



## Interview on Lucien Goldmann

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*GG: In today's Academic landscape it's not easy to find researchers who work on Lucien Goldmann's thought or apply a goldmannian approach to their studies. This is especially true in the Anglophone world. I think that we can start our interview by asking you how you encountered Goldmann's work and what did it mean to your studies? How did it influence them?*

MZ: In 1970, as a student of world theater and a fledgling Marxist literary critic in the Comparative Literature Ph.D. program at the University of California at San Diego, I read Lucien Goldmann's *Le dieu caché* and became fascinated with what I considered the richest interpretation of a body of philosophical and literary work I had ever read. Soon after, as I busily applied my often critical understanding of Goldmann's method to Molière and other playwrights, I read that Goldmann had died suddenly in Paris, and with that my hopes of studying with him were dashed. By then, one of my key professors, Fredric Jameson had published *Marxism and Form* (1971) without a chapter dedicated to Goldmann and indicated his lack of enthusiasm for Goldmann's work; another UCSD professor, Herbert Marcuse, made his grudging assessment even at the time of Goldmann's death. All this, including my own growing appreciation of the qualities of Goldmann's approach, led me to the conclusion that I should write an extended study/critique of Goldmann's genetic structuralism and in effect compensate for what I considered Jameson's unjust and ill-considered exclusion — a virtual dismissal that seemed to be extending throughout the 1970s. So, I left my dramatic applications to one side and began devoting my time and energy to working through Goldmann's theory in a book-length text that could also serve as my doctoral dissertation emphasizing not so much his most famous book but the internal logic of his theories in relation to what I knew of and came to understand as Marxism and the re-articulation of his work in relation to new emerging constructs. I completed my dissertation, *Genetic Structuralism, Lucien Goldmann's Answer to the Advent of*



*Structuralism* (GSLGA 1975). During the late 1970s, I rewrote and published chapters I, II and III of that text, plus two bibliographical studies of Goldmann's critics and (written with Ileana Rodríguez) an extended review article of the translation of Goldmann's *Cultural Creation in Modern Society*. Finally, at the particular urging of Jameson, I wrote and published an essay on Goldmann's intellectual development and subsequent career that was supposed to (and now after so many years does) replace Chapter I of my dissertation and serve as the introduction to the full-scale book version I was attempting to write over the years and belatedly published in 2007, *Lucien Goldmann, Genetic Structuralism and Cultural Creation in the Capitalist World*.

Of course, Goldmann was important to me because in the late sixties in the wake of the student movement and the leftward uprisings impelled by the U.S. counter-culture combined with the anti-war movement and the uprisings in Prague, Paris and Mexico 1968. I was drawn more and more toward his later theoretical efforts as they related to transformations in capitalism and official communism and veered toward new working-class theory and market socialism. While he seemed less exciting and brilliant (too focused on supposed homologies and less on dialectical shifts and contradictions) than Sartre or Lefebvre, Adorno or Marcuse, less "scientific" than Althusser and his group, Eagleton and Zizek and Jameson himself, but he closer perhaps with his Pascalian wager to Ernst Bloch's philosophy of hope" – though at the same time more methodical and "totalistic" than many, and probably more applicable to literary studies than many of them. Much too Euro and gallo-centric for many of us, much too focused like Lukacs on high culture, he gradually lost out to anti-Hegelians, post-structuralists, postmodernists and post-colonialists, to Deleuze and Guattari, to Foucault, Lacan, to Derrida and Lyotard to Bourdieu, to Hardt and Negri, to gender theory, eco-theory, etc. and even to those perhaps more kindred spirits who in the English-speaking world turned to Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, the Anderson brothers, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and others drawing upon new post-Marxist interpretations of Gramsci to constitute new socio-historical analyses of culture and literature. Goldmann was subject to ridicule by Kristeva and the Tel-Quelers, his work was snubbed and ignored by countless pundits. Still his orientation and method linger in my work and in many who are perhaps a little embarrassed to recognize his influence. I don't regret having



turned to him and he remains a presence certainly in my work today, even after decades focused on Latin American and Latino concerns.

Over the years, as an emerging Latin Americanist, I found his insights valuable in thinking through the evolution and contradictions in national literatures and transnational transformations. I was able to apply his work in the early days of the Nicaraguan revolution and even do a reduced version of my research in a book in Spanish that resulted from a seminar I had given to professors at the Universidad Autonoma de Nicaragua. Later in my life I realized that as an Ashkenazi Jew with Romanian as well as Russian roots, I had unconsciously been drawn to him as a mode of self-identification. A few years ago, my wife and I traveled to Romania with copies of my book and also Mitchel Cohen's careful study of Goldmann's Romanian years, which I made available to national and synagogue libraries in Bucharest and other towns — above all the library in Goldmann's home town of Botasani. As I had imagined, with the near-total decimation of Romanian Jewry and the subsequent rejections of revisionist and then any socialist critique hardly anyone had heard of him, and no book or his was to be found. So I was happy to have conducted my almost silent work of recovery. And I of course can only applaud this effort to look at his contribution in the light of Fortini, only noting that my interpretation learned much more toward the theoretical coherence and less toward the poetic vision implicit in Goldmann's work which only a poet like Fortini could capture in his own rhapsodic way.

*GG: Do you think that Goldmann's jewish origins are something to take into consideration to fully understand his thought? In a book, Michael Löwy calls Goldmann a «juif hétérodoxe», but when I asked Jacques Leenhardt, he seemed a bit skeptical. What is your opinion?*

MZ: For MZ's memoir fiction, visit [marczimmerman.net](http://marczimmerman.net). One of the first things one may say with respect to Goldmann and “the Jewish Question” is the paucity of his writings on Jewish issues. Yet, as an Ashkenazi American Jew, it is very hard for me to avoid seeing Goldmann's Jewish roots, and the development of his thought in the framework of the left Jewish intelligentsia of Central Europe, the Nazi Period and of



course his maturity in the post-War years. In Sartre's short story, "Childhood of a Leader", the antisemitic protagonist argued that Jews could learn many aspects of French culture, but they could never understand Racine. Whether Goldmann ever read the story, or Sartre's writings on Jews and anti-semitism, he certainly sought to go to the core of French culture by taking on Jansenism in Pascal as well as Racine. Of course, Sartre himself had Jewish relatives in his closet, and so did another figure important to this question: Julia Kristeva. Speaking of her earlier sense of affinity with Goldmann as one of her key professors and thesis director, Kristeva explains that, recently arrived from Bulgaria, she found Goldmann's teachings a necessary pathway "for establishing an obviously dialectical relationship between fashionable structuralism and Hegel's philosophy [as] the foundation of Marxist ideology... Goldmann's thought, his foray into the world of Pascal, his reinterpretation of Hegel in light of Georg Lukács, the famous Hungarian philosopher and innovator of Marxism, were closer to my philosophical training in Bulgaria; his familiarity as a Romanian Jew, being both fraternal and paternal, in contrast to the usual reserved style of professors, seduced me just as much". Goldmann was totally supportive of his brilliant student, even when, under the influence of Barthes and others, she began to stray away from his frames. When, during her dissertation defense, Goldmann gently questioned his star student's growing emphasis on Freudian and structuralist theory, she lashed out at her loving professor, calling him "a 'Marxist moth ball, ... overwhelmed by History, who understood nothing about the Freudian revolution, [and] wanted to impose on us his repression". Kristeva produced a sardonic portrait of Goldmann (renamed Edelman) in her novel about the intellectuals of Paris 1968, *Les Samurais*, but she regretted her attack on him in front of his colleagues and characterized it as a form of "parricide". Lucien's eyes blurred with tears, she tells us.<sup>1</sup> When I read Kristeva's account, I could not help but see her struggle with Goldmann as a father-daughter story, recasting the final act of *Fiddler on the Roof*. As badly as his daughter broke with tradition and brought her father to tears, still he continued to promote her and, however reluctantly, praise her as she went on her way. Ironically, Goldmann-Tevya is a patriarch not of Judaism but of the Marxist tradition which, even in its progressive unorthodox version, was the very world view that Kristeva and so many other Central European cultural critics (many of

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<sup>1</sup> See : Julia Kristeva, *The Future of Revolt*, online: <http://www.kristeva.fr/the-future-of-a-revolt.html>



them Jewish) sought to break with as they inevitably rebelled against as they sought to leave Soviet authoritarianism and authoritarian Marxism behind them. Seen in this guise, I suppose it is not surprising to note that when I came to deal with “Goldmann and the Jewish question”, I found a journalistic article I vaguely remember now in which he is critical of Zionism — a matter plaguing the Jewish and non-Jewish leftists throughout the world. Left; and I also seem to remember similar issues coming up obliquely in Goldmann’s cursory critique of Genet’s *The Screens*. However, I was especially drawn to the essay Goldmann wrote on the Shtetl roots and development of Marc Chagall. I soon found that Jean-Michel Palmier had already suggested the Chagall article as a key text in understanding Goldmann’s own emergence from Central European Jewry and his movement from Romania and Vienna to Paris. And I sought to develop Palmier’s view in an essay I published in 1980 in which I tried to build on Palmier’s essay and make a case, supposedly in genetic structural terms, for Jewish dimensions in the evolving trajectory of his thought and life project. The first chapter of Mitchel Cohen’s excellent book, *The Wager of Lucien Goldmann: Tragedy, Dialectics, and a Hidden God* (Princeton U. Press 1994) provides the most complete study of Goldmann’s roots in Bucharest and Botosani, and details his participation in Jewish leftist Zionist polemics and in organizations such as Ha-shomer ha-Tsair in his early years. Cohen shows what I could only suggest--that when Goldman moved to Vienna, the majority of his contacts seems to have been with Jewish Austrian Marxists — above all Max Adler — who had a great influence on his approach to Kant, leading him in circuitous routes, above all to the influence of Lukacs’ early Hegelian, pre-Marxist writings (namely *The Theory of the Novel*, *The Soul and its Forms and History and Class Consciousness* and a forgotten but important extended essay on the development of European drama, which I believe influenced *Le dieu caché*). In dealing with Goldmann’s Jewish roots, Cohen himself takes up Goldmann’s essay on Chagall. His use of the essay is quite interesting. However, he fails to mention the fact that Palmier had already explored this theme, and he seems not to have known my own elaboration of Palmier — which is no surprise, since that elaboration appeared in a critical theory journal published in India. Here, I’ll simply stick to laying out the Palmier-Zimmerman critique for better or worse. For Palmier, Goldmann’s Chagall seeks totality and finds it in neither of the two social or political solutions, Socialism or Zionism posed to Jews in



the early days of the 20th century (“Socialism or Zionism”), but rather in the world of Western artistic culture. Goldmann argues that we must understand Chagall as an extreme representative of a broader social group, and in so doing, we may recognize that the investigator (in this case, Goldmann himself) is part or somehow in partial identity with the object he seeks to study. Aside from any “objectivity” Goldmann’s view of Chagall may have, that view may tell us as much about Goldmann the investigator as it does about Chagall. Indeed, as Palmier points out, Goldmann himself confessed that his comprehension of the global structures of Chagall work had been facilitated by his personal knowledge of the milieu of Chagall’s youth. When reading Goldmann’s study, Palmier is struck by “an astonishing meeting between a rigorous, structural approach and an intuitive comprehension of Chagall’s canvases, at least of an astonishing erudition. I believe it is impossible to understand the figures and symbols of Chagall’s paintings so well if one has not lived in the same world as he. Indeed, this study of Chagall provides us with the occasion to make some biographical determinations (an approach Goldmann supposedly eschewed) which, I believe, greatly clarify Goldmann’s own work Chagall (GV 603)”. According to Palmier, Goldmann’s collaborator and wife, Annie Goldmann, a cinema sociologist of Algerian and Tunisian Jewish descent, confirmed for Palmier the similarities between the early environments of Chagall and Goldmann. While his milieu was not as impoverished as Chagall’s, Goldmann became very familiar with rural Jewish life through his upbringing in Botosani. “Although profoundly assimilated and atheistic, Goldmann had an admirable knowledge of Yiddish culture and the poetry of Yiddish tales”, says Palmier. The estrangement between peasant and Jewish communities, the particular Goyim and Jewish trades, all those figures that haunt the village and the imagination of Jewish children and that are central to Chagall’s images and significations made their early impression on Goldmann’s thought. .... (ibid.)”. Of course, some of the most problematic qualities of Goldmann’s work stem from his application of the German philosophical tradition as reinterpreted by such secularized Jews as Marx, Max Alder and George Lukács, to a vision of capitalist social and cultural developments that becomes increasingly “Gallo-centric”. Goldmann’s ultimate emphasis on French images and concerns may be imputed to a foreigner’s “over-adjustment” to his adopted national environment. But if we are to trace any basic categories of his thought or his interests to



his Jewish roots, we must do so understanding that the prime point of such an endeavor must be to explain how the Jewish influence is constituted as a virtual absence whose presence may only be perceived through the concrete matters that influence may pressure into place. Here is where Isaac Deutcher's perhaps overly simplistic notion of "the non-Jewish Jew" steps in. Goldmann's Jewishness is first characterized by his intellectual rejection of Jewishness, by a virtually complete transposition of rural Jewish preoccupations to secular, cosmopolitan political and cultural categories. And in this regard we may also note that some of his greatest early achievements are in the development of a Marxist history of religious thought, which like the interpretations of Engels, Weber and Tawney, centers on how supposedly religious-based categories express secular and social forces. Palmier's Goldmann, like Goldmann's Chagall, is caught initially in the Jewish / Christian and Jewish middle class / Christian peasant dichotomies so strong in a rural market center like Botosani. Like many Jews of his time, he leaves his rural home town and journeys to the cities. Gradually moving west, he seeks to break out of the dichotomy by taking on those dominant cosmopolitan values (German and then French) which maintain the Jewish aspiration to community, but which transcend Jewish isolation by aspiring to a universal humanism. Chagall opposed his Jewish isolation through a journey to Paris and the creation of a sublimated peasant world in art; he recuperated Jewish aspirations to a global and cosmic vision beyond Central European enclosure through the content and form of his paintings. Separated from his Romanian rural and urban roots, Goldmann chose a Marxist universal collectivity, recuperating the will to community nurtured in his Romanian Jewish background, through a linkage to a troubled, endangered aspiration toward totality which he found in marginal Christian and philosophical currents in the course of Western development. Goldmann's Chagall may choose the world of art, but the historical Chagall finds his final reconciliation in Zionism. Goldmann found drama and literature his world view remains "Jewish", it expresses that tendency of secular Jewish thought, which looks with hope toward a radical social community, purged of old world divisions and prejudices. Chagall's hope in a private creative world finds its concrete social correlative in the Jewish state; Goldmann's project is the secular Jewish European longing for integration, but, as he seems to have abandoned his early hope in a left Zionism, his mature thought is marked by the need for a new revolutionary



framework, and by wariness over how that framework may be losing its intended purpose and showing its incapacity to generate the hoped-for new world. In effect, Goldmann comes to share many of the qualities distinguishing the radical, cosmopolitan German-Jewish, intelligentsia. And yet he always establishes his distance even from others. Can it be any surprise then that so many Goldmann commentators stress the theme of his exile even during the period of his relative fame and integration into left intellectual circles? To be sure, the ability of the cosmopolitan-oriented Jew from Central Europe to think Totality on Marxist and socialist terms was both spurred and inhibited by the concrete circumstances of their time and place. Jewish isolation merely intensified his search for community. Having rejected his own community, he sought another, more universal one. The socialist solution was appealing, but he often encountered social divisions and prejudices carried over into the day-to-day life of socialist groups. He also found himself estranged by background from the proletarian or peasant work world, so that his socialism tended to be abstract, “pure” intellectual and idealistic. Finally, he inclined to feel more at home in Western Europe, where Jews at least seemed less parochial, where he had a soon-dispelled illusion that Jews would less subject to the immediate force of anti-Semitism, and where he could seek entry into dominant European cultural forms and polemics. Chagall depicts his marginality to the Russian Revolution, and industrial workers rarely appear in his paintings. We may see a similar pattern in Goldmann’s work. The Russian Revolution awakened the young Goldmann to Marxism. But the disturbing fate of many Jewish leftists and the certain policies during the Stalin era would help separate Goldmann from the Russian experience. This separation would be accentuated by his move to the West. As a cosmopolitan Marxist intellectual increasingly opposed to Soviet theory and practice, Goldmann makes his break with the work of Lukács to the point where it expresses the views of the Third International. That is, Goldmann’s Marxism is marked by Lukács’ aspirations toward the “human community” but he refuses those tendencies leading toward support of the Soviet Union. Goldmann’s experiences in the work world during his early days in Paris were marginal, provisional ones, which seem to have spurred him all the more toward an intellectual transcendence that combined some of the benefits of bourgeois society with a stance of opposition. Goldmann would take his place in a left elite removed from the world of mechanical routine, and with doubts about the ability of





workers to think Totality in advanced capitalism. The “chosen people” would be a “new working class” of students and “middle strata” professionals (plus the most advanced workers and members of exploited and marginal groups) - i.e., members of Goldmann’s own broadening group, opposed to the dominant order, but directing their efforts to a less alienating future. These are among the dominant characteristics of Goldmann’s journey west. But this journey toward liberation from the world of rural Jewry turns into a nightmare with the rise of Hitler. The radical Jewish intellectual seems exiled from the left and the right. Virtually all of Goldmann’s mature formation as a Marxist occurs in the shadow of Hitler and Stalin; it is only in the post-war context, with the defeat of Hitler and with the gradual development of a modern non-Stalinist Marxist humanism, that Goldmann’s mature career may unfold. Clearly the oppositions found in Goldmann’s work are not “real” but ideological. His thought attempts to mediate between these oppositions and attempts to sublimate them. He seeks a human community, but, one in which the individual finds ample space. Hence his rejection of Stalin, his later interest in new working class self-management and “market socialism”. In a sense, Goldmann is heir to the historical Jewish ties with the Enlightenment thought (the tradition of Spinoza and Moses Mendelssohn), and hence to rationalism as a prime bulwark in the Jew’s, opposition to anti-Semitism, in a secularizing (and anti-Hassidic) Jewish distrust of the irrational and occult. But Goldmann is also heir to the tradition which places rationalism and its continuation in positivism as a non-transcendent “worldview” of domination corresponding to bourgeois power. Thus he seeks to link aspects of the individualist, existentialist revolt against rationalism to those strains in the Enlightenment which come to synthesis in Kant and which lead to a dialectical totalization in Hegel, Marx and the early Lukács. He rejects bourgeois nationalism and Zionism, and he rejects capitalism; but he also rejects official socialism to the degree that it threatens to cancel the human aspirations embodied (however, distortedly and formally) in the French “Declaration of the Rights of Man”. In short, he rejects the East’s despotic and anti-Semitic traditions and the West’s capitalist cooptation of its most emancipatory impulses and its lesser and deeper turns to the right. I do not wish to imply any ultimate reduction of Goldmann’s theory to his Jewishness or his class interests. Clearly these matters are involved, but what’s at stake is a question of what he would consider “partial identity”. The oppositions generated in Goldmann’s village



youth seem to establish the basis of his search for a human community, as they both project and condition the subsequent stages of his development.<sup>2</sup>

GG: *You mentioned earlier the critics on Goldmann proposed by Fredric Jameson (you talk more extensively about it in your book). Can you explain Jameson's position on goldmannian Marxist theory?*

MZ: First, it should be remembered that Jameson's reaction to Goldmann came at an early stage of his development as the leading literary Marxist in the U.S. and years before his major contribution - the tying of Lyotard's view of postmodernism with Ernest Mandel's theory of late capitalism - that is, the development of his Marxist critique of modernity and postmodernity. The initial reaction (which persisted and was to become entrenched over the next several years) was articulated around 1970, when, with Herbert Marcuse, Tony Wilden, Alain Cohen and Claudio Guillen as immediate colleagues at the U. of California San Diego, Jameson made the leap from his early work on Sartre, to his two most important early books, *Marxism and Form* and *The Prisonhouse of Language*. In those books, there are hardly any comments on Goldmann but rather a few rather snide remarks. When, as a beginning student in his seminar on Lukacs and Marx, I asked Jameson why he had not sought to write a chapter or speak well of Goldmann, he told me that Goldmann was a tepid thinker mechanically applying a rather outmoded pre-marxist theoretical construct to literary and philosophical works, relating, say, Racine and Pascal and the philosophical and religious constructs related thereto by means of mechanical homologies which failed to account for the dialectical differences governing all phenomena and the very categories and spheres to which they corresponded. This I took to be his own Althusser-based attack on the reduction of all as part of an «expressive totality» which failed to account the structural efficacy or relative autonomy of superstructures and their constant contradictory differentials. In effect, homology was the fundamental, tired dimension of Goldmann which came out most explicitly in his *Sociologie du roman* but which that volume made him revealed to be existent even in his best book, *Le dieu cache*.

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Zimmerman, «Lucien Goldmann: Biography, Ideology and Politics in the Genesis of Genetic Structuralism», in *International Journal of Critical Sociology*, 4, Jaipur, India, pp. 27-67.



Goldmann, he believed was trapped in the episteme of Austrian Marxism's Kantian categories, unable to transcend them as he believed Lukacs did through a thorough application of Hegel and thus unable to then go beyond Hegel to the structuralist positions which Althusser then married to his own version of Marxist theory. To him, then Goldmann's theory of relationship was mechanical, reductionist and «without dialectical shock» - which for Jameson was the key to the analytical brilliance he found in Adorno, Benjamin, Horkheimer, Marcuse and other key figures of the Frankfurt school. So, Jameson much preferred Lefebvre's treatment of Pascal and Barthes' treatment of Racine, both of which he found to be strikingly original. So too, he found the *Sociologie du Roman* to be a disastrous re-thinking of Lukacs's *Theory of the Novel*, and even worse, a reductive failure which failed to take into account the dialogical dimensions of Bakhtine, to say nothing of that move toward the carnivalesque which made Bakhtine so attractive to Kristeva and other intellectuals emerging in the 1970s. In effect, Jameson felt that Goldmann's theories, for all their Marxist trappings, failed to find the nexus between material processes and thought, and between ideas in relation to literary structures, and led to a rehashing of Dilthey's world views and an old-fashioned history of ideas. When I informed Jameson of my decision to write on Goldmann and show that he himself was being condemned by homology when he in fact his best work was marked by a search for partial identities and fissures - elements of de-reification if you will - in structural relations allowing for shifts, genesis, contradiction, praxis and change, he welcomed my effort, but warned it would take a very careful nuanced reading, and suggested that I might find the root of the question not only in his later answer to structuralist theories (including the search for multiplicity, micro-structures, partial identities, etc. but in the influence of Austro-Marxism. Taking up this path was difficult for one with my own limited theoretical backgrounds; it took some time for me to grasp this matter even minimally, and years to convert my dissertation into a book. During this same period, as I moved from European problematics and became a Latin Americanist, i began to feel that the Marxist literary theory I was learning, whether Goldman and Lukaces on French and German literature, Althusser on Strehler and Brecht, or Jameson on the *Political Unconscious*, was too centered on high culture and that a turn to Gramsci and popular culture was essential for a kind of post-Marxism (read Laclauian) that could speak to broader processes that would be important in



understanding what Raymond Williams had referred to the progressive and regressive or vestigial dimensions of culture and history. In effect, for me, Gramsci and not Goldmann was the primary lack, or missing link, in both Jameson and, yes, Goldmann.

GG: *In the last part of his Life, Goldmann often refers to a Number of italian authors, Vittorio Foa and Bruno Trentin in particular. What can we Say about Goldmann's involment in the italian political debate in the 60's?*

MZ: I'm no authority on any of these matters, and only know of Foa and Trentin through what Goldmann, Serge Mallet, my friend and Italianist guide, Alessandro Carrera have written. Of course. the internet provides much information on both figures. However, with respect to your question, I believe Carrera's response might be a good place to start. So he writes to me as follows: Vittorio Foa and Bruno Trentin ... had one thing in common; they were neither Marxist nor Communists, yet they were prominent figures ... to the left of the Communist Party. Jewish-Italian Vittorio Foa was a member and a House Representative of the Socialist Party for several years. That was after *Partito d'Azione* ceased to exist in 1947. *Partito d'Azione* was mainly a party of liberal intellectuals. They had a pivotal role in the Resistance against Fascism and in the aftermath of WWII, but soon they were crushed by the combined forces of the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats (the whole story is told in *The Watch* by Carlo Levi). Foa moved further and further to the left and in fact, left the Socialist Party in 1964, when it formed a "center-left" government coalition together with the Christian Democrats. After that, the events of 1968 «radicalized» him. He went from progressive-liberal movements (*Giustizia e Libertà*, *Partito d'Azione*) to the so-called "extraparliamentary left" His idea was to convince the most restless factions of the young extreme left to abandon their revolutionary dreams and give life to a seriously leftist government. In his final years, he was a senator for the Communist Party, but he made clear that he «was not and had never been» a Marxist. He took some extreme positions but in the end he was a luminous and well-respected figure.

Carrera has much less to say about Foa's colleague, Bruno Trentin, who was a key figure in the Fiat strike of the late 60s, adding only this short note: Trentin was never a member of the Socialist Party. He was in the Communist Party for a while, and was



closer to the official left, but his real career was in the workers' union and for several years he was the very effective head of CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana dei Lavoratori), the leftist workers' union. Then he adds a final thought: “I am surprised that Goldmann read them”.

Of course, Goldmann was a Romanian Jewish "other" in Paris whose complemented his initial German-centered intellectual formation by *Frenchifying* (choosing Pascal and Racine as his route), but he was often open to other influences. He was part of that sector in Paris that sought new theoretical strands coming from east and south of Paris and Germany. An enthusiastic participant of the summer conferences sponsored by the new left Praxis group on the island of Kurcula, now part of Croatia, he certainly knew about and admired those who wrote about the new working-class and auto-gestion movements which he perhaps misguidedly related to an idealized view of Tito's market socialism. In the last decade of his life, he had moved very far from the traditional left and participated enthusiastically in Paris 68.

I recall little mention in his work of Italian Marxist theorists — little or no reference to Labriola, Gramsci, Colletti, Della Volpe, Luperini or even Crispini whose book on Goldmann was published in Naples in 1970. But he was undoubtedly aware of the tensions developing from Italy's modernization in the 50s and 60s - the rise of left terrorism, the Aldo Moro affair, the Fiat strike and other worker stoppages, as well as all the events of 1968-69 that would culminate in the political and ideological conflicts shaking up the left especially in the “hot autumn” of 1969. All this he saw in relation to his growing conceptualization of organized capitalism” and the struggle against reification he began to posit early in the 60s under the influence of Serge Mallet, Andre Gorz and Allain Touraine. In fact, in *La création culturelle dans la société moderne*, he directly cites works by these figures, in relation to articles by Foa and Trentin, which appeared in French translation in the same September-October 1962 issue of *Le Temps Modernes* (Foa, «Les luttes ouvrières dans le développement capitaliste» and Trentin, «Les doctrines néocapitalistes et l'idéologie des forces dominantes») under the supervision, I believe of Serge Mallet, the key figure involved in Goldmann's developing critique of possible resistance in modern society and a thinker with a special interest in relating the French PSU with the PSIUP.



One Brazilian commentator, Celso Federico, sees Goldmann's Italian turn as related to his own reaction to the events of Paris 1968: [Goldmann sees] May 1968 as having shattered the belief in the stability of the bourgeois order and in the promise of total control with organized capitalism ... excited with the overturn, attended one of Lacan's lectures in which the renowned psychoanalyst argued on how "in 68, the structure has descended from the streets".

Outraged, Goldmann answered saying that what we had on the streets were people in flesh and blood... From then on, Goldmann worked to reestablish his intellectual project and go back to the matter of the subject. As he read the works from theorists in the field of sociology of work, as those of André Gorz, Bruno Trentin and Serge Mallet, became interested in the process of emergence of the new working class, which fought not only for salary improvement but that in 68 manifested in favor of self-regulation. This section of society fought for a meaning to their work.<sup>3</sup>

As far as connections to Fortini are concerned, clearly both he and Foa were members of the *Partito d'Azione*. To this I would also add, then, reference to an article by Valerio Strinati.<sup>4</sup> This article relates Foa and Trentin to the overall context of the Italian left, including Fortini. I should add, however, that what I have read of Fortini leads me to believe that he is interested in Goldmann as a general thinker in relation to left existentialist questions of liberty and worker democracy rather than in relation to specific theories of worker self-management.

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<sup>3</sup> Frederico Celso, «Quem fala na criação cultural? Notas sobre Lucien Goldmann», in *Matrizes*, ano 5, n. 2 Jan./June 2012, São Paulo, pp. 181-194. <https://www.revistas.usp.br/matrizes/article/view/38332/41191>

<sup>4</sup> Valerio Strinati, «La Sinistra Italiana Di Fronte Alle Trasformazioni Del Capitalismo (1953-1963)», in *Studi Storici*, vol. 33, n. 2/3, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, 1992, pp. 555-582. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20565517>