

Marx est mort! Where Have All The "New Philosophers" Gone?

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ABSTRACT The May 1968 events in France, as well as a number of world events in the late 1960s and early 1970s, produced a profound *crise de conscience* in French Marxist thought. The *Nouvelle Philosophie* emerged as a by-product of such crisis. The self-styled *new philosophers* frantically denounced all forms of Marxism as a "philosophy of domination." The "shocking" novelty of their "new" philosophy was believed to mark the "end" of Marxism in France. But what was "new" in the *Nouvelle Philosophie*? Why did it fail to emerge as a distinctive school of thought? If Marx est mort, as the *new philosophers* and the media fanfares announced in the mid-1970s, why couldn't the *new philosophy* escape the fate of an ephemeral phenomenon? Were the *new philosophers* misunderstood, incorrectly interpreted, or badly read? Or they simply failed to provide a new conceptual framework for the understanding of human society at this *fin de siècle*? The current article attempts to answer some of these questions.

I

France is a country where Marxism, in one form or another¹ has provided a dominant frame of reference for work in philosophy, sociology, and the "human sciences" ever since the end of World War Two.² During the first two decades after the war the grip of Marxism on the minds of French intellectuals was virtually complete. Marxism became, in Jean-Paul Sartre's words, the "unsurpassable horizon" of the age and, indeed, remained so even as it was reinterpreted in light of existentialism, surrealism, Saussurian structural linguistics, and even Freudian psychology. This explains why even a celebrity like Raymond Aron, or other anti-communist thinkers like Furet, Dumont, and Castoriadis were almost entirely without influence among their fellow French intellectuals in the postwar decades, as was explicitly signified in the saying "Better wrong with Sartre than right with Aron."³

It was not until the mid sixties – a period of affluence, mobility, and individualism produced by economic growth, decline of the working class activism, and sclerosis of the PCF (Parti Communiste Français) – that the intellectual reign of Marxism in France became vulnerable to profoundly ideological and political attacks. Marxism lost its terrain to structuralism, and to what is called poststructuralism in the Anglo-Saxon world. It seemed that capitalist society was no longer the same that Marx had once described, and the alternative of a revolutionary transformation of such society was neither the order of the day nor even desirable anymore. Structuralist movements at this time not only called into question every aspect of modern liberal life, they also seemed to wipe out all hope of escaping the tentacles of "power" through political action. Instead, they seemed to offer "new possibilities" for resistance. The shift was of such a scope that, as Lilla (1994: 13) points out, "rather than resisting in action the dehumanization of man on the basis of a rational analysis of history, one resisted in theory the idea of a 'man,' 'reason,' and 'history' as the oppressive products of ideology."

After the rise of the New Left and the events of May '68, all this became clear. An idiosyncratic historical work like Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* succeeded in casting a far darker shadow of suspicion over liberal society than Louis Althusser's laborious analyses of Marx's *Capital* in the mid sixties [...]. Politically, May '68 marked the beginning of the end of Marxism, with Maoism and the "boutique" movements of the early seventies (feminism, ecologism, "Third Worldism") left glowing like embers of a dying fire (Lilla, 1994: 13-14).

The changes in the French intellectual life were further influenced by a number of world events in the late sixties and early seventies, such as the 1968 Soviet suppression of the "Prague Spring" and the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the

butcheries in Cambodia, and most importantly, the publication of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Arkhipelag GULag* in 1973 and its translation in 1974. These events set off a profound *crise de conscience* among the French intellectuals.⁴ The publication of Solzhenitsyn's work in particular had such a shocking impact among the French intellectuals that, as Lévy puts it, it was "enough to immediately shake our mental landscape and overturn our ideological guideposts" (Lévy, 1977: 178). In the span of few years, intellectuals who once subscribed to Sartre's view on Marxism as the "unsurpassable horizon" of our time began to confess that Communist totalitarianism might fall within that horizon and not be a historical accident, which can be explained simply as a consequence of the bolsheviks' mistakes and the Stalinist deviations. Such a view is most eloquently expressed by Foucault in his review of Glucksmann's *Les Maîtres penseurs*, which was for Foucault himself a final settling of accounts with Marxism:

The whole of a certain left has attempted to explain the Gulag [...] in terms of the theory of history, or at least the history of theory. Yes, yes, there were massacres; but that was a terrible error. Just reread Marx or Lenin, compare them with Stalin and you will see where the latter went wrong. It is obvious that all those deaths could only result from a misreading. It was predictable: Stalinism-error was one of the principal agents behind the return to Marxism-truth, to Marxism-text, which we saw in the 1960s. If you want to be against Stalin, don't listen to the victims; they will only recount their tortures. Reread the theoreticians: they will tell you the truth about the true (Foucault, 1977: 84-85).

Such was, briefly, the context in which the *Nouvelle Philosophie* (the "New Philosophy") emerged in the mid 1970s.

II

The expression "nouveaux philosophes" (new philosophers) derived from the title of a dossier edited by Bernard-Henri Lévy in the literary weekly *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* in June of 1976, in which the collective noun referred to a number of young — and for the most part unknown — intellectuals including Lévy himself, Jean-Marie Benoist, Michel Guérin, Christian Jambet, and Guy Lardreau. The dossier consisted of articles presenting the views of

such young authors, interspersed with interviews or exchanges of letters with well-known figures such as Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes. In this way the impression was created that the *imprimatur* of the philosophico-literary establishment has been granted to the "new movement," which the dossier purported to herald. Lévy's introduction of the dossier aimed at producing maximum impact, giving the reader the sense that something original and exciting was happening in French Thought, and a number of theoretical points of reference were displayed: Foucault, Lacan, Heidegger, Nietzsche.

A month later, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, France's leading left-wing weekly, published a lengthy article by Petitjean (1976), in which a number of other young writers were launched as *new philosophers*, including Jean-Paul Dollé, André Glucksmann, Jean Baudrillard, Guy Hocquenghem, and Nikos Poulantzas. Although no reference was made in this article to Maurice Clavel, Gilles Susong, and Philippe Nemo, the latter were regarded no less as adherents to the *New Philosophy* than the other ones. Lévy emerged as the founder, the figurehead, and *de facto* spokesman of this shifting constellation, not least because most of the *new philosophers* were published in the 'Figures' and 'Théoriciens' series which he edited for Grasset.⁵

Although "new philosopher" was inevitably a somewhat fluid term, the authors who were self-styled the "nouveaux philosophes" moved rapidly to the center of attention, dominating public perception of the day and making headlines not only in France, but also in Germany, England, Italy, the United States, etc. For the rest of 1976 and the next year or so the *New Philosophy* truly became media property. Appearances on television and public debates were accompanied by a flood of press interviews, many in magazines not normally noted for their interest in philosophical issues, such as *Lui*, *Paris-Match*, etc. It seemed impossible to read a Parisian newspaper or to turn on the radio without finding some mention of the *Nouvelle Philosophie* (Macey, 1995: 382). Media exposure of the *New Philosophy* was so great as to lead to a new coinage: "pub philosophie"⁶ (from "publicité philosophie"), which might be translated as "ad-philosophy." In the summer of

1976, Paris was once again showing to be the city where fashion in the realm of ideas moves faster than anywhere else, as was earlier the case with the *Nouveau Roman*, the *Nouveau Cinéma*, etc.

Besides their young age, there were, basically, two things which the *new philosophers* had in common: first, they emerged from the same socio-political context; second, they shared certain political beliefs and philosophical assumptions. More specifically, the *new philosophers* shared a common past of Maoist *gauchisme*, and their actual nasty *anti-Marxism*. As Macey (1995: 382) rightly points out, to the extent that any unity can be found in the work of the somewhat disparate group of the *new philosophers*, it is "a negative unity centered upon a violent rejection of Marxism in all its forms." On a cynical view, such as that of Gilles Deleuze, the "varieties" of the *Nouvelle Philosophie* — Christian, leftist, liberal, Nietzschean — were simply "different ways of dressing up the same reactionary message so as to appeal to as many tastes as possible" (Deleuze, 1977).

Virtually all the *new philosophers* (except for Benoist) had a leftist past. They were veterans of the May '68 and former leftist militants, descending from different Maoist groups, which had formed after the May '68 events with the impetus of the mere elements from the sacred Althusserian ranks (Descombes, 1993: 134). Their biography of political militancy became an almost indispensable trade mark for the *new philosophers*, for it provided not only the authenticity of disillusionment in their denunciations of Marxism, but also served as a source of moral authority for their later pronouncements and provided their work with a vague aura of leftism (Dews, 1979: 130). For the media, the *new philosophers* belonged to a "lost generation," disillusioned by the fading of the dreams and expectations of the May '68, yet continuing to bear witness to the "inner truth" of that movement.

The extreme *gauchisme* of the *new philosophers*, which was tempered on the road from Althusser through a French-style Maoism was converted in 1974, under the impact of the Soviet and East European dissidents, into a frenetic *anti-Marxism*. For them, Marx and his holy

scriptures alone were to be held responsible for the Soviet labor camps and all the crimes committed by state socialism. This conviction became the central thesis of Glucksmann's *La cuisinière et le mangeur d'hommes* (1975), and was further expanded in his *Les Maîtres penseurs* (1977). For Glucksmann (1975: 40), there would have been "no Russian camps without Marxism." Communism, according to him, equals Nazism, for "a camp is a camp, be it Russian or Nazi" (Glucksmann, 1975: 37). Lévy, on his part, simply complied with Glucksmann's view when in his *La Barbarie à visage humain* — a patchwork of ideas borrowed from the writings of his associates which immediately became a best-seller — he wrote: "The Soviet camps, are Marxist, as Marxist as Auschwitz was Nazi" (Lévy, 1977: 181-182). All this, according to Lévy, became evident with Solzhenitsyn, whom Lévy called "the Shakespeare of our time," and "the Dante of our time."

We needed a *Divine Comedy* to represent Hell, the modern Hell of the Gulag, whose horrendous topography he [Solzhenitsyn] has outlined in book after book. Hence there was a chain reaction, first of all within reference to Marxism. It was enough that Solzhenitsyn *spoke for us* to wake up from a dogmatic sleep. All he had to do was to *appear*, and an all too long history finally came to an end: the history of those Marxists who, for thirty years, had been retracing the path of decadence in search of their guilty party, moving sorrowfully from the "bureaucratic phenomenon" to the "Stalinist deviation," from Stalin's "crimes" to Lenin's "mistakes," finally from Leninism to the blunders of the earliest apostles, going through the layers of the Marxian soil one by one, sacrificing a scapegoat at each step, but always preserving above suspicion the one he dares to denounce for the first time — the founding father in person, Karl Kapital and his holy scriptures (Lévy, 1977: 180).

Like Glucksmann, Lévy found that Foucault's description of the great confinement in his *Histoire de la folie* was applicable to the Soviet Union and, therefore, he called for "a Foucauldian analysis" of Soviet society. His animosity towards Marxism went so far as to even try to deny Marx's doctrine. "Marxism," Lévy (1979b: 66) wrote, "is but an idea of the Stalinists. It was Stalin himself who invented 'marxism-leninism' as such."

The advocacy of the *new philosophers* for

the Soviet dissidents and for Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* was so zealous that Deleuze, in a virulent pamphlet, expressed his disdain in the words that follow: "What disgust me is very simple: the new philosophers are creating a martyrology [...] feeding on corpses, blaming the inhabitants of the Gulag for not having "understood" earlier [...] If I belonged to an association, I would lay complaints against the new philosophers, who show rather too much scorn for the inhabitants of the Gulag (Deleuze, 1977). Other authors also criticized the *new philosophers* on similar grounds, pointing out that with their writings they only contributed to make the reality of Gulag a myth (Debray, 1977: 61).

III

Critics usually agree that the "shocking" novelty of the *new philosophers* consisted of the fact that they were a group of young intellectuals who were no longer prepared to dialogue with, or work within, the framework of Marxism but openly and frantically denounced it as a philosophy of domination (Dews, 1980: 2). For the *new philosophers* Marxism had proved incapable to explain the struggles and the sufferings of men at present days. Its theoretical tools could no longer work. Therefore, as Lévy (1977: 111) formulated it, it was "urgent to re-think the spectrum of our society, according to new guides, new systems of power, new orders of concepts."

The question for the *new philosophers* was not the critics of Marxism as philosophy and ideology and its rectification in the light of the new social realities. Their aim was rather the veritable liquidation of Marxism. Since 1970, Benoist had announced the "end" of Marxism in his book *Marx est mort*. After decades in which the vast majority of French intellectuals had almost unanimously adhered to Marxism, the attitude of the *new philosophers* seemed now to mark an important departure (Hirschhorn, 1978: 305). While the Paris events of May '68 had led to the "stagnation" of French Marxism, the advent first of the "philosophies of desire" (1970-5), and now of the *Nouvelle Philosophie* (1976-8) marked the "disappear-

ance" of Marxism, at least temporarily, from the field of discussion in France (Descombes, 1993: 129).

Be that as it may, the *new philosophers*, however, cannot be credited for originality with regard to their denunciation of Marx and Marxism. Anti-Marxism in French modern thought did not arise in 1977. Three decades before the *new philosophers* voiced their anger and repugnance against Marx, Marxism and the Soviet bureaucratic system, to which it was applied, were strongly denounced by Claude Lefort in his *Les Temps modernes* (1948), which, as is known, was written under the direct influence of Victor Kravchenko's book *I Chose Freedom*. Other important examples of earlier denunciation of Marxism in French modern thought include Raymond Aron's *L'Opium des intellectuels*, and Merleau-Ponty's *Les Aventures de la dialectique*.

As for the zealous ambition of the *new philosophers* to search for more adequate tools than those provided by Marxism with regard to a better understanding of the new social world, it proved quite unable to produce any coherent system of concepts and propositions. There was in the *New Philosophy* neither anything comparable to other philosophical schools (*i.e.* the Frankfurt school, Existentialism, or Phenomenology), nor were the *new philosophers* allied to one another through some kind of a common doctrine. One could argue, as Hirschhorn (1978: 302) does, for instance, that the *New Philosophy* was still, in 1976-77, "a school in the making." Even if we agree for a moment with such a claim, there is no doubt that the *New Philosophy* failed to emerge as a distinctive school of thought, regardless of the publicity and some praise it received at the outset. For, not only is there no common problematique in those few works – but numerous newspaper articles and interviews – produced by the *new philosophers* besides their vicious rejection of Marxism, but the content of their works is also as poor as it is eclectic. Garrigues (1977: 27) refers to Glucksmann's works as an example of philosophical eclecticism where Nietzsche, Wagner, Clausewitz, and Mao-Tse-Toung are all mixed up together. Dews (1980: 2), on his part, points out that the work of the *new philosophers*

is in fact an "ill-considered mélange of theories, attitudes, and responses, in which positions inherited from the post-'68 far-left mingle with themes which, under their veneer of novelty, can be seen to belong to the traditional repertoire of the Right." Old reminiscences of Althusserian Marxism and Maoism — although Marx, Althusser, and Mao were now rejected *en bloc* — were mixed up with a set of notions borrowed by Lacan, Kojève, Foucault, and Solzhenitsyn, who became their new "theoretical patrons." This resulted in an amalgam of beliefs, ranging from Lévy's nihilist spiritualism — at first of a moralistic form in his *La Barbarie à visage humain* and then with plain religious tones and references to the biblical heritage in his *Le Testament de Dieu* — to a sort of Lacanian christianism in the work of Philippe Nemo, and, furthermore, to gnosticism to be found in *L'agne* by Guy Ladreau and Christian Jambet (See Hirschhorn, 1978: 308; Descombes, 1993: 134). Deleuze, who criticized their work probably more severely than any other French scholar, defamed the *new philosophers* scorning them as "sophists" and "TV buffoons" who should be credited for nothing (Deleuze, 1977).

As was previously suggested, besides their admiration for Solzhenitsyn, the *new philosophers* were greatly influenced in their work by Lacan and Foucault. Lacan's work had been important for several generations of French intellectuals, including Merleau-Ponty, Jean Hyppolite, and Louis Althusser. Especially after the publication of his *Ecrits* in the late 1960s, Lacan became a truly central figure. The *new philosophers* made extensive use of Lacan's perception of science as an "ideology of the suppression of the subject," inflating it into an attack on the "authoritarianism" implicit in the rigor of scientific method. For Lévy (1977: 177), the totalitarian state means "scientists in power." "Total power," according to him, is synonymous with "total knowledge." The threat of totalitarianism is even greater when a society imposes the duty of "telling all." This is, in Lévy's view, the case with state socialism and its Marxist ideology, for by sanctifying "the Hegelian dream of the truth becoming the world and the world becoming the truth, [it] ends up

with an ideal which is [...] one of the definitions of modern tyranny" (Lévy, 1977: 141-142).

The theme of "power/knowledge" became central also in Glucksmann's *Les Maîtres penseurs*, in which he extended his criticism to what he called "the Revolution-State," arguing that all philosophers, without exception, display a will to domination, which explains their complicity with tyrants. In Glucksmann's (1977: 149) terms, "to dominate is to know; to know is to dominate." This is a vicious circle. And the circle of circles: "The master fabricates all the truth" (Glucksmann, 1977: 271). Glucksmann accused modern philosophy since Hegel of intellectual complicity in the violence of a history dominated by principles of the revolutionary state. Demonstrating such an understanding of the relation *pouvoir-savoir*, the *new philosophers* searched for the seeds of "totalitarianism" in the 1844 *Manuscripts* of the Young Marx and in Hegel's *Logic*. As Foucault (1977), who welcomed the publication of *Les Maîtres penseurs* puts it, Glucksmann's basic question is: "By what trick was German Philosophy able to turn Revolution into the promise of a true, a good state, and the State into the serene and complete form of Revolution?" Foucault himself, in his review of *Les Maîtres penseurs* endorsed Glucksmann's blanket condemnation of the hyphenated monster "State-Revolution," portrayed as inevitably devouring its own children (Foucault, 1977).

Glucksmann's and Lévy's views on the complicity knowledge/power, philosopher/tyrant, show how much the *New Philosophy* was influenced by Kojève's teachings, for it was Kojève (1954: 252), who wrote that there is no essential difference between the philosopher and the tyrant. The tyrant, according to Kojève, is never anything but a statesman attempting to realize a philosophical idea in the world. Since the truth of a philosophical notion is judged by its realization in history, the philosopher, Kojève argues, cannot reproach the tyrant for tyrannizing in the name of an idea, as is always the case with modern tyrannies, where those in power consistently claim to represent an ideology.

More directly, yet, the subject of knowledge-power relationship as it was thematised in the works of the *new philosophers* and their belief

in the inherent oppressiveness of reason seem to have been inspired by Foucault's early work *Madness and Civilization*, and even more importantly by his *Discipline and Punish*. For Foucault,

Power and knowledge directly imply one another [...] there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (1979: 27).

Ewald suggests a *reapproachment* between Foucault's and Glucksmann's ideas. Just as Foucault demonstrated that, in general, power produces knowledge, and knowledge in its turn reinforces power, so Glucksmann revealed Marxism to be "an extraordinary instrument of power, unbelievable principle of production, production of concentration camps, and production of camps as an apparatus of production, formidable principle of blindness, obliteration, prohibition, exclusion, and death" (Ewald, 1975: 1232).

Similar arguments were used by the *new philosophers* to "explain" the complicity of language and power domination. For Lévy (1977: 50), language is power. Moreover, language is the essence of power, and "grammar is the science of power." He writes:

There is an obvious relationship between the form of power and the shape of language, between the orders of a Prince and the images of a sentence [...] There is an idiomatic science of power, an algebra of domination, and there is no politics that is not first of all a linguistics [...] Speech is not as Aristotle proposed, a pacified space in which conflict can be expressed; neither is it, as the Marxists assert, a political instrument which oppressors and oppressed in turn make use of; nor is it even, as Foucault's followers say, a critical *stake* in the struggle for power. Language is simply power, the very form of power, entirely shaped by power even in its most modest rhetorical expression (Lévy, 1977: 48-50).

Although this is not a place to debate about Lévy's ideas on language/power relations, a number of questions come into mind instantly: Does the oppression of man by man and political domination coincide in time with the birth of human language? Has language ever contributed to the progress of society? How come that some societies have a more repressive state machinery than others even though they might use the same language? Can there ever be a so-

ciety free of exploitation and class domination while people will still speak the same language that they use today? With regard to these questions it is appropriate to remind the *new philosophers* the sarcastic words which Marx and Engels once attributed to the Young Hegelians:

They forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world (Marx and Engels, 1989: 41).

The rejection of the "white terror of theory" led the *new philosophers* to paradoxical attacks on science, particularly on human science, not because of the falsity of its discourse, but precisely because of its "truth". "We have lost all the respect for science," declared Lardreau (1974: 82). In Lévy's attack on Marxism, for instance — and this applies to the *Nouvelle Philosophie* as a whole — his ultimate argument is not that Marxism is a false theory of society and of political action, but rather that it is an all-too-accurate account of the coming fate of the West. In a bizarre sense, as can be found in the case of *L'Agne* by Lardreau and Jambet, Marxism is oppressive because it is "true," or at least represents the "untransversible philosophy of our time." In Lévy's (1977: 218) terms, "we are today enclosed within Marxism as Ptolemaic cosmologists were enclosed within their cosmology," so that to reply to Marxist theory with a counter-theory would only result in a lapsing back into the "discourse of the Master." According to Lévy, the protest against Marxism can only take a moral form; and in this, Solzhenitsyn has shown the way. Lévy writes:

the idea of an anti-Marxist politics is absurd, untenable, and a contradiction in term. Anti-Marxism is and can be nothing but the contemporary form of the fight against politics [...] For a long time to come, we are condemned to the language of *Capital* as long as we resign ourselves to play the game of politics [...] We no longer have a politics, a language, or a recourse. There remain only ethics and moral duty. There remains only the duty to protest against Marxism, since we cannot forget it (Lévy, 1977: 217-218).

IV

The *new philosophers* became very soon an object for both polemic and mockery. One year

after Lévy had announced the aurora of the *New Philosophy*, *Le Nouvel Observateur* published a "jeu-test," which proposed a series of multiple-choice questions to allow readers to conclude if they were "new philosophers." Anyone who could honestly claim to have rejected Althusser in the last year scored a maximum of three points; rejection of Foucault scored no points. The ideal "new philosopher" was someone who had at various times been an orthodox communist, a Maoist, and a militant catholic.

The *Nouvelle Philosophie* was a fashion in Paris. As such, it vanished quickly with the end of the season, which lasted for about two years. There was no longer any publicity for it; no important works written by any of its adherents; no serious reference made to them. Soon, the *new philosophers* were not even recalled anymore as if their *Nouvelle Philosophie* had never existed. Indeed, since 1977, when Lévy published his *La Barbarie à visage humain*, the French public was fed up with the "novelties" of the *New Philosophy* and the media fanfares. Commenting on this, Lévy would write with sadness and narcissism at the same time:

There is a strange discrepancy between the public that has been reached and the one that has been addressed, and some have to pay a heavy price for this. I know these books are read, but I also know that they carry no weight; they are foreign bodies for the official left, transplants that cannot be assimilated by its established institutions [...]. I don't think Glucksmann has persuaded anyone on the left, and not a single Marxist has been shaken by *Marx est mort*. This is a common occurrence in the history of ideas: Many significant ideas were rejected or ignored in their age, and always as a direct result of their critical and subversive force. The "nouveaux philosophes," since this is what they are called, have been misunderstood, incorrectly interpreted, and badly read. How could it be otherwise with a somnambulist and somehow stupefied left which is still rehearsing obscure debates about reform and revolution, and whose theoretical spectrum has not got beyond the sour polemics of Lenin and Hilferding? (Lévy, 1977: 209-210).

Marx est mort. Yet, he remains a central figure in contemporary dispute in the social sciences. This isn't true for the *new philosophers*, who, apart from their zealous ambition and self-aggrandizement proved unable to provide a coherent frame of reference for understanding the complexity of our society. Therefore, in the

history of modern thought the *Nouvelle Philosophie* occupies no place of honor. It failed to pass the test of time, though both the *social milieu* and the *time* in which the *New Philosophy* appeared, provided a rare historical chance for novelty in the realm of ideas.

NOTES

1. Most importantly in the form of Marxist existentialism and humanism as developed in the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as well as of a more orthodox Marxism championed by Louis Althusser in the early sixties.
2. A relevant literature on this issue includes: Cauté 1964; Lichtheim 1966; Poster 1975; Kelly 1982; Judt 1986, 1992.
3. It was only on the eve of his death in 1983, after French intellectuals had themselves abandoned Marxism, that Aron was "rediscovered" through the publication of a series of interviews and his own memoirs in the early eighties and his major works in philosophy, history, sociology, and social commentary began to be read more widely.
4. The signs of crisis in French Marxist thought appeared earlier. One of the events which bred such a crisis was the Korean conflict in 1950. For Merleau-Ponty it proved the imperialist nature of the Soviet Union, while for Sartre, it marked "the end of idealism" and the beginning of "realism". It was in the mid fifties when Merleau-Ponty, in his *Les Aventures de la dialectique* (1955) announced his renunciation of Marxism, writing that "There is not much point in trying Bolshevism all over again at the moment when its revolutionary failure becomes apparent. But neither is there much sense in trying Marx all over again if his philosophy is involved in this failure, or in acting as if this philosophy came out of this affair intact" (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:91). For Sartre, it was a few years later that in his *La Critique de la raison dialectique* (1960) he "settled the accounts" both with his own previous thought and with that of the Communists, who, he then believed, falsified "true Marxism" (Sartre, 1976:149-150).
5. Lévy himself admits that he became "a kind of sponsor, at least through publicity and editorial judgement" (Lévy, 1977:209).
6. Expression used by F. Aubral and X. Delcourt in their book *Contre la nouvelle philosophie*. Paris: Gallimard, 1977, chap. VII.
7. "Êtes-vous un 'nouveau philosophe'?" *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 1 August 1977, p. 46.

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