

Review essay

**The alternative in Eastern Europe at century's start:
Brzozowski and Machajski on intellectuals and socialism**

MICHAEL D. KENNEDY

Department of Sociology, University of Michigan

To consider and to compare the lives and writings of Stanisław Brzozowski (1878–1911) and Jan Waław Machajski (1866–1926) in the aftermath of the recent East European revolutions is important for both Western and East European theorists, although for quite different reasons.¹

It is unfortunate how unfamiliar social theorists and philosophers from Western Europe and even more so North America are with the East European critical intellectual legacy. Debates among leading East European communist intellectuals are usually part of the Western critical repertoire, and occasionally some anarchist contributions might inform Western thinking. But it is relatively rare to find theorists such as Machajski and especially Brzozowski in the bibliographies of Western products, even while the experiences of Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. are becoming the stock of what transforms the critical perspective. This, I believe, is a major handicap for the analysis of socialism, as the issues that are central to the problem of socialism – the relationship between intellectuals and other classes on the one hand, and on the other the relationship between class and nationality – are dealt with in a more sustained manner by East European than by other intellectual cultures. I shall return to this claim in the conclusion of this essay, but it might be an argument difficult to sustain with East Europeans today as the Polish critical legacy pales in the light of the anglo-amerimania of contemporary Eastern European intellectual culture.

One will not find many intellectuals focusing on Machajski and Brzozowski in Poland today. Indeed, Machajski has never really been much of a part of Polish intellectual culture, given his anti-intellectual and anti-national stance.² Brzozowski is periodically fashionable in Polish culture, but at the present he is quite invisible in intellectual life.

Anglo-Saxon philosophy is hegemonic in most intellectual centers, as in the newly created Institute of Political Philosophy in Warsaw. The Anglo-Saxon emphasis on liberty and the market has supplanted traditional East European philosophical concerns with national and class identities. But this very emphasis is making philosophy and social theory themselves seem increasingly unimportant in comparison to economics and business management expertise, as so many East Europeans take the lesson from this shift to be that United States “can do” free-market pragmatism will solve post-communist problems.

This is a peculiar moment, and it seems quite unlikely that the Anglo-Saxon tradition will retain its hegemonic position as the difficulties of transition continue, and resentment against foreign influence grows. Indeed, the problems on which Machajski and Brzozowski concentrated will be the problems that return with a vengeance in post-communist society, and to which East European intellectuals must return. The contributions by Brzozowski and Machajski will be important then to reconsider, even if they prove to be of quite unequal value.

Until recently, however, this turn would be a privilege limited to those fluent in Polish and Russian. Even if most of their original writings are still untranslated, thanks to the efforts of Marshall Shatz, Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and Andrzej Walicki, Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame, the English speaking world at last has book-length monographs on Machajski and Brzozowski.³ In this essay, I draw upon these works to establish the major themes of each Polish theorist, and offer a comparison and consideration of their potential contributions to recent debates on intellectuals and socialism. This essay is directed primarily toward Western theorists, as they are more likely to be unfamiliar with the themes raised by Machajski and Brzozowski. But given the direction of intellectual developments, this essay might not be entirely without merit for discussion within the East European milieu too.

On Machajski

Of the two, Machajski has received more interest in the English language world. In *Telos*, for instance, Alvin Gouldner’s 1976 work⁴ was informed by Machajski’s ideas even if he was obliged to depend heavily on brief excerpts in an edited collection and on Machajski’s second-hand promotion by former disciple Max Nomad. A more recent *Telos*

debate sharply contested the anti-democratic legacy of Makhaevism and of its linkage to fascism and Stalinism itself.⁵ Too, Ivan Szelenyi⁶ noted explicitly that his own ideas follow in the tradition established by Machajski. In general, it seems that if the Western anti-Bolshevik, non-anarchist Left wanted to trace their ideas to an East European intellectual from the turn of the century, Machajski is ideal. After all, he devised “the first systematic theory of socialism as the ideology not of the proletariat but of a new class of aspiring rulers,”⁷ even if he did manage to finish his days working for the Bolshevik regime as a copy editor, having become a member of the very class “against whom his entire political thought had been directed.”⁸ And unlike his uncompromising critique of the ideology, Machajski ultimately found Bolshevik rule disappointing but better than any of the available alternatives, and certainly better than counterrevolution.⁹

Machajski's ideas are relatively simple, even if his biography is typically complicated for that part of the world. Although born a Pole, his mature intellectual and political life centered in the Russian world. Except for his last major work, “An Unfinished Essay in the Nature of a Critique of Socialism,” Machajski wrote his main contributions in Russian, and his political movement, the Workers' Conspiracy, operated principally in the Russian parts of the empire. After being expelled from Austrian Poland in 1891, he travelled among Polish emigre circles in the West until returning to Russian Poland in 1892, whereupon he was arrested and imprisoned in Warsaw and in St. Petersburg for three years, and finally exiled to Siberia for five years. Except for a brief period after the 1905 revolution, Machajski never again involved himself in Polish politics.¹⁰

In Siberia Machajski began his major work, *The Intellectual Worker*. That and a May Day manifesto printed in 1902 in Irkutsk contain Machajski's basic ideas, something Shatz calls “Makhaevism.”¹¹ Shatz does an admirable job of presenting Machajski's ideas, and my summary of it necessarily simplifies his explicative efforts. But to offer such a summary is less difficult in Machajski's case than in Brzozowski's, given that the ideas of the former did not change so much over his longer life. There was only one important shift. He began the essay, “The Evolution of Social Democracy,” believing that the parliamentary turn of the German Social Democrats was merely a tactical error, which his persuasion could overcome. But by the end of that essay, he believed he had found a more fundamental problem in the movement.

Socialists were mistaken in thinking the only enemy of the proletariat to be the owners of capital; instead, it was “the whole mass of privileged employees of the capitalist state: lawyers, journalists, scholars.”¹² And that means that many of the social democrats themselves were the proletariat’s enemy, for they belonged to the class of intellectual workers who sought to improve their position in the capitalist system through the socialist movement but at the workers’ expense.¹³ Their class interest was to preserve their hereditary monopoly on education, which was also a source of workers’ exploitation. Only physical labor, Machajski believed, could create value, and thus intellectual workers lived off the net national profit created by workers.

The solution to this principal problem of exploitation lay in socialization not only of the means of production but also of knowledge, which Machajski understood as the assurance of equal educational opportunity through the provision of economic equality. The working class could realize this for their children if not for themselves by remaining in a state of permanent opposition, striking for higher pay until their wages were that of the intellectual worker. This utopia of the socialization of knowledge, writes Shatz, is quite vague, but it gave Makhaevism a distinctive mark among contemporary Russian revolutionary ideologies. This was because it fully embraced the industrial era while at the same time finding manual labor degrading and intellectual work humanity’s distinctive attribute. Thus, universal education, rather than socialization of the means of production, became the definition of the alternative, and the strike for material equality became the means to realize it.¹⁴

Given this conflict of interests between intellectual and manual worker, it became very important for Machajski that the working class be organized on its own, and not led by intellectuals. Above all, it should not adopt some class consciousness or social ideals brought from without, and give up its own basic feelings and resentments. The revolution should be akin to the slave revolt, a violent uprising of the outcasts of the urban world, the unemployed worker-peasant.¹⁵ These ideas finally found their organizational form in the Workers’ Conspiracy, whose activities peaked in 1906 in Odessa but faded in the Russian empire by 1907. Although the movement could draw upon widespread workers’ resentment of intellectual workers, of the “white hands,” it failed to offer any constructive alternative to the other dominant revolutionary currents available, and thus Shatz explains the movement’s failure.¹⁶

Machajski's ideas are part of a substantial East European tradition of debate about the appropriate role of the intelligentsia in politics. Shatz situates Machajski's ideas in the principal Russian debates¹⁷ as well as in reference to Marxism and anarchism, in particular Bakunin's ideas. Machajski himself strived to distinguish his ideas from the Russian anarchist, although they were quite similar in their common critique of socialism as the ideology of intellectuals and their common belief in the universal insurrection. But unlike Bakunin, Machajski focused on the intelligentsia, believed the state necessary, emphasized the urban world, continued class analysis, and above all insisted that he was not an anarchist. But perhaps that very insistence suggests the ultimate similarity in politics and outlook that, if not Machajski, his followers and the anarchist movement shared.¹⁸

On Brzozowski

Although Machajski has been the more influential figure in English, in Poland Brzozowski has been far more important. Even during the period of his popularity in Russia, in Poland Machajski remained on the fringe. Beyond the limited appeal his interpretation of socialism and intellectuals would find among the Polish intelligentsia, Machajski's explicit internationalist identification limited his possible field of influence in a nation where political independence had to be central in any influential party program. Even after internationalism was imposed from without after World War II, Machajski received little publication in Poland,¹⁹ this time due to the derogatory reception awarded "Makhaevshchina"²⁰ in Stalinist regimes. By contrast, the study of Brzozowski was encouraged in Poland after the collapse of revisionist politics in 1968. The authorities actually encouraged scholars to study critical figures in the Marxist tradition, but by then, such a safe and depoliticized revisionism lost appeal for "non-conformist" intellectuals, and therefore its relevance for opposition.²¹

Despite the unfortunate timing of Brzozowski's Polish revival,²² he deserves far more attention from those in the critical tradition outside Poland than he has been so far given. In English, beyond Walicki's own occasional articles and a brief essay by Czesław Miłosz,²³ the only major source promoting Brzozowski's ideas was a chapter devoted to him by Leszek Kołakowski in his three-volume work.²⁴

As Kołakowski also argued implicitly, Walicki's major thesis is that

writings from Brzozowski's Marxist period (1906–08) anticipate most of the themes that have since come to be called “Western Marxism,” including: a) opposition to determinism of either the technological or historical materialist variety; b) opposition to dialectical materialism; c) a “historicist and radically anthropocentric interpretation of Marxism”; and d) a focus on cultural criticism, especially one centering on the problem of reification and alienation. If Walicki identifies Western Marxism correctly, and convincingly demonstrates Brzozowski's elaboration of these themes, then two major presumptions of the tradition fall by the wayside. Western Marxism did not need Soviet Marxism to develop, given the timing of Brzozowski's work, and Western Marxism is not “Western,” unless its borders move so far west as to include East Central Europe.²⁵

It is important to identify the “period” of Brzozowski's writings when making such a case given the considerable changes this short-lived philosopher and novelist underwent in his maturity. Walicki identifies three not very discrete periods. Brzozowski's “pre-Marxian” period, before March 1906, was consumed first with addressing the relationship between absolute individualism and an idealist philosophy of action, and later focused on opposing Kantian criticism and a Fichtean philosophy of action to naturalism in philosophy and objectivism in historical materialism.²⁶ Before 1906, Brzozowski considered himself opposed to Marxism, but in a letter to Salomea Perlmutter that month, Brzozowski began to develop his peculiar philosophy of labor, an effort that initiated his subsequent identification with Marxism.

Brzozowski found labor to be the single human act that could transcend cultural and national differences, and thus offer a universal foundation for the discovery of meaning, inasmuch as it provides a kind of “truth” that enables collective human control over external reality.²⁷ This philosophy thereby enabled the critique of both idealism and materialism as objectivist philosophies, and like pragmatism, found truth to be residing in human interaction with the environment, not preexisting outside that human world.²⁸ With this point of departure, Brzozowski preceded Lukacs in discovering philosophically Engels's positivistic bias and consequent difference from Marx.²⁹

Brzozowski considered humanity to be history's product, and history to be the autocreation of humanity through collective labor. History is not subject to either the laws of nature or of society, nor is it the working out of any kind of human essence.³⁰ Emancipation could not be recog-

nized, therefore, by material equality or the end to exploitation, as Brzozowski was also not so concerned with class analysis. Instead it could be understood in terms of a freedom that was conceived as the “conscious autocreation of the human species,” by which he understood increasing labor’s productivity as well as conscious control over everything external to the species. As such, the industrial working class is the first laboring class in history that could be emancipated, given that it need not be enslaved to increase its productivity.³¹

In the last stage of his life, Brzozowski moved away from this radically anthropocentric view of truth and began to elevate nation and religion above labor in his philosophy. But before I also leave the working class, it may first be useful to compare the Marxisms of Machajski and Brzozowski.

On Brzozowski and Machajski

There are many intriguing similarities and differences between Brzozowski and Machajski and that contrast can help the West understand the rich legacy of Polish critical thought much better. Although both were born in the Russian part of Poland, and both studied natural sciences in Warsaw’s university (Brzozowski ten years later), they were not part of the same world. Machajski’s commitment to internationalist political movements including the Proletariat led to lengthy imprisonments and exiles and his eventual immersion in Russian revolutionary politics and relative exclusion from the Polish world. Like Machajski, Brzozowski also engaged the Russian world, but only as a writer. He was not moved east for internationalist sentiments but out of his sympathy for the Russian radical tradition’s embrace of universal values against the narrow form of Polish gentry traditionalism.³² The “Brzozowski affair” did stem, however, from his attacks on the main nationalist Polish group, the National Democrats, calling them an “all-Polish leprosy.” They in turn launched a smear campaign against him, charging him with being an informant to the Russians, a charge Luxemburg’s SDKPiL echoed. But it was the “patriotic” Left, Piłsudski’s group and others associated with it, who finally tried Brzozowski. He died before they could pass sentence.

While Brzozowski became a central figure in the Polish intellectual tradition, and Machajski a disputed legend in the Russian revolutionary tradition, they nevertheless drew on similar intellectual legacies and

established some similar themes. Both Poles, for instance, found in anarcho-syndicalism an important stimulus, even if they drew on different sources. Machajski's principal inspiration seems to be Bakunin, even if Machajski himself rarely mentioned the man.³³ Brzozowski, by contrast, is explicit about his intellectual debts, which included French syndicalist theorist Sorel.³⁴ Given this common inspiration in anti-political radicalisms, it is not surprising to find that both Brzozowski and Machajski had similar criticisms of socialism and the intelligentsia.

Much as Machajski rejected the reformism of the German Social Democrats as rooted in the class interests of their leaders, so too Brzozowski found fault in their practice. But he went deeper than putative class interest at the reformist root; he argued that the objectivist vision of orthodox historical materialism led to passivism, "‘giving up spiritual autonomy’ for the sake of the ‘objective course of events.’"³⁵ To reject human will, as Plekhanov recommended, was for Brzozowski a complete rejection of political responsibility. This theme of will and subjectivity is of course important in the anarchist and syndicalist traditions, with which both Brzozowski and Machajski were familiar. But Brzozowski had additional intellectual weight for this commitment.

Brzozowski's intellectual background was incomparably greater than that of Machajski. In his pre-Marxian period, he was strongly influenced by Nietzsche, from whose early work Brzozowski acquired a lasting sympathy for the "historical sense" of the modern individual, and from whose later work Brzozowski found important the thesis of the necessity of the will's struggle against passive acceptance of the world.³⁶ But Nietzsche offered no solution, thought Brzozowski. The solution lay instead in an ethical standpoint different from one based on power, and rather based on Kantianism's "royal face," whereby the creative ego would be developed according to explicit commitments to certain values, foremost among them being freedom. The true subject of this freedom was, however, the "supra-individual transcendental ego, common to all mankind as rational creatures," which later would be linked to Polish romantic philosophies.³⁷ This emphasis on the active subject provided therefore an important philosophical basis for rejecting not only objectivism in science, but also the opportunism and passive acceptance of German Social Democracy.

Machajski's antidote to this kind of opportunism was to encourage the working class to reject the leadership of the suspect intelligentsia, and allow its own resentments to be its guide to action. In this he was like

Sorel, but unlike him, writes Shatz, he did not find the “power of the myth” important for revolutionary action. Rather saw the general strike only “as the most effective device for rallying the laboring classes and wresting economic concessions from the existing order.”³⁸ Brzozowski, by contrast, saw in the myth an essential element for the formation of the will necessary to emancipatory praxis. Indeed, this allowed Brzozowski to continue the heroic theme of the will he found in Nietzsche, but with Sorel he could link it to a Marxian ethos that found in the working class the source of the struggle for general emancipation. For Sorel, will also had to be developed out of conditions of discipline and restraint. This led Brzozowski ultimately to reconsider various traditions for the development of the workers’ struggle, and with that, Brzozowski also moved more toward the subjective side of productive labor, to culture, and to a reestimation of the intelligentsia.³⁹

Although Machajski’s theory is generally considered anti-intellectual, it remained also profoundly anti-labor, finding in manual work only drudgery and in emancipation only non-manual labor. Marx, of course, was far more ambivalent on this score, while Brzozowski was the most sympathetic to actual manual, as productive, labor. For Brzozowski, productive labor was an antidote to alienation rather than the expression of it, even if at the same time he recognized that labor under current conditions is characterized by “alienness” (*obcość*), rather than freedom.⁴⁰ And consistent with this, in his Marxian period Brzozowski came to understand the intelligentsia as a “pathological social phenomenon” severed both from life as productive labor and from the discipline of traditional customs.⁴¹ In this, his earlier interest in *Lebensphilosophie* could mesh with Sorel’s anti-intellectualism to yield a novel angle on the role of the intelligentsia. In fact, Brzozowski’s sensitivity to culture really makes him quite different from Machajski, who had a comparatively crude class analysis, and perhaps makes him far more relevant to understanding not only the conditions of socialist struggle, but in particular the role of the intelligentsia in it.

A deep cultural assumption in Eastern Europe is the belief that the intelligentsia had a special mission and role to play in national politics. Brzozowski seemed to retain that view at a semi-conscious level, but explicitly argued that only the working class could be the real national and modernizing leader in Poland. When the intelligentsia leads, it is a sign of social disintegration. But unlike Machajski and Sorel, he did not believe that intellectuals consciously deceived workers even if he did find the socialist movement to be an attempt to “transfer control of

economic production into the hands of economically incompetent intellectuals.”⁴²

The role Brzozowski did advocate for the Polish intelligentsia is remarkably similar to what Gramsci described for organic intellectuals, writes Walicki. The intelligentsia should not lead the workers politically, but rather facilitate the development of their intellectual life by “creating a culture which would express and develop the potential spiritual richness inherent in the ‘life-world’ (Lebenswelt) of the workers.” The intelligentsia is also, however, dependent on the workers, for their “metaphysical longings” for conscious autocreation cannot be based on thought alone; only in alliance with the working class can it be realized, as the working class itself realizes its conscious and purposeful control over productive labor.⁴³ Thus, while critical of the intelligentsia’s actual practice, Brzozowski did find an important, indeed essential, role for the intelligentsia in the struggle for freedom, even if one ultimately dependent on working-class emancipation.

Brzozowski’s analysis of the relationship of the intelligentsia to workers and to socialism seems to be far more sophisticated, and useful, than Machajski’s. Shatz provides a great service in pointing out many problems in Machajski’s work: 1) how Machajski used ethical claims to explain how their service to the proletariat as a conspiratorial group was not based on the interest of their class affiliation, the intelligentsia; 2) how the identification of industrialism’s professional and managerial class with the traditional politically engaged intellectuals of the nineteenth century led Machajski to overgeneralize about the politics of the Russian intelligentsia; 3) how Makhaevism’s program could not be premised on revolutionary transformation, but on continued pressure on the existing authorities; 4) how those whom Machajski counted on for the slave revolt, the most marginal, were also the least likely to embrace his aim of knowledge’s socialization; and 5) how social history suggests now that these same peasant workers also were not so revolutionary as Machajski assumed.⁴⁴

Brzozowski’s work manages to avoid some of these problems by limiting the role of the intelligentsia to culture and leaving them out of politics. He also does not glorify the most marginal worker and rather depends on the most advanced sections of the Polish proletariat. Indeed, this “‘conscious worker’ was not something empirically given, to be found ready-made among the proletarian masses. It was a regulative idea rather than a fact, and was *a task* to be consciously pursued by

the cultural elite of the nation.”⁴⁵ Thus, in ways similar to Gramsci and perhaps even better,⁴⁶ Brzozowski provides an approach to intellectuals, workers, and socialism that may prove to be of considerable relevance to the Marxist tradition and to current politics. But the last phase of his work becomes a problem for many in the critical tradition as romantic national and religious transcendental themes become central.

Religion, nation, and the transcendental

By the time of his trial by socialist leaders, Brzozowski had become quite disenchanted with existing socialism and its intellectuals, even if he still identified with the working class. In 1909 he wrote that political socialism had become a movement of the intelligentsia using workers for their own aims. But Walicki cautions that this rejection of political socialism and the intelligentsia is not just based on biography, but also on working out the internal logic of Brzozowski’s views.⁴⁷

After Sorel, Brzozowski began to read Henri Bergson and found quite useful his ideas about language as the means for reifying life and thereby enabling communication. But Brzozowski differed from the French philosopher by emphasizing a non-reified inner life, a deep self that is rooted in social life. It is a collective subconscious whose irrational, instinctual, unreflecting state is essential for the existence of a vital society. This was not the utopia of a romanticized past, but a future-oriented myth that drew on the collective memory of the past to minimize reification. And the means for this struggle was the construction of a culture that would be based on the “self-awareness of labor.”⁴⁸ In his work, “Anti-Engels,” this notion of the collective deep self moved him finally away from a Marxist identification, even if he continued to find the Marxist tradition important to a philosophy of praxis.

Obviously influenced by Sorel, Brzozowski found Marxism’s primary importance to lie in its myths that could influence the spiritual life of the masses. And with the myth, Brzozowski also began to turn away from his anthropocentric philosophy of labor to find in spirituality, both of the individual and of the collective, the source of autocreations that had been his aim and theme from the pre-Marxian days. This shift still identified with workers, but his philosophy of labor was now “broadened, subjectivized and irrationalized.”⁴⁹

As the irrational came increasingly to the fore in his philosophy, Brzozowski found more value in the Catholic Church as a historical institution channelling these irrational powers into a historical transformative agent.⁵⁰ But for Brzozowski, the deepest source for this collective subconsciousness was the fatherland (*ojczyzna*), by which he understood family structure, material production, and statehood with military organization, the nation being its subjective side, the stream of life that provides the means for objectifying life: language.⁵¹

Language and tradition are revered in this final phase of Brzozowski's thought, for they allow the people to come closest to what is most genuine and human: "the older our soul, the more creative it will be." The proletariat is in fact still the main source for preserving this life-defining identity.⁵² He also began to reconsider his harsh evaluation of the National Democrats in his later years. Even if he still considered them as opponents in terms of class, they were allies in the increasingly important national struggle. But consistent with his socialist past, the only actor that could make the nation strong is the workers' movement, for not only might they be modernizers, but they are also a strong force for conserving the traditions that both made Poland as it was and might enable it to overcome the social atomization and cultural crisis that characterized the modern era.⁵³

This emphasis on the irrational and the elevation of life over knowledge made him a stern critic of rationalism. Indeed, similar to the critiques of centralized planning one finds in the pages of *Telos*, Brzozowski found national planning to be one of the "illusions of rationalism."⁵⁴ But to embrace the irrational so meant an increasing openness not only to the nation, but also to religion and the supranatural.

For Poland to be revived as a nation, Brzozowski began to believe that the intelligentsia must return to the Catholic Church, given its terrific importance in and for the national soul. Indeed, he also thought it could be transformed so that it could become "the organ of the will of free working people, while preserving its historical continuity." Walicki notes that the Papal encyclical *Laborem exercens* is something Brzozowski would approve.⁵⁵

Brzozowski also moved to embrace the supranatural. He wrote, "to combat supranaturalism means in fact a reduction of our creative nature to the level of the forms of life already created and put under control." He found an "extra-human Truth" to be what created nations

and life. Moving finally away from his radical anthropocentric scheme of meaning in the philosophy of labor, he accepted that the deep meaning of existence and the specialness of humanity's existence could only be justified with reference to God. Under the influence of John Henry Newman, Brzozowski gave up on his past and accepted that while nations may be the "deepest reality" for humanity and a "necessary form of truth," and while labor may be humanity's universal experience, neither could be its ultimate foundation.⁵⁶

The legacies of Brzozowski and Machajski for current social theory

Shatz's final chapter considers "Makhaevism after Machajski," and begins with the premise that all new class theories are in some ways extensions of Machajski's approach. And of course he is right, given how Gouldner and Szelenyi have invoked his name. But beyond a genuflection to Machajski, it does not seem so important to return to his original ideas since subsequent theorists have gone so far beyond him. Indeed, given the implications of some of his other arguments, it might be best to leave Machajski as a "rightfully forgotten prophet."⁵⁷

On the other hand, Machajski's work should remind us of the great potential for anti-intelligentsia politics in Russia and in Eastern Europe, and remind us too that intellectuals can play a facilitating role in the mobilization of resentment. Even in Poland, where the intelligentsia has felt so relatively secure in the 1980s, Lech Wałęsa's presidential bid was successful in part because it was based on the resentments he and his intellectual advisors could foster against the Warsaw intelligentsia surrounding Mazowiecki. Indeed, it seems that the Warsaw intelligentsia was rather unprepared for the resonance of those anti-intellectual themes. Thus, while Machajski himself may not develop much of an intellectual following in Poland, we might see another kind of Makhaevism waiting in the wings, ready to mobilize anti-intelligentsia sentiment into a force for challenging the status quo. And I fear this potential anti-intellectualism to be also an anti-democratic, rather than emancipatory, current.

Brzozowski's legacy is something else entirely, especially as his ideas could contribute significantly to several important issues on the contemporary critical theoretical agenda: to 1) the reconstructive efforts involved in making Western Marxism a more inclusive tradition; 2) the problems involved in critical theory's anthropocentrism; 3) an emanci-

patory approach to the critique of intellectual hegemony in states and social movements, on the one hand; and 4) an emancipatory approach to the construction of national identity, on the other.

Walicki's book makes the beginnings of Brzozowski's contribution possible. His chapter-long discussion of Polish Marxism also could help Western Marxism include more Eastern work. But I'm not sure that Brzozowski will be brought into the Western Marxist fold after all.

Beyond the language barrier, Walicki identifies several reasons, all having to do with Marxism's relative weakness in Poland, why Brzozowski and other Polish Marxists have not become part of the discourse of Western Marxism. In philosophy, the Lwów-Warsaw school, similar to the Anglo analytic school, was dominant in Brzozowski's day. In inter-war Poland, Marxism was extremely weak. When Marxism became ruling dogma, the Stalinist regime in Poland actually censored works on Brzozowski, and when they finally encouraged it, Marxist revisionism had become politically irrelevant. But there is another reason why Brzozowski is unlikely to be so embraced in Western Marxism, much for the same reasons Kołakowski is kept at arm's length.

Walicki, Kołakowski, and Brzozowski all undermine the project of making Western Marxism. Walicki himself slurs most of these efforts. He seems to find Lukacs's interpretation as Western Marxism's precursor a self-serving effort to reconstruct an artificial tradition in the Anglo-Saxon countries. Indeed, it seems that Walicki himself is ambivalent about introducing Brzozowski to the West through his dialogue with Marxism, but he finally decides to do so because it is one of the best such dialogues found at century's start.⁵⁸ It is testimony to the intellectual historian in Walicki that he recognizes this value, but at the same time, it is hard to miss that Walicki values Brzozowski's final move away from Marxism far more than his dialogue with it.

Kołakowski also is difficult for Western Marxism to handle, especially as he was once a leading representative of Humanist Marxism and has since challenged the entire tradition, finding in it only the seeds of totalitarianism. More unsettling, perhaps, is that Kołakowski also has found the transcendental essential for human culture, even if as a philosopher he could agree with Marxism's negation of the epistemological question. Like Kołakowski, Brzozowski much earlier accepted the idea that humanity's self-sufficiency is self contradictory, and that the only way to overcome it is to believe in a Transcendent Being. And if

so, adaption to the world ceases to be an abrogation of the human essence in autocreation, and instead becomes another form of approximating the Truth that exists outside humanity.⁵⁹

This movement toward the transcendental may be difficult to incorporate into a tradition that continues to distinguish itself as one of the surviving attempts of Enlightenment in a world giving up on Reason and finding refuge in romantic traditionalisms. But this movement does resonate with another challenge to Western Marxism that similarly finds Truth outside of the human experience. Ecological consciousness also challenges the anthropocentrism of the Marxist and other Western traditions. For Western Marxism to establish its presence in this world, rather than only its ancestry, it will have to find significant dialogue and political alliance with this suprahuman expression. But while Brzozowski also attempted such a dialogue in linking his philosophy of labor to a supranatural system based on nation, religion, and the Transcendent Being, few positive lessons for the dialogue between Marxism and ecology could be taken from this effort. A few lessons of caution might be drawn, however.

Brzozowski wrote in a world where the extra-human, through nation and religion, only justified further human domination of what is “external to the species.” This led many “progressives” from that time, Brzozowski included, to an interest in eugenics. Thus, we might not only be interested in finding the logic in Brzozowski’s thinking that led to his exit from Marxism, as Walicki is interested, but also consider the dangers posed for those “outside” one’s nation or belief in just such an exit. Indeed, one of the most important fruits of a dialogue between Marxism and ecology is the realization of an ecological consciousness that not only values the extra-human, but also does not privilege that part of humanity that is already advantaged by its existing natural environment. To retain the radically anthropocentric point of view in any philosophic dialogue with the extra-human seems to be one of the more important anchors for assuring the rights of the human other. It seems that Brzozowski retained some of that tension, but whether such a philosophic tension can survive its translation into social movements and state policy is another question.

The dialogues more directly informed by a reading of Brzozowski are those between class and nation, and between workers and intellectuals. For Western Marxism, Brzozowski’s move to elevate national tradition can serve as a useful reminder of the importance to East Europeans of

nation, often over class. The contest between Mazowiecki and Wałęsa was not just about the problem of intellectual domination; it was also about the character of nationhood, whether of an exclusionary or inclusionary kind. Brzozowski might thus become again quite relevant to the Poles and other East Europeans, as the debate over the meaning of the nation rages and the search for universal values rather than chauvinistic ones characterizes an emancipatory nationalism. Unlike Machajski, who hardly treated the national question and whose approach to class was full of contradictions, Brzozowski was one of the few who could elevate both class and nation to supreme values in a philosophy of emancipatory praxis.

Brzozowski also offers a way to criticize the intelligentsia's leadership of society without heading into the cul-de-sac that was Machajski's trademark. The importance of such a critique is considerable given the overwhelming hegemony of the intelligentsia in the post-communist scene.⁶⁰ Even with Wałęsa's occasionally anti-intellectual rhetoric, his main promoters have not been dispossessed workers but rather excluded intellectuals, as the Kaczyński brothers. And his proposed cabinet and policy differs remarkably little from Mazowiecki's; indeed, he has emphasized the importance of retaining Balcerowicz and other architects of the radical capitalist transformation of Polish political economy.

I think it is quite likely that Polish and other East European politics will develop a profoundly xenophobic and populist current as the numbers of unemployed grow and poverty deepens. Under these circumstances, a politics of resentment will likely move to the center of a formidable workers' movement. It seems especially important in this moment for Polish and other East European intellectuals to anticipate this development, and work more directly on a philosophy and theory of popular empowerment that does not violate the spirit of tolerance and inclusion that was once Solidarity's.

I have characterized the emancipatory praxis of 1980–81 Solidarity as one of "socialist pragmatism," the substance of which was based primarily on a classless ideology of civil society's formation.⁶¹ Unfortunately, this Anglo-Saxon philosophy that once served as a basis for unifying classes and political factions no longer suffices. This approach has little directly to say about the relation between national identity and class-based emancipation, nor on the intellectual's role in that struggle. Another approach to emancipation must be found.

I have argued that the tradition of Solidarity might be retained best by developing socialist-feminist pragmatism as a theory of, and in, Soviet-type society.⁶² One major problem is that while it profoundly respects the problem-solving capacity of women and the popular classes in Soviet-type and post-communist societies, it does not establish its linkage very clearly with the philosophical traditions that are their own. In the Marxist Brzozowski, I believe, we might find an important connection between socialist pragmatism on the one hand, and the Polish critical tradition, on the other.

Both traditions privilege human collective self-regulation and both reject the search for a truth existing outside human interaction. Both emphasize the importance of popular culture, in addition to class relations, and both emphasize the importance for intellectuals of explicit alliance with the working class. Both emphasize the importance of regulative ideals to help guide the cultural struggles of those intellectuals. Pragmatism, however, is better in recognizing the communicative element in emancipatory praxis, but Brzozowski has more seriously addressed the problem of anthropocentrism in establishing a normative foundation for such action. And most importantly, pragmatism has not seriously considered the problem of national identity and how that affects the capacity of communicative rationality, while Brzozowski has contributed to an East European legacy that has made the nation, much as class, the central analytical categories with which we interpret, and influence, the history of Eastern Europe. After reading Walicki's account, I am convinced that my own efforts in constructing a critical sociology appropriate to Eastern Europe would benefit considerably by further study of Stanisław Brzozowski.

Notes

1. This essay has benefitted considerably from comments on and conversations around the ideas found in it. I am especially indebted to Włodzimierz Wesółowski, Roman Szporluk, Edmund Mokrzycki, and Geoff Eley.
2. For a recent example of Polish writing on Machajski, see Lech Dubel, "Samotny rewolucjonista (szkic Janie Waclawie Machajskim)," *Wybrane problemy teorii i praktyki panstwa i prawa* (Lublin, 1986), 19–31.
3. Marshall S. Shatz, *Jan Waclaw Machajski: A Radical Critic of the Russian Intelligentsia and Socialism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989). Andrzej Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
4. "Prologue to a Theory of Revolutionary Intellectuals," *Telos* No. 26 (1976). His summary and brief three-point critique of Machajski remain reasonable in light of

- Shatz's discussion, even if there are more problems with Machajski's work than Gouldner noted.
5. See Ernest Haberkern, "Machajski: A Rightfully Forgotten Prophet," *Telos* 71 (1987): 111–128; and Anthony D'Agostino, "Machajski and the New Class: A Reply to Haberkern," *Telos* 77 (1988): 138–142.
 6. "The Intelligentsia in the Class Structure of State Socialist Society," Michael Burawoy and Theda Skocpol, editors, *Marxist Inquiries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
 7. Shatz, 42.
 8. Shatz, 159.
 9. Shatz, 153.
 10. Shatz, 18, 145–148.
 11. The Manifesto is translated in Shatz, 181–187.
 12. Shatz, 32.
 13. By intellectual workers, Machajski "applied it to anyone who engaged in nonphysical work requiring some education – including, therefore, not only 'intellectuals' in the strict sense but all professional and managerial personnel and much of the white-collar work force. As to the latter, however, he never specified the point at which the line should – or could – be drawn between the least skilled or lowest paid 'intellectual workers' and skilled manual workers." Shatz, 197, n.25.
 14. Shatz, 102–104.
 15. Shatz, 92–97.
 16. Shatz, 110–144.
 17. Shatz, 43–55.
 18. Shatz, 37–42, 98–100.
 19. Shatz, 3–18.
 20. Machajski's doctrines, writes Shatz (xi-xii), "were referred to as makhaevshchina, formed from 'Makhaev', a Russian corruption or misunderstanding of his name, coupled with the disparaging ending -shchina. It might be translated as 'the notorious doctrines of Makhaev.'"
 21. Walicki, 12.
 22. Walicki, together with R. Zimand, was himself the editor of one of the earliest volumes on Brzozowski to appear in Communist-led Poland: *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, Krakow 1974.
 23. "A Controversial Polish Writer: Stanisław Brzozowski," *California Slavic Studies* 2 (1963): 53–94.
 24. "Stanisław Brzozowski: Marxism as Historical Subjectivism," 215–239 in *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 2. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).
 25. Walicki, 12–24.
 26. Walicki, 76–110. On 169–175 there is an excellent summary of Walicki's periodization of Brzozowski.
 27. Walicki, 103, 112, 117.
 28. Walicki, 113. Indeed, later Brzozowski even argued that the sole vital issue in philosophy is the struggle between pragmatism and historical materialism. Although both reject intellectualism, Marxism is superior to pragmatism given its preservation of well-defined criteria of truth and value, that being "free and self conscious labor" (Walicki, 142–143). I agree. As I argue in *Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland: A Critical Sociology of Soviet-Type Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), this is why pragmatism requires a socialist prefix to be an appropriate critical approach to change in Eastern Europe.

29. Walicki, 113–116.
30. Walicki, 124–125.
31. Walicki, 126–128.
32. Walicki, 180–183.
33. Shatz, 37.
34. Walicki, 144–149.
35. Walicki, 93–94.
36. Walicki, 81–88.
37. Walicki, 96.
38. Shatz, 91.
39. Walicki, 144–147.
40. Walicki, 131–132.
41. Walicki, 148.
42. Walicki, 186–189. More about the poor leadership of this group whose roots are in a lifeless knowledge: “This influential group – the modern intelligentsia – emerged as the social result of historical changes by which human thought had emancipated itself from the military and religious discipline of feudalism without, at the same time, taking root in the world of modern productive labor.... the virtual monopoly in the cultural sphere of the intellectuals brought about an alienated culture while their monopoly in the social sciences a reified image of the social world” (Walicki, 252). In fact, this objectivism of social science is “a rationalization of silent acceptance of the alienation of intellectuals and the atomization of society” (Walicki, 253).
43. Walicki, 187–195.
44. Shatz, 53, 70, 104–109.
45. Walicki, 221–222.
46. Walicki makes a strong case in a comparison between Gramsci and Brzozowski for considering the latter a far more valuable legacy for the Western Marxist tradition (316–318) and comparable to Lukacs (319–324). In that concluding chapter he also compares Brzozowski to the Frankfurt School and to Kołakowski.
47. Walicki, 206.
48. Walicki, 152.
49. Walicki, 155–160.
50. Walicki, 162, 275–314.
51. Walicki, 164–165.
52. Walicki, 166.
53. Walicki, 218, 268, 273–274.
54. Walicki, 269. See Paul Piccone, “Introduction,” *Telos* 79 (Spring 1989): 2–6.
55. Walicki, 298.
56. Walicki, 301–309.
57. Haberkern, “Machajski.”
58. Walicki, 24. See also his dismissal of all socialist movements (as opposed to social democratic ones) in regard to legal justice (33–34).
59. Walicki, 332–336.
60. See Michael D. Kennedy, “The Intelligentsia in the Constitution of Civil Societies and Post-Communist Regimes in Hungary and Poland,” *Theory and Society* 21: 29–76, 1992.
61. See chapter 3 of *Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland*.
62. See chapter 10 of *Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland*.