by all the representatives of the "Annales" group²⁸. At the same time Jean-René Surtteau said that the young French Marxists sympathized with M. Bloch's and L. Febvre's periodical, considering its methodology the closest to their own, despite

²³ W. Kula, *Wstęp (Introduction)*, in: M. Bloch, *Pochwała historii*, Warszawa 1962, pp. 15–21.

²⁴ A. Burguière, *L'anthropologie historique*, in: *L'histoire et le métier d'historien en France 1945–1995*, ed. F. Bédarida, Paris 1995, pp. 171–185; see also: F. Bédarida, *La notion de "mentalités" chez Marc Bloch et Lucien Febvre: deux conceptions, deux filiations*, "Revue de synthèse" 1983, 2, pp. 333–349.

²⁵ F. Dosse, *op. cit.*, p. 59; see the eulogy of Marx in: M. Bloch, *L'étrange défaite. Témoignage écrit en 1940*, Paris 1957, p. 170. One might wonder to what extent those eulogies were an ideological declaration, and to what extent a courteous phrase.

²⁶ A. Burguière, *The New Annales. A Redefinition of the Late 1960's*, "Review" 1, 1978, 3/4, p. 202.

²⁷ *Idem*, *L'anthropologie historique*, pp. 171–185.

²⁸ Cf. H. Mukhia, *Témoignage étrangers*, in: *L'histoire de la métier d'historien*, p. 410.

seeing all the differences and being convinced that the two scholars from Strasbourg could by no means be considered Marxists²⁹. A diametrically opposed thesis, and at the same time more credible, for based on concrete examples, has been proposed by Frédérique Matonti. In her opinion the milieu of Marxist–communists (some of whom later joined “Annales”!) sharply attacked the “Annales” group — for example Jacques Blot (a pseudonym) criticised L. Febvre, F. Simiand and Fernand Braudel; Jean Névy attacked F. Braudel; Annie Kriegel — Ernest Labrousse, and Maurice Agulhon — Charles Morazé³⁰.

The general opinion about the complicated relations of the founders of “Annales” with Marxism is best rendered by T. Stoianovich, who said that historical materialism was at the same time a rival and a precursor of the “Annales” paradigm³¹. A. Burguière adds that the connections of “Annales” with Marxism were always unclear³². If I were to join this international debate, I would put the question differently: although the creators of “Annales” cannot be considered Marxists in the full sense of the word, still it has to be admitted that they were not prejudiced against Marxism. Their posture was in a large measure due to the ideology (leftist republicanism) that was the starting point of their world outlook, as well as to the fact that Marxism — and Marxist historiography — stimulated them intellectually.

The interest in Marxism reached its height after World War II, especially in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, that is in the era of F. Braudel and E. Labrousse, known as the “second generation of «Annales»”. In this period the socio–economic paradigm rapidly grew in importance (without becoming predominant, however)³³, and most historiographers detected in it similarities with Marxism.

²⁹ J. R. Suratteau, *Les historiens, le marxisme et la naissance des Annales: l'historiographie marxiste vers 1929: un mythe?*, in: *Au berceau des Annales*, ed. Ch.–O. Carbonnel, G. Livet, Toulouse 1983, p. 243.

³⁰ F. Matonti, *Intellectuels communistes. Essai sur l'obéissance politique. La Nouvelle Critique (1967–1980)*, Paris 2005, pp. 252–253.

³¹ T. Stoianovich, *op. cit.*, p. 237; see F. Dosse, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

³² A. Burguière, *École des Annales*, p. 48.

³³ P. Pleskot, *Optymizm i świadomość kryzysu. Stan historiografii francuskiej na przełomie tysiącleci. Szkic (Optimism and an Awareness of Crisis. The State of French Historiography at the Turn of the Millennium. An Outline)*, “Historyka” 35, 2005, pp. 79–103.

At the same time they tried to find the reasons for this offensive and those similarities. It is often noted that the war produced a need for a reorientation of historical sciences. This need has been met by historical materialism, promoted by the Soviet (but not only Soviet) Marxists³⁴.

In France this reorientation in a large measure took the shape of the socio-economic approach represented by F. Braudel and E. Labrousse. This paradigm was an attempt at giving a historiographic answer to the main problems of post-war reality: the crisis, a necessity for modernization, the disappointment with the inter-war achievements, etc. It was also a result of the popularity of Marxism: Alain Plessis says that the socio-economic trend in history was inspired, apart from the British and American macro-economy, by the ideas of Marx and Marxist historians³⁵. Moreover, historical materialism was perceived as one of the instruments of combat against traditional, academic "historicizing" history, which the new generation of scholars — even more than the generation of M. Bloch and L. Febvre — found impossible to accept³⁶.

Let us draw attention to the similarity of those phenomena with the situation in Poland: here, too, after the war, voices were heard calling for a reorientation of historiography, and they came not only from the communist circles. The crisis and the necessity for modernization were problems of the same nature, despite all the geopolitical differences between Poland and France. The end of war and the post-war crisis were an "intellectual moment" which caused to a certain extent a similar reaction of historians, in which their methodological, ideological and political convictions combined in a complicated way. This similarity must be acknowledged as one of the most important factors making for the intellectual unity between Polish and French scholars.

A comparable necessity for a reorientation of historiography as well as a wish to employ Marxism as a method of combat with

³⁴ E.g. R. Stobiecki, *Historia pod nadzorem. Spory o nowy model historii w Polsce (II połowa lat czterdziestych – początek lat pięćdziesiątych)* (*History under Supervision. Disputes Over the New Model of History in Poland: 2nd Half of the 1940s – Beginning of the 1950s*), Łódź 1993, p. 48.

³⁵ A. Plessis, *L'histoire économique*, in: *L'histoire et le métier d'historien*, pp. 271–272.

³⁶ R. Rémond, *Le contemporain du contemporain*, in: *Essais d'ego-histoire*, comp. P. Nora, Paris 1987, p. 324.

traditional historiography arose also in Italy where, as Alain Schnapp says, Marxism had taken a more radical form than in France³⁷.

Political Marxism, that is communism, as a reaction to the post-war situation, in the opinion of some researchers into the history of "Annales", sometimes appeared to be even more attractive than historical materialism, that is "methodological Marxism". In the 1940s and 1950s a large group of the "Annales" members joined the French Communist Party, an episode which was certainly marked by fanaticism. Pierre Nora³⁸, citing René Rémond³⁹, even went so far as to say that the symbiosis of historians with the communist party was one of the most important phenomena of post-war history⁴⁰. To testify to the dimensions of this phenomenon, let us repeat the anecdote cited by François Dosse⁴¹: François Furet and Jean Chesneaux⁴², while commenting in the foyer of the Sorbonne on the results of the agrégé examination in 1952 said: *nous avons laissé quelques places aux bourgeois!*⁴³ At the same time, according to P. Nora, no Marxist scientific school, independent of "Annales", had been created in France⁴⁴. It should, however, be noted that "Editions sociales" centred round it a group of Marxist-historians who had nothing in common with F. Braudel's "school"⁴⁵.

Jacques Le Goff argues, on the other hand, that even scholars who considered themselves to be Marxists and communists tout court — such as Albert Soboul, Michel Vovelle or even the Stalinist Pierre Vilar — generally did not apply the

³⁷ A. Schnapp, *Les "Annales" et l'archéologie: une rencontre difficile*, "Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome" 93, 1981, 1, p. 478.

³⁸ P. Nora, research worker of EHESS, editor-in-chief of "Le Débat", from 2002 member of Académie Française. Author, among other books, of *Français d'Algérie*, Paris 1961.

³⁹ R. Rémond, b. 1918, (1971–1976) first president of University at Nanterre; long-standing director of "Revue historique". Author, among other books, of *La Droite en France de 1815 à nos jours*, Paris 1954.

⁴⁰ P. Nora, *Conclusion*, in: *Essais d'ego-histoire*, p. 355.

⁴¹ F. Dosse, b. 1950, professor of the University in Créteil. Author, among other books, of *Michel de Certeau, le marcheur blessé*, Paris 2002.

⁴² J. Chesneaux, professor of the University Paris VII, co-founder in 1975 of "Cahiers du Forum Histoire", author, among other books, of *De la modernité*, Paris 1983.

⁴³ F. Dosse, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

⁴⁴ P. Nora, *Conclusion*, p. 360.

⁴⁵ See e.g. the book issued by this publisher: *Aujourd'hui, l'histoire* (note 6).

dogmas of historical materialism in the methodology of their studies, and rather opted for a more elastic, "dissenting" vision of Marxism⁴⁶. This ambiguous phenomenon, which is difficult to interpret, is best reflected in the words of Le Goff: *Vilar, c'est un vrai marxiste. Et Vilar, c'est un grand historien. C'était un marxiste très bizarre — en tant qu'historien, sont marxisme était ouvert, intelligent, etc. En tant que citoyen, il était un communiste... vous pouvait ne pas croire, mais il trouvait que Staline était un modéré! C'était extraordinaire. Je me rapelle très bien que quand nous allions le voir, nous parlions l'histoire avec très grand plaisir et nous avons toujours peur du moment où il allait parler politique — parce que nous savions qu'il allait dire vraiment les choses épouvantables — ce qui était difficile de lui*⁴⁷.

The question of the relations of the French intellectuals with communism is extremely broad, and it has been the subject of exhaustive studies⁴⁸, therefore I will not develop it here. Instead, let us consider the debate, going on for several decades, that tries to define the position of Marxism in the historical studies of two scholars who are symbols of the "second generation" of "Annales" — F. Braudel and E. Labrousse.

In his *Metodologia historii (Methodology of History)*, Jerzy Topolski relates Braudel's words pronounced in his lecture on the occasion of receiving the title of doctor honoris causa of Warsaw University in 1967. The French scholar said that while laying stress on socio-economic systems he referred to the most enduring achievements of Marxian thought⁴⁹. This may mean that F. Braudel did not consider himself to be a Marxist tout court, but was convinced of the convergence of his methodological ideas with that of historical materialism.

This thread has been taken up by Wojciech Wrzosek. He notes the tribute paid by F. Braudel to Marx⁵⁰. The French

⁴⁶ Unauthorized interview with J. Le Goff of 31 Jan. 2005, the author's private material.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ See e.g. C. Madajczyk, *Klerk czy intelektualista zaangażowany? (Clerk or Committed Intellectual?)*, Poznań 1999; F. Furet, *Przeszłość pewnego złudzenia*, Warszawa 1996; F. Matonti, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ J. Topolski, *op. cit.*, p. 138. The author cites Braudel in a Polish translation, without giving the translator's name. The French scholar's words are cited from "Kultura", 25 June 1967.

⁵⁰ Z. Drozdowicz, J. Topolski, W. Wrzosek, *Swoistości poznania historycznego (Specificities of Historical Cognition)*, Poznań 1990, pp. 191–192.

historian said that the author of *Das Kapital* created “the most powerful social analysis of the past century”⁵¹. At the same time Braudel opposed Marxism in its communist (or as W. Wrzosek would have it) positivist edition. He argued that some elements of Marx’s doctrine cannot stand the test of criticism⁵².

In this attitude, toutes proportions gardées, F. Braudel seems to approach the views of Polish “revisionists” who criticized the Stalinist conception of historical materialism, though they considered themselves to be Marxists nevertheless. However, even this analogy is not completely true, if we take into consideration that in some places F. Braudel completely negated Marx’s postulates, for example his conception of the class war⁵³. Braudel also differed from Marx in estimating the appearance of the first elements of capitalism at a much earlier date, in distinguishing capitalism from the free market, and in his understanding of the role of the means of production⁵⁴.

A. F. Grabski points out that F. Braudel, just like L. Febvre and M. Bloch, was critical of the “idea of continuity” that appeared for example in Marx’s concatenation: primitive society — slavery — feudalism — capitalism — socialism⁵⁵. The French scholar was rather in favour of the theory of spheres called “economy — the world” (in the original more often presented in plural: *économie — mondes*) that act synchronically at various stages of economic development⁵⁶.

On the basis of those and other differences between Marxism and the views of F. Braudel, P. Burke has drawn the conclusion that “the pope of historians” “found it necessary to preserve a certain intellectual distance from Marx and even more from Marxism, to avoid being trapped inside an intellectual framework he regarded as too rigid”⁵⁷. As the author of *La Méditerranée*

⁵¹ F. Braudel, *Historia i trwanie*, Warszawa 1999, p. 84.

⁵² See F. Braudel’s statement in “Review” 1, 1978, 3/4, p. 255.

⁵³ F. Braudel, *Morze Śródziemne i świat śródziemnomorski w epoce Filipa II*, vol. 2, Gdańsk 1976, p. 91; see Z. Drozdowicz, J. Topolski, W. Wrzosek, *op. cit.*, pp. 193–194.

⁵⁴ F. Dosse, *op. cit.*, pp. 141, 143–149.

⁵⁵ A. F. Grabski, *Koncepcja historii globalnej — Fernand Braudel (The Concept of Global History — Fernand Braudel)*, in: *idem*, *Kształty historii (Shapes of History)*, Łódź 1985, p. 495.

⁵⁶ F. Dosse, *op. cit.*, pp. 150–151; see F. Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme*, vol. 3, Paris 1979, p. 66 ff.

⁵⁷ P. Burke, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

himself emphasized, *le génie de Marx, le secret de son pouvoir prolongé tient à ce qu'il a été le premier à fabriquer de vrais modèles sociaux, et à partir de la longue durée historique. Ces modèles, on les a figés dans leur simplicité en leur donnant valeur de loi, d'explication préalable, automatique, applicable en tout lieux, à toutes les sociétés*⁵⁸. On the other hand P. Burke says that the structure of *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme* corresponds to a large extent with the model of basis–superstructure of Marx⁵⁹. We can see again that the opinions on the relations of F. Braudel with “methodological” Marxism are far from being unequivocal.

While dwelling on the same issue of the structure of *Civilisation matérielle*, J. Topolski put forward rather a risky thesis that F. Braudel, who highly appraised the achievements of the Polish Institute of Material Culture, inspired to some extent by historical materialism, was encouraged by this school in his studies of the material culture of capitalism⁶⁰. If this idea were right, this would testify to a large influence of Polish historiography on Braudel's scientific studies. In my opinion, however, Topolski goes too far in this conjecture.

The methodological views of the French historians from the “Annales” group, especially those who, in contrast to F. Braudel (an adherent of de Gaulle) situated themselves on the left side of the politico–ideological scene, show some common points with the theses of historical materialism. The best example of such a posture is E. Labrousse, a professor who had many pupils in the field of socio–economic history. As we will be able to see, his posture was not viewed unequivocally, either.

Some French researchers argue that E. Labrousse's paper at the learned conference devoted to the hundredth anniversary of the 1848 Revolution testified to the convergence of his methodological views with Marxism. Labrousse argued then that the main reason for the successive French revolutions (of 1789, 1830 and 1848) was an economic crisis accompanied by social conflicts and political contestations⁶¹. This was in complete agreement with

⁵⁸ F. Braudel, *Écrits sur l'histoire*, Paris 1969, p. 80.

⁵⁹ P. Burke, *op. cit.*, p. 45; see F. Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle*, vol. 1–3, Paris 1979.

⁶⁰ J. Topolski, *Prawda i model w historiografii (Truth and Model in Historiography)*, Łódź 1982, p. 252.

the assumptions of Marxism, although specialists today more frequently put forward an opposite thesis: the French as well as the October Revolutions were preceded by a rapid economic growth. P. Burke, taking this and other theses of Labrousse as the basis of his reflections, said point-blank that the friend (and in some way also a rival) of F. Braudel was a Marxist⁶². Besides, it is a fact of some significance that Labrousse was the head of L'Institut Français d'Histoire Sociale that published a leftist periodical "Le Mouvement social" and collected materials for the history of the working class⁶³.

At the same time there are many opinions that the similarities between the ideas of E. Labrousse and those of Marxists are not complete. The French scholar avoided the mono-causal explanation of historical phenomena, which he thought was the error of many strictly Marxist works⁶⁴. This was also the case of A. Soboul, a long-time member of the FCP. Although Soboul, in accordance with the scheme of historical materialism, considered the French Revolution to be an act of a bourgeois opposition to the feudal system, he did not agree with the identification of the sansculotte movement with the proletariat and an automatic subordination of all events to one scheme⁶⁵. Moreover, he argued that an excessive concentration on the economy at the cost of the analysis of societies leads to a situation where *l'histoire perd son esprit*⁶⁶. This did not prevent him from conducting sharp polemics with Denis Richet⁶⁷ on the subject of historical methodology and the attitude to Marxism⁶⁸.

⁶¹ E. Labrousse, *Comment naissent les révolutions*, in: *Actes du Congrès historique du centenaire de la Révolution de 1848*, Paris 1948; see also: Ch. Delacroix, F. Dosse, P. Garcia, *Histoire et historiens en France depuis 1945*, Paris 2003, pp. 31–32.

⁶² P. Burke, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁶³ D. Oznam, *Enseignement et recherche en France de l'Ancien Régime à nos jours*, in: *La recherche historique en France de 1940 à 1965*, preface by J. Glénisson, Paris 1965, p. 116.

⁶⁴ Ch. Delacroix, F. Dosse, P. Garcia, *op. cit.*, p. 36; on the other hand, A. Burguière said *a priori* that Labrousse did not repudiate the justifiability of the Marxian scheme, A. Burguière, *École des Annales*, p. 48.

⁶⁵ Ch. Delacroix, F. Dosse, P. Garcia, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁶⁶ A. Soboul, *Problèmes théoriques de l'histoire de la Révolution française*, in: *Aujourd'hui, l'histoire*, p. 263.

⁶⁷ D. Richet (1927–1989), research worker of EHESS, author, among other books, of *La France moderne. L'esprit des institutions*, Paris 1980.

⁶⁸ See the exchange of opinions between those historians in "Annales" 1970, 6, p. 1494–1496; cf. M. Harsgor, *Total History: the Annales School*, "Journal of

It is very characteristic that the members of the "Annales" circle who years later try to appraise the influence of Marxism on their group, are sometimes very sceptical and cautious in their assessment of the depth of the influence of Marx's thought on their own historical methods. In their opinion "methodological" Marxism *à la française* was in most cases declarative and to a certain extent artificial; ideological declarations (resulting mainly from political convictions) did not go hand in hand with an authentic reflection upon Marxism. This is the opinion of among others Jacques Revel and J. Le Goff. The former argues: *Oui, bon, je l'ecris et je continue à penser que dans le cas français le marxisme a joué un rôle très faible. Beaucoup de ces gens pouvaient être des communistes à titre... comme citoyens* [pause] — *pas tous, mais c'était important en France* [smile]. *Mais ça se ne passait pas du tout dans un type de l'analyse. Si vous prenez quelqu'un comme Agulhon, qui a été un militant communiste jusqu'à 1968, dans les travaux d'Agulhon il n'y a pas d'analyse marxiste. Même Vovelle, qui restait communiste, je pense, jusqu'aujourd'hui* [laugh], *là, il y a...* [pause], *bon, ça tire aussi à la faiblesse de marxisme français, par rapport au marxisme anglais, par exemple, qui était beaucoup plus sophistiqué*⁶⁹.

This opinion is shared by J. Topolski who (after 1989) acknowledged Marxist views of P. Vilar as "something rather extraordinary in the «Annales» school"⁷⁰. Christian Delacroix⁷¹, F. Dosse and Patrick Garcia⁷², none of them attached directly to "Annales", also subscribe to the argumentation of J. Revel and J. Topolski. They say that Marx's works were not much read in France. The works of Louis Althusser were an exception. Nevertheless the three French researchers think it right to emphasize again that even the scholars who considered themselves

Contemporary History" 1978, 1, p. 6. The disputes over the role of Marxism in the methodology of history between the "Annales" members themselves show again that Marx's thought was not perceived in an unequivocal way in this milieu.

⁶⁹ Unauthorized interview with J. Revel of 2 Feb. 2005, cf. note 46.

⁷⁰ J. Topolski, *Od Achillesa do Béatrice de Planissolles. Zarys historii historiografii (From Achilles to Béatrice de Planissolles. An Outline of the History of Historiography)*, Warszawa 1998, p. 118.

⁷¹ Ch. Delacroix, professor at the University in Créteil, author, among other books, of *La falaise et le rivage, Histoire du "tournant critique", "Espaces-Temps"* 1995, 59–61.

⁷² P. Garcia, professor at the University in Versailles, author, among other books, of *Le Bicentenaire de la Révolution française. Pratiques sociales d'une commémoration*, preface by M. Vovelle, Paris 2000.

to be the pupils of the author of *Communist Manifesto* and were active in the structures of the FPC did not in fact apply “pure” historical materialism in their works⁷³. Similar conclusions are reached, in another place, by J. Revel, who did not see Marxism as the principal theme of the theoretical discussions of historians, with the exception of P. Vilar⁷⁴.

It would, however, be wrong to think this kind of attitude was general. The fact that scholars retained a distance towards “methodological” Marxism and did not have a full knowledge of the communist “classics” (although Marx’s works were studied in university classes!) did not mean, in my opinion, that they were not open to Marxist inspirations (frequently indirect), or did not show a “friendly” attitude towards the achievements of those historians from Eastern Europe who more or less sincerely avowed themselves to be Marxists. This, at any rate, was noted by the researchers mentioned above. Such a “tolerant” attitude of the “Annales” circle and the VI Section of École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE) towards Marxism was best summarized by F. Braudel at a conference at Binghamton in 1977: *le libéralisme, ce n’est pas seulement une politique vis-à-vis des personnes, c’est une politique vis-à-vis des idées —. En fait, nous acceptons la pensée de Marx, la problématique marxiste un peu comme si Marx avait soutenu sa thèse d’Université en 1867 avec «Le Capital» — —. Donc, nous avons accepté la pensée marxiste parmi d’autres. Elle ne nous a pas servi de crédo, elle ne nous a pas servi de cadre, mais nous ne l’avons pas tenue à l’écart — —. Plus que vous ne le pensez, dans un pays comme le nôtre — — les idées de Marx ont pénétré en profondeur — —. Cela ne vous étonnera donc pas que nous nous soyons bien entendus avec quelques marxistes anglais, que nous avons fait très bon ménage avec des marxistes polonais*⁷⁵.

The question of inspirations, frequently loose, indirect and partial, is well illustrated by the testimony of Georges Duby. The author of *The Time of Cathedrals*, who in contrast to many of his colleagues never joined the FPC, said that between 1955–1965, while being preoccupied with social history, he made use

⁷³ Ch. Delacroix, F. Dosse, P. Garcia, *op. cit.*, pp. 35–36.

⁷⁴ J. Revel, *L’histoire sociale*, in: *Une école pour les sciences sociales: de la VI Section à l’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*, ed. J. Revel, N. Wachtel, Paris 1996, pp. 53–54.

⁷⁵ F. Braudel, *En guise de conclusion*, “Review” 1, 1978, 3/4, p. 249.

of Marxism as one of the theories of research. While appraising his own work, he said that the construction of the book *Guerriers et paysans* was in a large measure based on the notion of classes and means of production⁷⁶. In another place he adds that one of his main research problems was the analysis of relations between the means of production and the arrangement of social relations⁷⁷. Elsewhere, he admits that Marxism has played an important role in his intellectual development⁷⁸. However, if we look up the said work we can see that it is not only well-inscribed in the traditions of French socio-economic history, autonomous with respect to Marx, although certainly drawing much inspiration from him, but also uses anthropological concepts, while raising the issue of a gift or generosity in the medieval economy⁷⁹.

G. Duby at the same time renounced one of the principal dogmas of historical materialism: the rigid division into infrastructure-superstructure, and argued for an incessant mingling of the material basis and mental superstructure, being against their simple, hierarchical relation⁸⁰, and emphasizing the overpowering influence of custom and human relations on the economy⁸¹. This is another proof of his "free" approach to "methodological" Marxism. Nevertheless one cannot deny that he used terms drawn from Marx's theories and was generally indebted to Marx's thought. This "duality" in his approach to historical materialism can be seen in his conviction that to explain a society we have to take into account not only economic factors, but also the social idea it cherishes of itself⁸².

Thus, to generalize this example, we can say that Marxism was simply one of the intellectual inspirations, models, which were transformed by the members of the "Annales" group according to their own convictions and needs. However, the very fact that these sources of inspiration included Marxism (side by side with Claude Lévi-Strauss's⁸³ structuralism, Georges Gur-

⁷⁶ G. Duby, *L'histoire continue*, Paris 1999, p. 106.

⁷⁷ *Le Moyen Age. Entretien avec Georges Duby*, in: *Aujourd'hui, l'histoire*, p. 202.

⁷⁸ F. Dosse, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁷⁹ See G. Duby, *Guerriers et paysans: VII-XII siècle, premier essor de l'économie européenne*, Paris 1973.

⁸⁰ P. Nora, *Conclusion*, pp. 359-362.

⁸¹ *Le Moyen Age. Entretien avec Georges Duby*, p. 205.

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 206.

⁸³ See C. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale*, Paris 1958.

vitch's⁸⁴ sociology, Paul Vidal de la Blache's⁸⁵ geography, F. Simiand's⁸⁶ economic–sociology, Michel Foucault's⁸⁷ philosophy, etc.), shows that historical materialism played a more or less significant role in the shaping of the paradigm of “the second generation of «Annales»”.

As regards the French researchers' interest in the achievements of the Marxist historical schools from behind “the iron curtain”, most members of the “Annales” group as well as its critics and sympathizers point to the bilateral wish to maintain their contacts and co-operation. J. Le Goff argues that the methodology applied by the researchers from “peoples' democracies” was to the generation of F. Braudel very attractive, since *ces historiens cherchaient, comment dire, des lignes de conduites, des fils conducteurs*⁸⁸. The American sociologist Norman Birnbaum adds that “Annales” turned to Marxism — including its Polish version — out of “a general, indeed voracious, human curiosity and sympathy”⁸⁹.

Some scholars and witnesses to this epoch seek the reasons for this mutual wish to maintain relations in the fact that the members of the “Annales” group, looking for lines of understanding with their colleagues working in the communist reality, sometimes simply found easily a common language with them. However, the perceptible methodological similarities resulted rather from a similar intellectual evolution than from the application of the schemes of historical materialism. J. Revel describes it, taking as an example the phenomenon of disregarding an individual in favour of social groups, present in the publications of both “the second generation of «Annales»” and the researchers from Eastern Europe. F. Braudel's circle was, indeed, marked by a “certitude, quel'histoire qui compte est celle du collectif, celle du plus grand nombre, celle des processus anonymes et non

⁸⁴ See G. Gurevitch, *Le concept des classes sociales*, Paris 1954.

⁸⁵ See P. Vidal de la Blache, *Principes de la géographie humaine*, Paris 1995.

⁸⁶ See F. Simiand, *Méthode historique et science sociale. Étude critique d'après les ouvrages récents de Lacombe et de M. Seignobos*, “Revue de Synthèse historique” 1903, reprinted in “Annales E.S.C.” 1960, 1, pp. 83–119; *idem*, *Méthode historique et sciences sociales*, Paris 1987.

⁸⁷ See M. Foucault, *Les mots et les choses. Une archéologie des sciences humaines*, Paris 1992.

⁸⁸ Unauthorized interview with J. Le Goff, *op. cit.*

⁸⁹ N. Birnbaum, *The Annales School and Social Theory*, “Review” 1, 1978, 3/4, p. 233.

conscients"⁹⁰. J. Revel, however, did not think this resulted from Marxist views, since neither the follower of de Gaulle, F. Braudel, nor the "progressive" E. Labrousse, as we could see, considered themselves to be Marxists, and theoretical and methodological discussions were rare⁹¹ in the whole of this milieu (a situation which changed in the 1970s and 1980s).

The similarities, even if only apparent, between the convictions of the "Annales" group and some Polish historians who avowed themselves to be Marxists favoured the co-operation of both those milieux and, despite the differences, caused their rapprochement. These similarities were probably also responsible for the above-mentioned interest of the "Annales" group in the achievements of Polish scholarship. It was shown in many conferences organized in common with the Polish historians by the VI Section of EPHE — the institutional emanation of Braudel's circle. For example in February 1960 at the Sorbonne a lecture of Czesław Bobrowski was held (hosted by VI Section), entitled *Les problèmes de planification socialiste*, discussing the way Marxist ideas were put into practice⁹².

Three months later, towards the end of May, the Section hosted a Polish-French seminar *Les problèmes théoriques de l'investissement* — again discussing socialist economics. Poland sent to it people from the Chief School of Planning and Statistics (including Bronisław Minc), while the French side was represented by those from École (among them Charles Bettelheim). The inauguration session was presided over by F. Braudel himself⁹³.

The joint organization and financing of an international seminar on "the Marxist theory in economic and social development" by the 1st Department of the Polish Academy of Sciences (W. Kula) and VI Section of EPHE (Kazimierz Szczerba-Likiernik) also testifies to the interest of the "second generation

⁹⁰ J. Revel, *L'histoire sociale*, pp. 60-61.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*.

⁹² It is characteristic, however, that the person delivering a lecture was not the more orthodox Marxist Bronisław Minc, *Invitation pour la conférence "Les problèmes de planification socialiste"*. EHESS, Fonds Louis Velay (1958-1972), Généralités 1955-1968, sygn. CPLV 86.

⁹³ Programme du colloque "Les problèmes théoriques de l'investissement", 17-20 mai 1960, EHESS, Fonds Louis Velay (1958-1972) Généralités 1955-1968, sygn. CPLV 86.

of «Annales»” in the theory of Marxism. The event took place in April 1962 and brought together 50 participants⁹⁵.

Beginning with the 1970s the co-operation of the “Annales” group with their Polish colleagues slackened. At the same time we could observe a weakening of the French researchers’ interest in the achievements of historical materialism. Both phenomena achieved their height in the 1980s and continue to this day. Are they interrelated, or can they be associated with one another? This supposition deserves a separate consideration. Let us merely state that the main reason for those transformations was an evolution within the “Annales” group consisting, most generally speaking, of an exchange of generations and the replacement of the socio-economic paradigm by a more capacious conglomerate of various methodological approaches which can be termed as “historical anthropology” or “history of culture”⁹⁶. At the same time Polish Marxism was losing its edge and less and less frequently marked its presence in the historical works of the 1970s and the later decades.

I have raised this issue in another place⁹⁷, and here let me only trace the course of an international discussion of the influence of this “cultural turn-about” on the attitude to Marxism. In the first place, we have to say that the history of culture paradigm has criticized and dismissed most elements of socio-economic history that constituted the points of contact with historical materialism. It started promoting a return to the individual and events in history; it gave up macro-economic descriptions of societies in favour of a reconstruction of the life of individuals, their emotions and ideas. Politics was again in favour, as well as history of religion, now treated in anthropological, non-Marxist terms. Women’s studies have developed —

⁹⁴ But the term used was “marxienne”, and not “marxiste”.

⁹⁵ Lettre de A. Bertrand, Directeur de Sciences Sociales de l’UNESCO, à Monsieur le Professeur Fernand Braudel du 6 avril 1962, EHESS, Fonds Clemens Heller (1957–1972), Colloques, Généralités, 1960–1962, sygn. CPCH 36.

⁹⁶ Cf. J. Le Goff, *L’historten et l’homme quotidien*, in: *L’historten entre l’ethnologie et le futurologue*, ed. J. Dumoulin, D. Moisi, Paris 1972, pp. 241–248. The problem of the historiography of “Annales” in the 1980s and especially in the 1990s has been discussed by T. Wiolich, *Krótkie trwanie. Problemy historiografii francuskiej lat dziewięćdziesiątych XX wieku (Short Duration. The Problems of French Historiography in the 1990s)*, Warszawa 2004.

⁹⁷ P. Pleskot, *op. cit.*

a subject completely by-passed in Marxist history of "the working class". As F. Braudel noted himself, *mes successeurs — donnent l'impression — d'abandonner ce sol économique qui nous permettait une liaison avec nos collègues marxistes*⁹⁸. F. Furet was explicit about the new paradigm's breach with the "Stalinist-Marxist historicism"⁹⁹.

The postulates of the "third generation of *Annales*" concerned the epistemological sphere. In 1987 Charles-Olivier Carbonnel said clearly that nouvelle histoire renounced philosophy of history — including the "reductional explanations" of Marxist historians¹⁰⁰. This fact has been corroborated by A. Burguière¹⁰¹. W. Wrzosek points out that both Marxism and the "*Annales*" movement belonged to the broad current of modernist history¹⁰². The 1970s, however, turned the modernist order upside down¹⁰³. Belief in the scientific character of history was dismissed as an illusion, and its concept as *les lettres* was recognized again¹⁰⁴. Its affinities to Marxism either disappeared completely, or considerably weakened. These transformations were to some extent correlated with the changes in 20th century philosophy which passed from positivism, through modernism up till postmodernism (though the latter term rarely appears in French scholarship). One might say that Braudel's history was a counterpart of modernism in philosophy, while nouvelle histoire was a French answer to the world-wide tendency of calling the earlier "positivist" achievements into question¹⁰⁵. In English-

⁹⁸ F. Braudel, *En guise de conclusion*, p. 256.

⁹⁹ F. Furet, *Beyond the "Annales"*, "Journal of Modern History" 55, 1983, p. 391; see L. Hunt, *French History in the Last Twenty Years: The Rise and the Fall or the "Annales" Paradigm*, "Journal of Contemporary History" 1986, 2, p. 214.

¹⁰⁰ Ch. O. Carbonnel, *L'apport de l'histoire de l'historiographie*, in: *Certitudes et incertitude de l'histoire*, ed. G. Gadoffre, Paris 1987, p. 208; see E. Domańska, J. Topolski, W. Wrzosek, *Między modernizmem a postmodernizmem: historiografia wobec zmian w filozofii historii (Between Modernism and Postmodernism: Historiography in the Face of Changes in Philosophy of History)*, Poznań 1994, p. 12.

¹⁰¹ A. Burguière, *École des Annales*, p. 49.

¹⁰² E. Domańska, J. Topolski, W. Wrzosek, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.

¹⁰³ See T. Wiolicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 10–11.

¹⁰⁴ See e.g. P. Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'histoire*, Paris 1971; M. de Certeau, *L'écriture de l'histoire*, Paris 1975.

¹⁰⁵ A very interesting issue that deserves a separate analysis is the fact that the successive trends of French historiography (and perhaps not only French), developed by each new generation of researchers, accused their predecessors of "traditionalism" or "positivism". We must remember that "*Annales*" arose in the atmosphere of opposition to the modernist methodology of Charles Seignobos or Ernest Lavisse.

speaking countries such an answer was probably the “linguistic turn” (developed, incidentally, by François Derrida, a scholar underestimated in France)¹⁰⁶.

Leaving this theoretical level aside, let us add that a factor that was not without significance to changes within “Annales” was the general intellectual evolution of the French intelligentsia, an important element of which was the so-called “Solzhenitsyn effect” that emerged in the 1970s and resulted in a more sober attitude to communism and the Soviet Union¹⁰⁷. We must not forget the social changes, either: a gradual decrease in the significance of the 2nd sector of the economy in favour of services (especially connected with information industry).

At the historiographical level Ch. Delacroix, F. Dosse and P. Garcia argue that the new cultural paradigm was incompatible with Marxism. They point out that the departure from socio-economic history in favour of historical anthropology was an attempt to oppose structuralism, “to digest it” — just as it was the case of G. Gurvitch’s sociology in the generation of F. Braudel. As a result *l’histoire économique et sociale cède sa place à une histoire des phénomènes culturels*¹⁰⁸. This change took place on the principle of an opposition. Historical anthropology does not ask “why?”, but “how?”; it is less interested in a change in time, and more in a “cross-section” of culture and society at a given moment in the past. J. Revel made a point that the methodology of all the “generations of «Annales»” was not able to construct a theory of social change¹⁰⁹. This was something contrary to the assumptions of historical materialism.

To make this picture more precise let us note that some researchers (Maurice Bloch¹¹⁰ or Stanley Diamond¹¹¹) try to

¹⁰⁶ See e.g. H. White, *The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Baltimore–London 1987; idem, *Topics of Discourse in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore 1978.

¹⁰⁷ See F. Dosse, *op. cit.*, pp. 212–217; P. Pleskot, *Na przekór rzeczywistości. Ideologia Komunistycznej Partii Francji wobec upadku komunizmu (In Spite of Reality. The Ideology of the French Communist Party in the Face of the Downfall of Communism)*, Toruń 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Ch. Delacroix, F. Dosse, P. Garcia, *op. cit.*, pp. 111, 119.

¹⁰⁹ Discussion, in: T. Stojanovich, *Social History: Perspective of the “Annales” Paradigm*, “Review” 1, 1978, 3/4, p. 52.

¹¹⁰ M. Bloch, b. 1939, anthropologist, research worker of London School of Economics, professor of Collège de France, author, among other books, of *L’anthropologie cognitive à l’épreuve du terrain*, Paris 2006.

perceive connections between anthropology and Marxism, seeing some of Marx's works as forerunners of ethnology. M. Bloch says: *d'une part, des anthropologues ont été influencés par la pensée marxiste, d'autre part des marxistes ont puisé dans les travaux anthropologiques des informations, principalement sur les sociétés primitives et les sociétés paysannes, qu'ils ont utilisées dans leurs analyses de la société en général*¹¹². These words concern, however, anthropology *sensu stricto*, and in the case of historical anthropology the opposition to Marxism was more conspicuous¹¹³.

This does not change the fact that, as Lynn Hunt¹¹⁴ observed in 1986, Marxist interpretations continued to exert some influence on the historical debates in France¹¹⁵. Nevertheless, she noticed that the presence of Marx's thought in university circles could not be felt as strongly, and was definitely much less intensive than in the earlier decades¹¹⁶.

The above deliberations, which only attempt to outline some threads of the issue of our interest, nevertheless show that the attitude of "Annales" to the methodology of historical materialism, beginning with the 1920s, up till now, has not been given an unequivocal assessment either by historians of historiography or the members of the group themselves.

This lack of a clear assessment seems to show that French non-classic historiography cannot be simply classified as Marxist. At the same time, however, it would be wrong to say that it did not yield to Marxist inspirations, especially until the 1970s. Michael Harsgor observes: "Annales welcomed Marxist stu-

¹¹¹ S. Diamond, d. 1991, anthropologist, founder of the Department of Anthropology in New York's New School for Social Research, author, among other books, of *Primitive Views of the World*, New York 1964.

¹¹² M. Bloch, *Marxisme et anthropologie*, in: *Dictionnaire de l'ethnologie et de l'anthropologie*, ed. P. Bonte, M. Izard, Paris 1991, pp. 450-453; see M. Bloch, *Marxism and Anthropology*, Oxford 1983; *Toward a Marxist Anthropology. Problems and Perspectives*, ed. S. Diamond, The Hague-Paris-New York 1979.

¹¹³ More extensively on the complicated relations between the historiography of "Annales" and anthropology see A. Burguière, *The New Annales*, pp. 195-206 (including discussion); Ch. Tilly, *Anthropology, History, and the "Annales"*, "Review" 1, 1978, 3/4, pp. 207-213.

¹¹⁴ L. Hunt, academic worker of University of California in Berkeley and Los Angeles, specialist in the history of France, history of historiography and gender studies, editor, among other books, of *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity*, New York 1993.

¹¹⁵ L. Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

dies in order to absorb their elements as a part of a total synthesis, more elaborated and more sophisticated than the economic determinism which characterizes so much of French Marxist historiography. In such a way, *Annales* won over young researchers who considered themselves as Marxist without taking into account that a cardinal *Annales* conception, that of the long duration — —, was rather at variance with the orthodox Marxist ideas about historical discontinuities"¹¹⁷.

The very definition of "methodological" Marxism, provided by the representatives of the "Annales" movement, testifies to the subtlety and complexity of the whole issue. It was formulated in various ways and with much freedom. E.g. M. Vovelle argued that the Marxist approach to historical research consists in... the application of quantitative methods¹¹⁸. One can hardly subscribe to such a formulation of this theory.

An equally free and wide interpretation was given to Marxism by J. Le Goff. He declared that Marx was one of the main sources of inspiration for "nouvelle histoire", but did not agree with the "commandment" that "consciousness is shaped by existence"¹¹⁹. What, according to his own words, inspired him in Marxism, was an interdisciplinary approach to the past¹²⁰. Obviously, this method of research was not only used by historical materialism, which, at any rate, in most of its works boiled down to an economic scheme, frequently reducing its interdisciplinary character to economic sciences.

Given such broad definitions of "methodological" Marxism there is no wonder that both J. Le Goff and M. Vovelle argued they were inspired by historical materialism in their research. This would also, at least partly, explain, the declarative and "false" character of the Marxism represented by the "Annales" group. Their views must have been based in many cases on some misunderstanding or, in other words, a free interpretation of Marx's assumptions.

It was probably this openness that underlay the interest of the "Annales" group, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, in the historical achievements of Eastern Europe, especially Poland,

¹¹⁷ M. Harsgor, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Ch. Delacroix, F. Dosse, P. Garcia, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

¹¹⁹ *La nouvelle histoire*, p. 236.

¹²⁰ J. Le Goff, *L'appétit de l'histoire*, in: *Essais d'ego-histoire*, p. 220.

where attempts were made to give a more "human", unorthodox face to materialism imposed from above. Only in the latter version was "Marxism-non-Marxism" digestible for Western scholars, who because of their leftist views needed some Marxist dressing, under which the ideas were hiding that had no connection with Marx.

(Translated by Agnieszka Kreczmar)