LUKÁCS, György (April 13, 1885, Budapest – June 4, 1971, Budapest)

György Lukács was a Hungarian philosopher and literary critic. Born into a wealthy Jewish family, he spent his youth in Berlin and Vienna studying German philosophy. As a Marxist revolutionary, he was involved in the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919). After a noted essay on the *Theory of the Novel* (1920) inspired by Hegel, Lukács published *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), which countered the deterministic Marxism typical of the Second International with a neo-Hegelian view of the proletarian revolution. He emphasized class-consciousness and spontaneous mass action over the mechanistic “laws of capitalism” set forth by Engels. Pilloried by Bolsheviks and German Social-Democrats alike, and later repudiated by its author, this seminal work inspired much of interwar Western Marxism just as Lukács changed course philosophically to justify Leninism. Exiled from Austria in 1930, he lived in Moscow until 1945, in Budapest thereafter, always aligning his intellectual output with the Communist party line. Lukács sided with Imre Nagy in the 1956 insurrection but was rehabilitated in the aftermath on mere self-criticism. *The Historical Novel* (1937) remains a key reference in literary studies. *The Destruction of Reason* (1954) is a critique of philosophical “irrationalism” beginning with Schopenhauer, intended as a defense of socialist realism.

Bibliography: Arpad Kadarkay, *Georg Lukács: Life, Thought and Politics* (Blackwell, 1991).

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