A CRITIQUE OF THE CONCEPTION OF HISTORICAL NECESSITY AND TELEOLOGY FOR UNDERSTANDING HISTORY BY Phil Sharpe

Istvan Meszaros, the most distinguished Marxist of our era, understands the character of history in terms of teleology: “To be sure, human history is not intelligible without some kind of teleology. But the only teleology consistent with the materialist conception of history is the objective and open-ended teleology of labour itself. At the fundamental ontological level such teleology is concerned with the way in which the human being – this unique ‘self-mediating being of nature’ creates and develops itself through its purposeful productive activity.”(1) He argues that this conception of teleology is different from the apologetic justification of the present that is provided by Kant and Hegel. Instead he is suggesting that his interpretation of the Marxist view of history is able to combine a sense of ontological intelligibility with recognition that the goal of communism is not inevitable. However what is being defended is the perspective that the purpose of history represents the ultimate victory of labour over capital. Alex Callinicos outlines how this stance indicates theoretical complacency and dogma in relation to the actual outcome of empirical events and the problems involved in the progress of the class struggle: “Even where the exploited class has both an interest in, and the capacity to accomplish social revolution, as is true of the modern proletariat, it does not follow that the overthrow of capitalism is inevitable. To assert otherwise is to ignore the experience of the international workers movement since the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914. The grim succession of defeated revolutions and the lengthy incorporation of the Western proletariat into the capitalist order suggest that the objective interests and capacities of the working class are not necessarily translated into the conscious struggle for political power.”(2)

Even if we allow for an aspect of historical pessimism in the standpoint of Callinicos we can still accept that his view is an accurate interpretation of events when compared to the philosophical rationalisation of the character of history made by Meszaros. However it is necessary to establish a theory of history that would express a valid alternative to the standpoint of Meszaros. In order to carry out this task it is necessary to reconstruct Meszaros’s approach in more detail. One of his initial premises is that the very development of the productive forces of capitalism creates the conditions for the overthrow of the system in terms of its rejection at the level of class consciousness. This approach is not the justification of economic determinism which would imply that change would come about as a result of an economic logic that excluded the importance of class consciousness. Instead the historical choice at the level of consciousness becomes the continuation of the system or its overthrow: “Consequently, either there is a no alternative to reproducing the contradictions of class society in all conceivable forms of society, or the chain of socio-economic determinations must be broken.”(3)

The problem with this reformulation of technological determinism is that it abstracts the possibilities of change from the actual progress of the class struggle. This means justification is provided for the conception of automatic change because the increasing contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production does not allow for the crucial importance of class consciousness. Meszaros tries to overcome this theoretical problem by arguing in favour of the dynamic role of class consciousness but this aspect does not become an integral part of the apparent logic of history and the process of change to socialism. Furthermore in a dogmatic manner it is assumed that the continuation of capitalism will become intolerable for the working class and so action will be taken to bring about socialism regardless of the actual balance of class forces. However the major argument against this perspective is that it has not yet been expressed as an important aspect of the actual class struggle. Instead the diversity of actual historical events cannot be reduced to the evolutionary logic of the productive forces. It is true that the development of the productive forces may explain the numerical weight of the working class but the impetus for class struggle does not have this exclusive structural and technological logic. We can accept that the standpoint of Meszaros indicates an important historical influence on the class struggle, but the point is that it cannot be defined as the crucial contradiction that decides the outcome of social conflict. Nor can we describe the significance of socio-economic factors as the expression of direction within history. Instead we are describing conditions that amount to the objective context of change but this situation does not decide the choices that humans make about the present and future. Indeed Meszaros is aware that people may decide to support capitalism and that this prospect has to be part of any credible conception of history. But an important problem with Meszaros’s approach is that he can only conceive of the continuation of capitalism as being unlikely because of his adherence to the perspective of historical necessity.

It is interesting that Meszaros supports his views on the basis of the following comment: “The core of Marx’s theory of classes and class consciousness is precisely this concept of the necessary structural subordination of labour to capital in commodity society.”(4) But this standpoint is not necessarily consistent with Meszaros’s interpretation of the Marxist conception of history. It is entirely possible to suggest that the dynamics of the capital-labour relation are explained without recourse to teleology. Indeed it could be argued that Meszaros is defending what could be described as the conflicting poles of Marx’s thought, as Callinicos explains: “Two poles can thus be detected in Marx’s thought, each resting on one of the mechanisms of historical change he posits – the tendency for the productive forces to develop, on the one hand, with the implications of inevitable progress this can be made to carry, and the class struggle, on the other, full of contingencies and uncertainties.”(5) Hence, Meszaros is trying to reconcile the irreconcilable in terms of outlining how the very development of the productive forces has intensified the tension between capital and labour. The suggestion is that the inability of capital to resolve this conflict means that there is a constant tendency for socialism within capitalism. What this standpoint ignores is the very importance of contingency mentioned by Callinicos. We can elaborate this point and argue that contingency is a crucial aspect of social reality because of the inability of the contending classes to resolve their conflict in the permanent favour of themselves. Only the triumph of global socialism would enable us to justify the view that history was teleological, but this would actually be a formal argument based on hindsight. Instead in concrete terms this outcome would be the result of the resolution of contingent factors. It would only be possible to deny the importance of contingency if we became apologists for capitalism and argued that it had become omnipotent. This perspective would express a type of teleological support for the process of domination in the present. In actuality the conception of the end of history resulting in socialism is as dogmatic as the same stance applied to the capitalist system.

Meszaros argues that if we deny the structural character of the role and consciousness of the working class as part of the capital-labour antagonism the result is the voluntarist justification of a mythological conception of the class struggle: “Proletarian class consciousness is, therefore, the workers consciousness of his social being as embedded in the necessary structural antagonism of capitalist society, in contrast to the contingency of group consciousness which perceives only a more or less limited part of the global confrontation. To assign to the concept of the proletariat merely the status of an ‘ideal type’ inevitably carries with it the conception of class consciousness and political action as an arbitrary ‘ought’, from Sorel’s myth-conscious voluntarism to some contemporary advocates of a critical utopianism.”(6) What is interesting about this view is that it does not require teleology in order to sustain the standpoint that the most important structural aspect of society is the relationship between capital and labour. Instead the constant outcome of the capital-labour relation can be open-ended, and provides a temporary ascendency to either protagonist that is fragile and so cannot justify the perspective that history represents a purpose that favours either capital or labour. Instead of the justification of the teleological approach Meszaros is actually suggesting that with an understanding of the significance of the capital-labour antagonism the working class has the potential at the level of class consciousness to transform the situation. The question of whether this occurs depends on circumstances such as the balance of class forces and the extent of support for a strategy based on the socialist offensive. However without high levels of class consciousness it is more likely that the forces of capital will be able to create a situation in which labour is subordinate and is forced to obey the dictates of the economic system.

But Meszaros does outline this issue of the intensification of the contradictions of the capital-labour relation in teleological terms because he defines it as a question of the realisation of a global awareness of the social being of labour that is connected to a process of historical development. The assumption is – and it is a big assumption - that the structural development of capitalism which is increasingly global will bring about a corresponding level of consciousness within labour. This process suggests that social being is expressed in terms of consciousness. Hence the economic development of capitalism will result in the formation of the type of consciousness – humans have become social individuals – that are capable of recognising the possibility to transform global capital into the expression of world socialism. This means the teleological aspect is not a question of a philosophical imposition of an understanding of history onto real social processes and is instead about the very character of the structural development of the economy. The aspect of necessity is the outcome of the increasing internationalisation of the productive forces and the globalised development of the economy. What this standpoint ignores is the role of ideology, especially the importance of the bourgeois nation state that mystifies what is occurring and so generates the standpoint that the development of the productive forces does not supersede the continued influence of the national interest. Therefore the ideology of the globalisation of the world economy is that the nation state is still primary and the working class should accept this situation and deny any importance to internationalism. Only if the limitations of ideology can be overcome is it possible to suggest that the forces of labour are becoming aware of the importance of the social individual.

However, Meszaros ignores the question of the relationship of ideology to the development of class consciousness. Instead he emphasises the structural character of the transformation of the global economy and the creation of the social individual: “This historical necessity of a fusion between objectification and alienation, functional and structural division of labour culminating in the structural subordination of labour to capital, is however a ‘disappearing necessity’…….as indeed all historical necessities are. It disappears in the course of productive development that brings with it not only the concentration of capital, but simultaneously, also the socialization of the labour process on a formerly unimaginable scale, transforming the earlier necessary social-structural regulators of the productive process – the classes – into anachronistic shackles of all further productive advance.”(7) The implication is that the very process of the logic of capital, which expresses the importance of expansion and socialisation, results in the generation of the structural necessity for the transition from capitalism to socialism. However, the most that can actually be explained is what is occurring at the objective material level. What is not explained is the role of the conscious development of class struggle. It is entirely possible that the increasing maturing of the economic conditions for socialism can occur in the context of important defeats for the working class in the class struggle. This means there is a contradiction between the objective and subjective situation. In contrast, Meszaros defends the view that the creation of the objective conditions for socialism also results in the enhancement of the subjective prospects for socialism. The creation of the social individual also results in the structural impulse for the transformation of the global economy: “The production of the social individual is the same process as the emancipation of society from the classes which are but an alienated objectification of the individual’s social dimension. Since, however, the classes themselves are constituted and continue to develop in accordance with the more and more internationally articulated structural division of labour, this emancipation of the social individual from the conditions of his alienated self-objectification in class society necessarily implies in its turn, the growing supersession of the social division of labour on a world wide scale.”(8)

The suggestion is that the creation of the social individual by the structural and economic logic of capital accumulation implies the generation of a necessary and automatic process of transformation of the social relations. The very development of capital is the basis of the generation of a class consciousness that can be expressed in support for strategies of change and transformation. Consequently: “The historical necessity of the development of this consciousness resides in the objective contradictions of the socio-economic system, to which it has to provide a global strategic alternative. In this sense, necessary class consciousness is the consciousness of the necessarily global character of any viable historical alternative to the established order of productive relations.”(9) In other words the development of the internationalisation of the productive forces creates a social individual who is interested and motivated by the prospect of the realisation of a socio-economic global alternative. This view implies that the logic of economics cannot be undermined by the role of politics or limitations in the class consciousness of those subordinated by capital. Instead the logic of socialisation will ultimately assert itself and bring about the transformation of the global economy. This type of reasoning does imply that the process of change is automatic and inevitable. The importance of historical necessity will not allow for detours in history.

Meszaros argues that this process is not rigid and determinist because the question of success depends on the quality of the strategies of those who are subordinated to capital. The importance of historical necessity implies that the logic of the economy will bring about the success of the aspiration to create a new socio-historical context for productive activity. This is because the imperatives for socio-economic change cannot be undermined by what will be temporary setbacks in the class struggle and the limitations of class consciousness. Instead there will be an ultimate conformity between the importance of what represents progressive historical logic and the emerging class consciousness of the social individual. This will imply that the process of economic and historical development means that the contradictions of the domination of capital can only be resolved by the victory of the standpoint of the social individual. Unfortunately the actual outcome of empirical events does not justify this historical determinism. The level of class consciousness of those subordinated to capital has not acquired the dimensions of the social individual and capitalism has not displayed a tendency for transformation in accordance with the logic of socialisation. Instead in order to explain the levels of complexity and contingency within history we require a different theory that can allow for the open-ended character of events. Ultimately we have to develop strategic conclusions that can promote the prospect of success in the class struggle despite the frequent prospect of failure and setbacks. However this establishment of an alternative to historical determinism will also not have to support a voluntarist denial of the importance of objective factors and the role of the economic. This will mean that we cannot resort to defining the class struggle in mythical terms that tries to ignore the structural context of the tensions within society.

An important problem with Meszaros’s conception of history is that we cannot test its validity in terms of empirical verification. We cannot outline the historical development of the productive forces under capitalism and relate this to the issue of whether it means the maturing of the success of the social individual. It is not possible to establish that the relations of production are changing in terms of the impetus of the social individual and the apparent anachronistic character of the existing organisation of economic activity. Primarily we cannot utilise a description of the class struggle in order to show the advance of the social individual and the decline of the process of capital accumulation. Instead what Meszaros is defending is an assertion that is defined in terms of the teleological methodology of historical necessity. The conception of teleology is imposed onto reality and is utilised in order to explain the contradictions of capitalism in terms of its essential features, but the actual fact that appearances do not correspond to this supposed essence is apparently not important. Hence the more disturbing situation for the Marxist, that globalisation seems to be enhancing the power of capital rather than undermining it, is something that cannot be explained by the approach of Meszaros. If reality did relate to his theoretical conception it would seem that the very development within capital is promoting the influence of the social individual. However this is an illusion because the only basis to make effective historical progress within capitalism is by the process of success in the class struggle. But it is the very reliance on teleology in the approach of Meszaros which means he does not include the role of the class struggle within his perspective. Instead historical necessity, via the socialisation of labour, transforms social reality and the significance of class struggle becomes irrelevant. This standpoint represents the illusion of many strands of orthodox Marxism.

Alex Callinicos tries to argue that an emphasis upon the importance of the productive forces does not mean support for the teleological approach: “Nevertheless, there seems to be no good reason why one cannot postulate the existence of mechanisms responsible for historical change across the whole range of human societies without falling into the trap of teleology. The crucial difference here from philosophies of history is that the theories specifying these mechanisms rely on straightforward causal and intentional explanations not requiring appeal to objective purposes and the like.”(10) Callinicos argues that Marxism is a theory of history rather than a philosophy of history and so the attempt to provide universal answers for the meaning of social development do not justify a conception of inherent purpose and the culmination of an end to history. Hence it could also be argued, as Marx does in the Communist Manifesto that the importance of the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production does not necessarily result in the realisation of some purpose of end to history. Instead this contradiction can result in historical regression, as indicated by important periods in the history of humans. Specifically, it can be argued that contemporary history has resulted in catastrophe that has undermined the prospect of progress. Hence the actual outcome of historical development is open-ended and it is of crucial importance that success in the class struggle by means of proletarian revolution should occur if the forces of barbarism are to be overcome.

However Callinicos undermines his rationalisation of a non-teleological conception of historical materialism when he justifies the view that historical progress provides a meaning or logic to history: “Theories of history, by contrast, seek to give non-teleological explanations of the historical process. Both Marxist and Weberian theories discern a progressive directionality in the course of history – respectively, the development of the productive forces and the growth of social power. But the existence of such a pattern does not provide the rationale for the explanations each theory gives of specific social transformations. The nature of each social form is to be understood, not in terms of the final state of affairs towards which it is a step, but on the basis of the powers and relations constituting it, which give that form its identity but may threaten its survival.”(11) Callinicos justifies his dilution of the difference between the philosophy of history and the theory of history in terms of the distinction between the standpoint of philosophical logic imposed onto history and the alternative that represents the importance of empirical evaluation of development. However it is entirely possible that the empirical could be interpreted in a manner that justifies teleological reasoning. Hence it could be argued that the development of the productive forces is culminating in the end of communism. In this context the empirical could be interpreted in order to uphold the imposition of philosophical logic onto history. Indeed Callinicos has made concessions to this perspective in terms of his acceptance of the view of progressive directionality within history. It would be more principled to suggest that it is only with success in the class struggle can the most progressive classes express the prospect for the advances of the productive forces. Consequently the issue of historical progress becomes contingent on the outcome of the class struggle.

 In other words it is the importance of the conscious aspect of human activity that explains the prospect of the transformation of the productive forces. However we also have to allow for the prospect that the social role of the most reactionary classes can bring about the development of the productive forces and the related undermining of the prospect of a more progressive process of transformation. However this situation does not express the end of history and is instead the contingent outcome of the class struggle. It is the very fact that the class struggle is the most important aspect of human history that means that any period of ascendency and supremacy of a particular class is ultimately fragile and liable to be challenged by the resistance of a subordinate class. In this context the issue of the realisation of communism is the contingent outcome of class struggle. Communism is not the end of history and is instead the outcome of a situation that can bring about the classless society. Only if we recognise that communism is not the inherent outcome of the development of the productive forces and is instead an expression of the balance of the class forces and the role of strategy can we understand its historical significance.

In contrast, Callinicos defines the distinctions between the theory of history and the philosophy of history in the following terms: “We have thus come across two senses in which the question of meaning arises in history. The first is that of what I called historical significance – the causal relationships in which an events stands to other events occurring at different times. The second sense arises from the resort to teleological explanations in philosophies of history: the meaning of an event here derives from the position it occupies with respect to the goal of the historical process.”(12) This is an important part of a distinction between rival historical explanations. We can establish that the operation of causal mechanisms does not imply an inherent purpose to history and so this conception does not uphold the standpoint of a philosophy of history. However to a Marxist what is a vital expression of the character of causal mechanisms is the contradictions generated by the class struggle. We can argue that the emphasis on the productive forces can justify teleology and so the only alternative that provides sufficient emphasis on contingency and open-ended outcomes is the importance of the class struggle. When he discusses the character of the class struggle in specific terms, Callinicos is able to accept that its outcome is not inevitable and he considers that there is a tension in Marx’s thought between two possibly conflicting conceptions of historical change. He suggests that the tensions between the contradiction of the productive forces and the relations of production in regards to the progress of the class struggle are a part of reality: “Now, there is no a priori reason why these mechanisms should necessarily operate in a co-ordinated and synchronized fashion. The relative strength of antagonistic classes is only partly determined by their relative material bases in the relations of production; it also depends on forms in which subjectivity and agency play an irreducible part – organization, ideology, leadership. Depending, then, on the contingencies of how these are worked up on both sides, the outcome of the historical crisis of a mode of production will vary.”(13) But he undermines this standpoint by still insisting that historical development represents a process involving a trajectory with likely or more favourable outcomes. Hence the approach of Callinicos represents a tension between the understanding that Marxism is an empirical doctrine that attempts to explain the importance of the antagonism between capital and labour combined with justification of an alternative form of reasoning that considers the proletariat is still a universal and emancipatory force because of historical development.(14) It could be argued that Callinicos is only reflecting the tensions in the approach of Marx. However these tensions represent the ultimate failure to definitively reject teleology in relation to an understanding of the class struggle.

Instead of making predictions about the possible direction of the class struggle it would be less dogmatic to attempt to explain why it is a constant feature of contemporary society and what would be its important features. Chris Harman, in his monumental ‘Peoples History of the World’ explains the character of the class struggle in the following manner: “Out of these struggles will emerge new attempts to remould society around the values of solidarity, mutual support, egalitarianism, collective cooperation and a democratically planned use of resources. The ruling class of the world, like their predecessors for 5,000 years, will do their utmost to thwart these attempts and will, if necessary unleash endless barbarities so as to hang on to what they regard as their sacred right to power and property. They will defend the existing capitalist order to the end – even if it is the end of organised human life.”(15) Hence the only prediction we can make is that these potential tragically type of events within society will not change because the causal mechanisms of capitalist society express the antagonisms of the capital-labour relation. What will be the outcome of this situation it is not possible to make predictions. We do not have the consolation of the supposed certainty of a philosophy of history, or even a theory of history. Instead Marxism has to provide the arguments as to why the character of class struggle should assume a socialist dimension. But we should not make assumptions that this perspective will be realised.

However some commentators have suggested that the very inability of Marxism to unify its aims in practice mean that not only the illusions in historical certainty are over but also the very project of Marxism is called into question. In other words, the failures of Marxism indicate that the world has changed to the extent that its goals and ambitions have become unrealistic: “The first criticism turns on Marxism basic impulse and starting point: the belief that a revolutionary transformation of bourgeois society is taking place that is leading both to a fundamental reversal and fulfilment of the main trends of human history. A transcendence of class exploitation, toil, impoverishment, and alienation were believed to be in the offing, and with them would appear a new human being and a genuine beginning of history as a conscious process controlled by its subjects. Hindsight based on the fact that this has not happened and is not happening reveals a good deal about Marxism’s early modern character, especially about the nature of its hope.”(`16)

The assumption that the promise of the Marxist conception of history has not been realised does not mean that Marxism has become falsified. Instead we can develop a revised and modified understanding of Marxism that is able to explain what has happened and why the prospect of socialist revolution has not been realised. We can indicate that the very relation of history to the sense of redemption and hope has been shown to be problematical. However this does not represent the denial of Marxism, and instead could be considered to be its confirmation. This is because the very setbacks and denial of progress has been because of the victories that the capitalist class has been able to achieve in the class struggle. The element of catastrophe in recent history is because of the failure to realise proletarian revolution. For example, the development of World War Two was because fascism was able to triumph over the forces of the working class and Marxism. Furthermore, the durability of the cold war, which expressed the prospect of nuclear war, was because the working class was divided by the geo-political logic of competing and rival blocs. In other words, the continuation of capitalism was not the confirmation that Marxism had become antiquated and instead important premises of Marxism were confirmed in negative terms. But what these developments also indicated was that the view that historical necessity, or the sense of the promise of liberation was imminent, could be described as being either premature or represented the fact that reality was more complex than could have been anticipated by either Marx or Engels. Indeed Lenin’s expectation of an early development of world revolution was also not realised because of the regressive effect of the split between the Social Democrats and the emerging Communist International. But Marxism was not falsified as a doctrine of class struggle because the history of capitalism could be described in these terms. But the situation could not be described as a process of transition from capitalism to socialism because of the impulses of the productive forces and the limitations of the relations of production. Instead the relations of production proved to be resilient and durable when confronted with the challenge of the militant working class and the influence of Marxism. This meant the challenges of the complex situation generated the impulse to revise Marxism in the manner of Gramsci and to recognise that Marxism had to develop its strategic imagination and justify a modified conception of history. The problem is that this modification often took the form of the justification of historical pessimism and the rejection of any possibility of progress.(17) In contrast, the forces of revolutionary Marxism such as expressed in the work of Istvan Meszaros were reluctant to reject historical necessity and replace it with a less dogmatic conception of history.

Aronson is making an important point when he considers that the Marxist conception of history should replace the ontological principle of necessity with that of possibility: “Because it depended on human will and action, such an emancipation could never be predicted with any degree of confidence. To call it any more than possible, and to do any more than understand its preconditions and work for its coming into being, was a gross violation of the very ideas embodied in the “Theses on Feuerbach”. Yet the power of Marx’s eschatological vision cloaked these changes not just with possibility, not just with moral urgency, but with necessity.”(18) Aronson suggests that Marxism was unable to adjust and recognise that the very actions of human actors meant that the perspective of the inevitable demise of capitalism was falsified by events and changing developments. In his opinion the result is a collection of attempts to uphold Marxism despite the apparent reluctance of the working class to overthrow capitalism. Hence the only principled option is to support some form of Post-Marxism and a different praxis and strategy of change. Aronson supports his argument with the view that ultimately Marxism was utopian and unrealistic in relation to its perspective of proletarian revolution. The level of socio-economic development could not sustain a conception of an alternative classless society. Hence the approach of historical necessity was sustained by false premises and the inability for the participants of the struggle to understand that the goal of socialism was generally unattainable: “In the end, if it fits its world tightly, Marxism was utopian in its cal for a general human emancipation, based on the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie, using the human and material resources generated by the early years of industrialization. The world was not ready for emancipation. Marxism was incapable of fulfilling its mission because (among other reasons), like itself, its world was still too authoritarian, too close in time to domination by religion, too needful of, yet uncomprehending of this need for, a long subjective practice of emancipation. Since Marxism so closely fit – so full expressed, focused, gave shape to – its time, its promised liberation was itself premature. Like its historical period, its hopes were stimulated by real events and trends, but not grounded in them. The early modern revolution, containing, as it had to, so many pre-modern elements, could never lead to transforming history as Marx envisaged it, even if it produced the vision of doing so.”(19)

But this appraisal means that the problem with Marxism is much more serious than that of the illusions justified in the approach of historical necessity. This is because the actual defect with Marxism is that it represents impractical views and principles. The view that communism is possible is unreal and is based on ignoring the actual limitations of the early development of the productive forces under the existing relations of production. Consequently the attempt at the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism must end in failure. Socialism and Communist are not possible and the very premature character of the aspirations of Marxism is expressed in the general durability of capitalism. The logic of Aronson’s view is to suggest that capitalism is the most accurate and true expression of historical necessity. It is the system that symbolises the progress of humanity and means that the struggle of the working class and the influence of Marxism has ultimately utopian or unreal objectives. The tragedy of Marxism is that when the productive forces mature so as to become receptive to the aim of an alternative society it is no longer an expression of a mass movement because of its historical failures. Hence the dynamism of the struggle for change belongs to the ideas, agencies and organisations that have a Post-Marxist dynamic.

This view that Marxism could not succeed is very dogmatic and is based on the effective equation of Marxism with Stalinism. However what is most apparent in the period when Marxism was most influential is that the capitalist system continues to be dominant but this also means that the prospect of the class struggle is possible in this situation. Hence the relevance of Marxism is related to this aspect, as Aronson inadvertently admits: “Marxian hope was an amalgam of a number of elements. If it included a suppressed prophetic or utopian vision, it also included a faith that the proletariat, largely because of their place at the centre of the emerging industrial society, and their status as its outsiders, were capable of seizing power and transforming capitalism into a classless society. And so it was dependent on collective action. It was also rooted in confidence in a scientific grasp of capitalism, including an understanding of its tendencies towards crisis and anarchy.”(20) It could be argued that these aspects of capitalism such as crisis still occur and the working class despite important sociological changes still has the structural capacity to change society. However we also have to recognise that support for revolutionary socialism is minimal and the balance of class forces does not presently favour resistance against capitalism. But above all we have to agree with Aronson that the revival of a revolutionary movement cannot be based on the illusions of historical necessity. Consequently Marxism would have to support a different conception of history if it is to become credible and able to renew its popularity.

Aronson sums up the limitations of historical necessity in the following manner: “The problem was that Marxism, in basing itself on the objective unfolding of events, depended on an assurance that reality was unable to provide. Supposedly scientific prophecy was still just prophecy, a vision of wondrous transformations that might or might not happen. And so, for the sake of its hope, Marxism insisted that its subjects were far more ready and able than they ever could have been to end class domination and become the rulers of a classless society…..Indeed it was never more than possible that the proletariat’s struggles might succeed. Marxism’s sense of security, rooted in its claims to be scientific and to be standing on the solid ground of history, turned out to be no more than a new faith, a false hope – indeed to be bad faith. Beneath this faith lay, as always, the contingency and chance of all human prospects.”(21) But this most serious of critiques of Marxism only establishes that the crucial theoretical and philosophical problem is with the perspective of historical necessity. Aronson considers that this problem cannot be resolved and so Marxism is the ideological generation of false hopes in an unobtainable future. However we would argue that the illusions of historical necessity can be overcome. This aim can be realised by the recognition that class struggle is a constant feature of capitalism and yet its outcome is contingent and based on the balance of class forces. This means on the one hand we should reject the false illusion that history culminates in an end expressed by Communism. The actual complex character of empirical events indicates that this perspective represents a generalisation of an imposition of a philosophy of history onto reality. On the other hand the very complex character of history means that the prospect of socialism is not non-existent. It is entirely possible that mass struggle can raise the prospect of the revolutionary transformation of society. However this perspective can only be understood in relation to the legacy of the past period of defeats for the working class and the restrictive role of the trade union bureaucracy. Hence the prospect of the establishment of a relation between the working class and socialism is based on the development of the influence of Marxism. Whether this occurs is dependent on the dynamism of the class struggle and the effectiveness of Marxism.

Despite the influence of the concept of historical necessity upon Marxism it is important to recognise that an alternative was expressed in the practice of the October revolution and the philosophical writings of Georg Lukacs. He argues: “For a class to be ripe for hegemony means that its interests and consciousness enable it to organise the whole of society in accordance with those interests. The crucial question in every class struggle is this: which class possesses this capacity and consciousness at the decisive moment? This does not preclude the use of force. It does not mean that the class interests destined to prevail and this to uphold the interests of society as a whole can be guaranteed an automatic victory…..But it often turns out that questions of class consciousness prove to be decisive in just those situations where force is unavoidable and where classes are locked in a life and death struggle.”(22) Consequently the crucial prospect of success in the class struggle is not the outcome of mechanical and automatic processes of change that represent historical necessity. On the contrary what is required is the development of class consciousness that recognises the importance of the revolutionary transformation of society. It is quite possible to have tensions that express the contradiction between the productive forces and relations of production and yet change does not occur because of the continued domination of bourgeois ideology, the influence of Social Democracy, or the general failure of the working class to recognise that the situation is maturing for transformation. Hence the objective situation may be ripe for change but change will not occur because of problems at the level of the subjective or the inability of class consciousness to be equal to the prospect for the transformation of society. Furthermore, even when the working class does recognise at the level of consciousness the importance of change this will not occur automatically because of the resistance of the ruling class. In this situation the balance of class forces including the use of force may be crucial for realising the revolutionary transformation of society. But what is most important to understand is that only when at the level of consciousness the working class understand the significance of change will this prospect become possible. It is entirely possible for the objective situation and the subjective to relate to each other in contradictory terms because the subjective lags behind the objective. If historical necessity was an aspect of the revolutionary process the subjective would not lag behind the objective and instead social being would be reflected in consciousness.

Lukacs does suggest that the process of revolutionary change is located in historical development. But this does not justify a conception of historical necessity because what is crucial is the role of consciousness being able to understand the limitations of the immediate and therefore being able to establish a connection to the future: “No doubt, the fact that it is possible to go beyond the given, the fact that this consciousness is so great and profound is itself a product of history. But what is historically possible cannot be achieved by a straightforward progression of the immediately given (with its laws), but only by consciousness of the whole of society acquired through manifold mediations, and by a clear aspiration to realise the dialectical tendencies of history.”(23) The point is that it is not the logic of the objective aspects of the processes of society that brings about change. Instead it is the comprehension at the level of consciousness that brings about not just the cognition of these processes but it also results in the praxis that brings about the transformation of the objective. Hence the character of the objective and its mediations cannot be understood outside of our conscious appraisal and the impetus for praxis and the transformation of the objective. The question of what a thing is within society cannot be abstracted from our conscious recognition of its character and the related impetus to bring about change via praxis.

What is important to understand is not any form of cognition can result in praxis and change. Many types of cognition that are contemplative and individualistic result in a divided relation to the object. It is proletarian consciousness that has the quality to transform the object in accordance with its class interests: “History is at its least automatic when it is the consciousness of the proletariat that is at issue……..The objective economic evolution could do no more than create the position of the proletariat in the production process. It was this position that determined its point of view. But the objective evolution could only give the proletariat the opportunity and the necessity to change society. Any transformation can only come about as the product of the free action of the proletariat itself.”(24) The reference to necessity in this context does not justify some type of automatic impetus for change. Instead it refers to the recognition by the working class of the importance of the revolutionary transformation of society. The point is that the character of the objective could not be understood outside of the consciousness and type of action engaged in by the working class. It is entirely possible that the development of the productive forces could result in the support of reformism and rejection of a revolutionary perspective. Instead of accommodating to the apparent progressive character of the maturing of the objective forces of change it was instead more crucial and important that the working class came to conscious recognition that these economic developments meant it could change society. Without this recognition and the related character of praxis it was entirely possible that capitalism would continue. Only the open rebellion of the working class against capitalism would establish the actual maturing of society for change.

Lukacs argued that it was necessary to reject the evolutionary or organic approach of the Second International including its left-wing variant as supported by Rosa Luxemburg: “In the course of the struggle against the opportunistic, ‘organic’ theory of evolution which imagined that the proletariat would by a slow expansion gradually conquer the majority of the population and so gain power by purely legal means, there arose a revolutionary ‘organic’ theory of spontaneous mass conflict. Despite all the ingenious reservations of its best advocates, this theory ultimately implied the view that the constant exacerbation of the economic situation, the imperialist world war inevitably produced by this, and the approaching period of revolutionary mass conflict would issue with social and historical inevitability in the outbreak of spontaneous mass actions on the part of the proletariat. In the process, the leaders’ clear appreciation of the goals and methods of the revolution would be fully vindicated.”(25) It is not our intention to defend Luxemburg from this criticism which is one-sided because she is aware of the importance of transforming the spontaneous struggle into a conscious struggle for socialism. But Lukacs has outlined a powerful reason why the economic situation of crisis might not result in the corresponding level of class consciousness. This is because of the tensions between the objective and the subjective and the frequent failure of the latter to correspond to the former. His answer is that the role of the party is crucial in order to resolve the contradiction between the objective situation and its expression at the level of consciousness. The Second International had assumed that the imperatives of historical necessity would resolve the distinction between the objective and subjective. But the actual result was the political passivity of the Second International and its adaptation to capitalism. To Lukacs the development of the revolutionary consciousness and actions of the working class would be the result of the guidance of the party and this situation would express the political possibilities arising from economic crisis and war.

It could be argued that Lukacs had replaced illusions in economic catastrophism and historical necessity with the role of the class consciousness, via the party. This standpoint seemed to suggest subjectivism and voluntarism or the view that the consciousness and actions of the working class was able to transcend the limitations of the objective situation. Lukacs defended himself from his critics and argued that the question of whether the level of development of the productive forces can provide an impetus for change can be outlined in the following manner: “If, however, economic development shakes the social foundation of such a state, then whether the crisis is fatal or surmountable for the bourgeoisie depends entirely on the class consciousness of the proletariat.”(26) Hence the question of deciding to support insurrection is an expression of the correspondence between the subjective and objective: “There are, then, indeed, instants in the process (“moments”) where decision is dependent only on the class consciousness of the proletariat. That these decisions do not float freely in the air, that they cannot be brought about wilfully, but are occasioned by the objective process, that is to say they are not isolated from the productive process, is evident from the proceeding formulations.”(27) However, this understanding also results in two different conclusions: “First, that for Marx it appears possible, and therefore clear, that in his opinion, historical materialism is not contradicted by, but rather confirms that objective ripeness for revolution can be present, while the consciousness of the proletariat remains behind objective economic development. Second, that it is the task of the International, the international proletariat party to intervene actively in the process of developing proletarian class consciousness from its actual position to the highest level that is objectively possible.”(28)

In other words recognition of a dynamic conception of the relationship between the objective and the subjective does not imply a defence of subjectivism. Instead the question of revolutionary class consciousness is dependent upon an understanding of the importance of the objective, and this recognition is expressed in praxis. However, it is also necessary to recognise that the significance of the objective cannot bring about automatic revolutionary change, and instead the potential of the objective is mediated by the subjective or the role of class consciousness. It is also vital to understand that if the subjective lags behind the objective the very possibilities of the objective cannot be realised. This dynamic conception of the relation between the objective and the subjective is an alternative to the rigid objectivism that denies the importance of subjective factors such as class consciousness. The approach of Lukacs is an alternative to the dogmatic evolutionism of the Second International and its adherence to a conception of historical necessity. Instead Lukacs is suggesting that history is open-ended because of the very importance of consciousness. On the one hand if the required class consciousness does not develop the possibility for proletarian revolution located within the objective will not be realised. On the other hand the very significance of the objective is mediated by the role of the subjective because it is the dynamic aspect of the latter that interprets the character of the former. Only the development of the subjective will ensure that the potential of the objective is realised and this is not an automatic and mechanical process. The very character of consciousness means that the reflection of the prospects of the objective at the level of the subjective is not guaranteed by the supposed imperatives of history. Instead the development of the class struggle and the related progress of consciousness is the actual crucial aspect that can bring about the correspondence of the potential of the objective with the subjective.

However, Meszaros considers that Lukacs’s conception of class consciousness did amount to voluntarism because it ignored the prospects for the stabilisation of capitalism in a situation of the continued expansion of the system: “For the great difficulty which the socialist movement had to face concerned the fundamental socioeconomic metabolism of the global capital system. No direct appeal to the ideological consciousness of the proletariat could so to speak, ‘jump the gun’ of such objective developments, nullifying or overruling thereby the organic character of the developments in question, when capital could still find vast outlets for displacing its contradictions on the basis of the global ascendency, notwithstanding the setbacks it suffered through the victory of the Russian revolution.”(29) This may be an accurate assessment of the situation but Meszaros still ignores the revolutionary aspects of the class struggle in Europe between 1918-20. This was the situation that Lukacs was responding to and trying to explain. But Meszaros is critical of Lukacs because he does not accept that a pre-revolutionary situation has developed in Europe, and so the result is that he argues that because Lukacs has denied the expansion of capital his approach is based on subjectivism and the denial of the role of the objective: “The importance of the objective factors was consistently minimized by Lukacs in order to enhance the plausibility of his direct ideological appeal to an idealized proletarian class consciousness and to its ‘active, visible and organized incarnation’, the equally idealized party. The crisis of the capitalist system was exaggerated out of all proportions so as to suggest that, had it not been for the ‘minds of the workers’, the established order could not sustain itself any longer. In this way, the neglect of the material factors gave the illusion to Lukacs that the economic and social preconditions of revolutionary transformation were ‘often fulfilled’ and only the ‘minds of the workers’ had to be modified by the ‘active and visible incarnation of their class consciousness’ in order to gain victory over the ‘objectively extremely precarious condition of bourgeois society.”(30)

Meszaros is justifying his view that Lukacs is voluntarist because he under-estimates the development of the stabilisation of capitalism in Europe after the end of the First World War. This may be true but it does not mean that Lukacs’s approach is inherently idealist. Instead he is outlining the importance of the transformation of class consciousness if the working class is to act as a revolutionary agency of change. Hence if the required class consciousness does not develop for any number of reasons, such as the influence of Social Democracy or the ability of the capitalist state to regulate class contradictions, then the development of the prospects of revolutionary change will be undermined. Furthermore, Lukacs justifies the perspective that economic crisis will not automatically result in a process of revolutionary transformation unless the working class is able to intervene and be able to act in a manner that advances the prospect of revolution. If this does not happen it is entirely possible that capitalism will re-stabilise and the possibilities for change will not occur: “For it is evident that the greatest emphasis must be laid on whether the “greatest Productive power” of the capitalist production system, namely the proletariat, experiences the crisis as object or as the subject of decision. For the crisis is always determined by the “antagonistic conditions of distribution”, by the contradiction between the river of capital which flows on “in proportion” to the impetus it always possesses” and the “narrow basis on which the conditions of consumption rest”, i.e. by the objective economic existence of the proletariat. But because of the immaturity of the proletariat and because of its inability to play any role in the process of production other than that of a “power of production” passively integrated into the economy and subordinated to its “laws”, this side of the antagonism never emerges into the open. This gives rise to the illusion that the “laws” of economics can lead a way out of the crisis just as they lead into it. Whereas what happened in reality was that - because of the passivity of the proletariat – the capitalist class was in a position to break the deadlock and to start the machine going again.”(31)

In other words Lukacs is making the crucial point that in most situations the working class has a level of class consciousness that does not allow for an active intervention in order to enable the crisis to be transformed into an open struggle for political power. Instead the passivity of the working class enables the economic situation to be resolved in the reactionary manner of the continuation of the system without the development of an attempt to bring about alternative relations of production. The very ability of the system to function in accordance with its laws is because of the lack of the intervention of the working class on the basis of a revolutionary perspective. This understanding indicates that Lukacs is not a voluntarist and does not over-estimate the potential for the crisis to become an expression of the revolutionary struggle for political power. However the very point that Lukacs is making is the at the character of the crisis generated by the First World War has changed because of the greater levels of participation of the working class in attempting to transform the economic and political situation. The working class is no longer a passive cog in the unfolding of the economic laws of the system and is instead a subject of history that is trying to utilise the situation to its advantage and to facilitate the prospect of the revolutionary transformation of society: “Or more accurately: this transformation is distinguished by the fact that the proletariat ceases to be merely the object of a crisis; the internal antagonisms of capitalist production which had already by definition implied a struggle between bourgeois and proletariat systems of production, the conflict between socialised forces of production and its individual anarchistic forms, now flourish openly. The proletariat had always striven “to destroy the ruinous effects of this natural law of capitalist production on their class”, it now leaves behind it the stage of negativity in which its effect was merely to impede, weaken or restrain, and it proceeds to a stage of greater activity. It is this that brings about the decisive qualitative change in the structure of the crisis. The measures taken by the bourgeoisie to break the deadlock of the crisis and which in the abstract (i.e. but for the intervention of the proletariat) are as available to it as in former crises, now become the arena where class warfare is openly waged.”(32)

The point is that this intensified development of the class struggle is not the ‘normal’ expression of the contradictions of society. Usually the onset of economic crisis does not result in the intervention and activity of the working class and consequently the crisis is resolved at the expense of its class interests. However, the very development of class consciousness, which is caused by the success of revolution, can result in the rejection by the working class of its subordinated position within the relations of production. This results in the perspective that the crisis should not be resolved at its expense and instead the militant attitude that develops is that the outcome of crisis should be action by the working class in order to bring about the revolutionary transformation of society. Lukacs’s view is not an over-optimistic assessment of the situation and is instead an accurate rationalisation of what was happening and relates to the prospects for change within Europe between 1918-20. He is outlining that change will not automatically occur because of crisis and instead only the development of class consciousness can promote the active intervention of the working class in order to promote the prospect of the overthrow of capitalism. In this context it could be argued that Meszaros had a pessimistic understanding of the prospects for change in this period because of his objectivism. This point can be indicated in relation to the following comment that presents a choice between virtual total domination of labour by capital on the one hand and the voluntarist rejection of this situation on the other: “The uncomfortable fact that in the real world the proletariat – as a result of the practically accomplished and consolidated alienation and inversion of the relation between the working subject and its object – is emphatically not the subject of the reproduction process, but happens to be objectively reduced to the status of a mere condition and (cost) of production, totally at the mercy of capital’s imperatives and rationalizing/economizing ‘ decisions, cannot matter in this conception, because facts have been by now ‘wholly dissolved’ into processes’ in order to suit the convenience of the identical subject-object and its labyrinth of conceptual mythology’. All that is needed to turn the ‘unconscious’ proletariat – at present captive of its psychological consciousness – into a proletariat fully conscious of its subject status’; a task to be achieved by means of ideological clarification and theoretical illumination.”(33)

But the point is that this polarised perspective is not the actual choice. This is because the domination of capital over labour is not total and instead this relationship can only exist on the basis of the prospect of opposition and discontent. Hence the very structural character of the relations of production does not mean that the proletariat has to be a subject-object in order for opposition to occur. Instead the crucial point is that the limitations of the capital relation can promote the prospect of the development of class consciousness at exceptional periods. Only this advance of class consciousness will promote the prospect of change and the translation of the ideological development into a revolutionary praxis. This view does not seem to be voluntarist and is instead an accurate expression of the history of the class struggle. In contrast, Meszaros’s view that capital generally subordinates labour to the most abject status cannot explain periods of the intensification of the class struggle and the generation of the prospect of revolutionary change. The approach of Lukacs is not voluntarist because he does not ignore the importance of the role of capitalism and instead tries to explain how the domination of capital can be undermined by the intensification of the class struggle via the promotion of class consciousness.

In other words the approach of Lukacs would be voluntarist if he ignored the fact that the general situation of capitalism is one of stabilisation because generally the operation of the economic activity of capitalism is not challenged by the opposition of the working class. This also means that in periods of crisis it is frequently possible for the forces of capital to resolve the situation without the generation of the unrest and resistance of the working class. However Lukacs would dispute the claim of Meszaros that capital had the potential in the period after the First World War to undergo the possibility of expansion without the prospect of revolutionary crisis. This was because the very fact of the Russian revolution had resulted in the promotion of the class consciousness of the working class and the result was the intensification of class struggle. Hence the onset of economic crisis could not be resolved in the normal manner of the operation of economic laws and instead mass activity contributed to the further economic and political destabilisation of the system. The development of the class consciousness of the working class meant it was not prepared to accept the usual sacrifices imposed by the system in a period of crisis, and instead the result was action in order to resolve the crisis in terms of the possible overthrow of capitalism. In contrast, Meszaros uses his emphasis on the importance of objective factors in order to minimise the importance of class consciousness. Consequently he effectively argues that the militancy of the working class did not recognise the capacity of the system to develop and expand. He is effectively suggesting that Lukacs’s emphasis on class consciousness represents an accommodation to false consciousness that does not recognise the durability of the capitalist system. This argument is similar to the Social Democratic rationalisation of adaptation to capitalism after 1918 because the situation is not objectively favourable to the process of transition to socialism. In contrast Lukacs is able to explain the militancy after the First World War because of the rise of class consciousness produced by the October revolution. This does not mean that he is over-optimistic about the prospects for the transformation of society because he is also aware that the situation could generate important economic and political reasons for the establishment of re-stabilisation. In this context his approach is not ideological as Meszaros claims because Lukacs is still aware that the durable capacity of capitalism such as state regulation of the economy may prove to be superior when contrasted to the progress of the class consciousness of the working class. However what he does dispute is Meszaros’s claim that the role of the objective effectively undermines the capacity for revolutionary change after the First World War.

Robert Lanning suggests that Lukacs approach is compatible with a conception of historical necessity and the view that the development of class consciousness has an inherent logic that promotes the prospect of the realisation of socialism and the classless society.(34) However this is a controversial claim because it could be argued that what Lukacs is actually concerned about is victory in the class struggle and this perspective can be understood in a manner that is not reduced to the imperatives of historical necessity. For example, Lukacs argues: “The proletariat only perfects itself by annihilating and transcending itself, by creating the classless society through the successful conclusion of its own class struggle. The struggle for this society, in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is merely a phase, is not just a battle waged against an external enemy, the bourgeoisie. It is equally the struggle of the proletariat against itself: against the devastating and degrading effects of the capitalist system upon its class consciousness. The proletariat will only have won the real victory when it has overcome these effects within itself.”(35) This comment does not make reference to the role of laws of historical necessity and instead the question of the prospect of the working class obtaining victory in the class struggle depends on its own efforts and level of class consciousness.

In other words instead of an external reliance on historical imperatives the question of the capacity of progress towards socialism is dependent upon the level of class consciousness of the working class and the progress that is being made in the class struggle: “The self-understanding of the proletariat is simultaneously the objective understanding of the nature of society. When the proletariat furthers its own class aims it simultaneously achieves the conscious realisation of the – objective – aims of society, aims which would inevitably remain abstract possibilities but for this conscious intervention.”(36) This comment does not mean that the objective material aspects such as the productive forces are an irrelevant part of historical development. However the question of the potential of these objective aspects is connected to the progress that is being made in the class struggle. The point is that history is not the unfolding of laws and processes that are passively obeyed by people. Instead the very issue of what is meant by historical development is connected to the intensification of the class struggle and the related balance of class forces. This is because the question of progress in economic and political terms cannot be differentiated from the capacity of the working class to intervene in order to influence the affairs of society. In this context the crucial aspect is not the imposition of external historical laws and is instead about the ability of the proletariat as the subject to be able to influence the very development of society. Instead of historical necessity the logic of society is the open-ended aspect of the progress of the class struggle and the related issue of the level of class consciousness. Only when class consciousness increases can the prospect of socialism become actualised and this prospect is by no means teleological and is instead an expression of the development of the class struggle.

Thus the standpoint of Lukacs has provided reasons why we can justify a strategic and ontological alternative to the approach of historical necessity. Instead of the view that the objective and external is primary and the basis of rigid historical laws it is possible to understand that the importance of the objective can only be interpreted in terms of the role of the subjective or the importance of the class struggle and the level of class consciousness. The problem with the Second International was that it relegated the importance of the class struggle to the laws of objective material factors and so neglected the tasks that were generated by the class struggle. In practice the Bolsheviks rejected this approach and Lukacs provided the theoretical justification of an approach that was not evolutionary and contemplative. This new development in the understanding of history did not mean that the role of the objective was ignored and instead the relation of the objective to the subjective was defined in terms of the importance of the class struggle. However it could be argued that at various times Trotskyism as the revolutionary Marxism of the period of the formation of Stalinism has ignored the importance of the objective. This is why Meszaros’s work is important for re-establishing the significance of the objective for the understanding of the class struggle.

FOOTNOTES:

(1)Istvan Meszaros: Philosophy, ideology and Social Science, Wheatsheaf Books, Brighton, 1986 p153

(2)Alex Callinicos: Making History, Polity Press, Cambridge 1987 p64

(3)Meszaros op cit p61

(4)ibid p72

(5)Alex Callinicos: Social Theory, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1999, p94

(6)Meszaros op cit p75

(7)ibid p91

(8)ibid p91

(9)ibid p97

(10)Alex Callinicos: Theories and Narratives, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995 p42

(11)ibid p107

(12)ibid p144-145

(13)ibid p161

(14)ibid p202

(15)Chris Harman: A Peoples History of the World, Bookmarks, London 1999 p620

(16)Ronald Aronson: After Marxism, The Guilford Press, London, 1995 p91-92

(17)Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, New York, 1973

(18)Aronson op cit p96

(19)ibid p115

(20)ibid p261

(21)ibid p261

(22)Georg Lukacs: History and Class Consciousness, Merlin Press, London, 1971 p52-53

(23)ibid p179

(24)ibid p208-209

(25)ibid p303

(26)Georg Lukacs: Tailism and the Dialectic, Verso, London, 2002p60

(27)ibid p61

(28)ibid p67-68

(29)Istvan Meszaros: Beyond Capital, Merlin Press, London, 1995 p319

(30Ibid p320

(31)Lukacs, History op cit p244

(32)ibid p244-245

(33)Meszaros, Beyond Capital op cit p361

(34)Robert Lanning: Georg Lukacs and Organizing Class Consciousness, MEP Publications, University of Minnesota, 2009 p31-43

(35)Lukacs, History op cit p80

(36)ibid p149