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## Adam Schaff (1913-2006)

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The International Erich-Fromm-Society reminds of a philosopher, who was connected about humanistic socialism to Erich Fromm. Prof. Dr. habil. Adam Schaff was born in Lemberg on March 10th, 1913, and died in Warsaw on November 12th, 2006. He was a Polish Marxist philosopher of Jewish origin.

At the beginning he was representing an orthodox Marxist philosophy with a main emphasis on epistemology. From the middle of the sixties he increasingly contributed to a democratic and humanist and finally represented an Eurocommunism with basic approaches to a critical view of globalization.

Adam Schaff studied law and economics in Paris at the Ecole des Sciences Politiques et Economiques, philosophy in Poland and Russia and worked about epistemology and semiotics.

From 1941 he stayed in Moscow, where he got a doctorate in philosophy from the local university in 1945 and qualified himself as university lecturer. In the years 1944 to 1946 he worked in the Polish editorial office of Radio Moscow. He returned to the University of Warsaw in 1948 and became director of the Institute for Philosophy and Sociology. He worked in Vienna later, too.

After Stalin's death in 1953 Schaff joined the humanistic and anthropological school of Leszek Kolakowski, which was orientated to philosophical existentialism and phenomenology. This school assumed that the subject of philosophy should be man and his actions.

In his later contributions Schaff attempted to bring together the historical determinism of the Marxist theory with Sartre's existentialism,

which is an indeterministic philosophy. To be able to make his life and history consciously and in freedom, man must recognize how he is determined socially.

Adam Schaff was the only well-known Marxist with academic background in Poland during the postwar period. In the initial phase of his work he was regarded as an admirer of the work of Josef Stalin. After his return to Poland in 1955 he became a member of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (the communist party of Poland) to which he belonged till 1968. He got the first Polish professorship for Marxist philosophy at the University of Warsaw in 1948. In the time from 1952 to 1953 he was director of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Warsaw University. At the same time he was the main-ideologist of the communist party of Poland. In this position he represented at first orthodox Marxist views. In 1956 he was appointed as member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Since 1963 he directed a sociological institute in Vienna. In 1965 he published his book "Marxism and the human individual" with which he moved away from the orthodox Marxist opinion and conceded that also in socialist societies alienation keeps on existing. In the course of these modifications he got the reputation to be a revisionist of Marxism. His book about the human individual was introduced by Erich Fromm. He was in personal contact with him since 1964. In particular he regarded Fromm's theory of the social character as an innovative enlargement of the historical materialism.

In 1966 Schaff opened a controversial dis-



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cussion about a revised Marxism at highest party level. In the course of extensive modifications in party and politics he was removed in 1968 from the CC of the Polish United Workers' Party and dismissed from teaching at university. In 1969 he became member of the Club of Rome. Since 1972 he was guest professor of social philosophy at the University of Vienna, but was not appointed there as professor. He was honorary doctor of the universities of Nancy, Paris (Sorbonne) and Ann Arbor (Michigan).

For a while he was a decided critic of the labor union Solidarnosc. Opposite the politics of the Polish labor union movement he showed himself sceptically and even suggested Wojciech Jaruzelski for the Nobel Peace Prize.

After the imposition of the state of emergency 1981 in Poland, Adam Schaff, due to his system criticism, was excluded as a deviant from the Polish United Workers' Party. He was rehabilitated, however, a short time later.

After the radical social changes of the year 1989 Schaff remained faithfully to his Marxist world view and kept on representing furthermore democratic socialism as an alternative to capitalism. Even after socialism had collapsed in the eastern states, Schaff did not regard the Marxist theory as disproved. He trusted in democratic socialism being able to remove the structural causes of starvation and unemployment, and believed that mankind's future might depend on the realization of socialist ideas.