UNDERSTANDING MARXIST IDEOLOGY

This article is an attempt to understand the role of Marxist ideology using the work of Meszaros as a guide. His book ‘Beyond Capital’ seemed to underestimate the importance of ideology. However, a previous work ‘The Power of Ideology’ outlines how ideology represents the practical consciousness of social classes in conflict. (1) He rejects the view that the role of ideology is illusory and instead maintains that it is objectively constituted by the very antagonistic character of societies based on class struggle. Thus ideology is manifested in rival world views and strategies that aim to establish domination over the social metabolic order: “In this sense, what determines the nature of ideology more than anything else is the imperative to become practically conscious of the fundamental social conflict – from the mutually exclusive standpoint of the hegemonic alternatives that face one another in the given social order – for the purpose of fighting it out.”(2) The question of the effectiveness of an ideology depends on its ability to justify either a dominant mode of social network in relation to its level of historical dynamism, or its ability to articulate an alternative that it is able to connect the aspiration for change to the role of practice. In this context there are three major ideological standpoints. Firstly, the uncritical defence of the existing social order that tries to deny the significance of dynamic alternatives. Secondly, the approach that whilst indicating some of the irrationalities of the existing system is still undermined by its own tensions and contradictions. Thirdly, the most principled approach which aims to overcome any forms of class antagonism.

This understanding would seem to be un-problematical in that it rejects any suggestion that the antagonisms of society can be differentiated from the role of ideology. Instead the issue becomes which social force is most suited to a particular type of ideology? But, what requires greater attention is the question as to which class, or social force, is most suited to a given form of ideology? This issue is also connected to whether a social force is capable of realising the claims of its own ideology? These tensions are most important in relation to Marxism, which claims that the working class is the practical agency of human emancipation. It would seem that historical experience would raise questions about this claim, and it could be suggested that the reform of the existing system is more compatible with the interests of the working class. Indeed, it could be maintained that this issue has been complicated further by the fact that considerable sections of the working class have increasingly supported the ideology of the ruling class, and therefore implies that the ruling ideology does not conflict with supposed different interests. Meszaros would claim that only a principled ideology would aspire to end all class divisions and therefore is truly compatible with the interests of those that are subordinated within society. In contrast, he contends that the ruling ideology cannot make this claim because it ultimately has to defend the interests of the dominant elite in comparison to those who are exploited and oppressed. The fact that some may not consider themselves subordinated does not necessarily alter this situation if the system can be shown, using both science and ideology, to be based on the actuality of domination. Hence the very role of the ideology of the subordinated is to convince them of this adverse situation and to therefore popularise a strategy of struggle for change of the social order. Obviously, if this task of persuasion is unsuccessful then the influence of the ideology of the ruling order will be the most effective. It could be argued that this reactionary situation is increasingly apparent over the last thirty years. Hence it is has been possible to elect governments committed to deflation, austerity and the overall undermining of the interests of the working class. Thus the propagators of the Marxist ideology have to scrutinise their own viewpoint in order to establish how to improve its effectiveness, and so enhance the ability to convince the subordinated of the validity of the aim of establishing a classless society.

Meszaros would claim that ruling ideologies, because of the very fact they have to justify the situation of domination, cannot be truthful, but he suggests that this limitation is compensated by the fact that they are able to explain the stability of the system. In other words they have the advantage of being able to rationalise what exists and to contrast this situation unfavourably with the unknown of ‘what is not yet realised’. The future can be perceived as being a reckless unknown when compared with the familiarity of the present, and this view can be reinforced with unfavourable views of the Soviet experiment. Meszaros would contend that at some point the practical effects of the ideology of the classless society will have a practical effect. However, this perspective has been undermined by the success of the ruling ideology in neutralising the possibilities of the emancipatory ideology. For example, the Weberian emphasis on rationality has been more influential than the contrasting Marxist understanding of the importance of exploitation. But this ideological situation would be trivial were it not for the uncomfortable fact, from the point of view of Marxism, that these developments have had profound adverse effects on the consciousness of the working class, and so reinforce the hegemonic role of ruling ideology.

In contrast, Meszaros ignores the effect that the effectiveness of the dominant ideology has in popular terms, and instead he concentrates on the theoretical role of the intellectuals. The hegemonic situation of the ruling ideology, has, as Meszaros articulates, profoundly influenced the work of critics of the existing order like Habermas, who reinterpret the strategy of emancipation without the role of labour. They ignore the importance of existing class conflict in order to reduce the role of praxis to discourse. Meszaros outlines how the left-wing intellectuals accommodate to a consensus that denies the importance of actual class conflict, and as a result their theoretical innovation is always based on the dilution of the objectives of Marxism. But this very revisionism would not be very relevant were it not for the fact that this dilution of principles occurs amidst the very crisis of class consciousness of the working class.

However, the emphasis on the crisis of the Marxist intellectual is eventually connected by Meszaros to its material roots in the political situation of the mass movement. Hence he comments: “As far as Marxism is concerned, its transformations (and ‘crises’) are inseparable from the development of the working class movement. For Marxism is not an armchair philosophy that could be practiced irrespective of the conditions prevailing in the international socialist movement. On the contrary, it is a world view which, right from its inception, consciously rejected the idea of a mere interpretation of the world and committed itself to the uphill struggle of changing it: a task whose realization is inconceivable without the successful implementation of suitable political strategies. Hence the actual state of the necessary strategic instruments of the working class movement can never be a matter of indifference for Marxist theory.”(3) Meszaros has outlined the importance of the theory-practice relationship, but he has not yet connected this to the problem of ideological crisis. There is no consoling manner in which this issue can be addressed. The decline of Marxism is caused by the increasing lack of support within the working class for its strategy, or programme of action. This situation is in turn the result of the increasing failures of Marxism to popularise a convincing world view and related conception of the emancipatory role of the working class. Instead the workers support the ideology of the ruling class or reformism. In this sense, it is not the supposed Marxist intelligentsia that are responsible for the decline in popularity of the revolutionary strategy, as Meszaros maintains, but rather the intellectual articulates the increasing estrangement of the working class from Marxism. The left-wing intellectual does not arise out of ‘mid-air, but from the time of Bernstein, they articulate popular moods and express increasing dissatisfaction of working people with Marxism. The response of Marxism should not be to ignore these developments, but instead it should respond to this situation and attempt to uphold and develop Marxism. Failure to carry out these tasks will ultimately be to the benefit of ruling class ideology.

Instead of recognising this relationship between the right-wing moving intellectual and the demoralised working class, Meszaros characterises the situation in terms of increasing emphasis on abstract issues and differentiation from working class concerns: “As a result, the intellectuals have lose their orientation (irrespective of how unquestioning or critical it might have been towards the direct political forces and organizations of the working class base), finding themselves on their own, with the temptation to withdraw into the domain of abstract theoretical discourses quite remote from identifiable practical issues. In a sense, therefore, the working class and its ideology have become ‘superfluous’ in the eye of Western intellectuals. For they could not see a fundamental hegemonic challenge to the existing order emanating from the organized and politically conscious working class movement.”(4) But, in contrast to this conclusion, the working class often shared the concerns and pessimism of the intellectual. For example, the international working class movement effectively agreed with Adorno’s pessimistic conclusion that the victory of Fascism in Germany indicated the unrealistic character of the revolutionary project of working class emancipation. His writings also indicated the despair of working class opinion concerning the possibility of change in the era of the cold war and the hegemony of USA capitalism. Meszaros partially recognises this point when he reluctantly accepts that the apparently intellectual and ideological character of discourse is connected to the crisis of the emancipatory movement: “In this sense, the self-orientated and predominantly abstract ideological discourse of a particular historical period – which attempts to resolve its problems without any appeal to tangible socio-historical forces……does not simply arise from ideology itself. It originates in the historically specific contradictions and crises of the potentially emancipatory social movements, and in the problematical relations between the given social movements and the cultural/ideological agencies at work in society.”(5) The problem is that his resolution of intellectual crisis is dogmatic because he emphasises the role of practice, and so ignores the necessity of a combined theory and praxis interaction. Indeed, it could be that the very renewal of Marxist theory can encourage the prospect of intransigent practice. In contrast, the decline of theory can undermine the development of practice.

In a sense, Marxism has still not replied to Bernstein’s challenge that it does not understand the important changes within society. These social changes have caused a constant crisis for revolutionary theory. The point is that Bernstein was suggesting that these economic and sociological changes meant the end of the validity of Marxism as a revolutionary project. Indeed, the very evolution and influence of Social Democracy seemed to confirm his claim. Since that time Marxism has constantly been theoretically diluted in order to accommodate the significance of social change. Meszaros is suggesting that this process of intellectual dilution has to be ended. Very good, but the most important expression of contemporary Marxism, Analytical Marxism, is based on the rejection of most of the views of Marx in the name of social science and the importance of changes within capitalism. (6) The point is that the regeneration of Marxism cannot take place if its important ideas are continually being questioned without adequate rebuttal, apart that is from the work of solitary figures like Meszaros. Nor can we rely on the problematical changing ‘objective conditions’, or nostalgic books about Lenin or Trotsky, instead the only firm basis to begin the counter-attack is the development of historical materialism, sociology and economics. In other words, all the arguments of bourgeois ideology that attempt to ridicule Marxism have to be rejected. How can we expect working people to become supporters of Marxism if it is presently a theory dominated by revisionist rejection of virtually all aspects of Marxist theory? In this context, Meszaros’s emphatic denunciation of the revisionism of the left-wing intelligentsia is also problematical because he cannot establish what is progressive in thinkers from Hegel to Habermas. Instead he evaluates them in terms of his own intransigent standpoint, and so rejects them as opportunist. He is the dogmatic opposite of Bernstein, and so cannot construct an all-embracing and open-minded Marxism. On the contrary, by being rigid he upholds the revolutionary character of Marxism. This standpoint is effective for indicating the reactionary character of bourgeois ideology, but it is not able to establish revolutionary Marxism except in narrow terms – which may be acceptable - but it also needs to be improved. He may need to be intransigent in order to indicate the importance of labour for human liberation, but this standpoint need not imply absolute rejection of the work of Habermas. Instead it is possible to indicate how Habermas may have improved Marxism without dilution of our principles of historical materialism. On the other hand, flexible Marxism does not mean the rejection of virtually all of its principles in the name of social science. This is the limitation of analytical Marxism, and its approach only encourages the discrediting of Marxism in order to justify the latest forms of social science. This is an opportunist liquidation of Marxism which is intellectually unacceptable if Marxism is to remain credible and feasible. The intransigence of Meszaros is still superior to this latest justification of revisionism.

Meszaros establishes his dogmatically inclined standpoint in a discussion of the pessimistic role of the Frankfurt school. They are considered to have adopted a contemplative approach that denies the importance of social tensions: “Once, however, the actuality of the class struggle is denied, all claims to radicalism go with it. Even the explicit recognition of class contradictions can only become radical if it is coupled with realistic strategies about resolving such contradictions by intervening at the level of the fundamental structural determinations of society, with a view of actually overcoming the antagonism of class domination and subordination.”(7) This standpoint is principled, but it also seems to suggest the development of a Marxist orthodoxy that would deny the relevance of any work that was defined as being outside of its boundaries and premises. In contrast we can suggest that the work of Adorno is both perceptive about society and yet has rejected the Marxist conception of emancipatory agency. We should be able to incorporate the former aspect into our approach whilst rejecting the conclusions about the demise of the role of the working class as an agency of change because of the omnipotence of instrumental reason. Meszaros argues that to Adorno labour is in a condition of adaptation and integration within the universal condition of reification and alienation, and so the only principled standpoint is to reject Adorno’s methodology. But we could argue that the emphasis on negativity implies that the possibility of rejecting this condition is an irrepressible part of the human condition, as Bhaskar outlined. (8) The point is that Meszaros has a method that upholds formalism, and so because Adorno argues that the class struggle is over, this is all that has to be said about his approach. But we can try to establish more profound contradictions.

Adorno’s ‘Negative Dialectic’ tries to outline the limitations of all existing models of freedom, and how they turn into their opposite, But he qualifies this standpoint and also contends: “There is no available model of freedom, save one: that consciousness, as it intervenes in the total social constitution, will through that constitution intervene in the complexion of the individual.”(9) Hence he rejects the collective possibility of freedom but he cannot deny its individual aspect at the level of conscience. This means whilst being ambiguous about the possibility of realising freedom because of the restraints imposed by contemporary society he cannot deny the ultimate basis of this aspiration in the role of the individual. We can connect this glimmer of hope to a dialectic of freedom and praxis, as Bhaskar has done. In contrast, Meszaros cannot establish the profound complexity of Adorno’s dialectic in terms of its tension between futility and the ultimate hope of emancipation. Instead he asserts in terms of closure that: “What paralysed him in a theoretical sense was that he wanted to achieve the impossible; namely to offer a valid critical assessment of the fundamental issues of the capitalist socioeconomic and political order, projecting a way out of the destructive contradictions, while simultaneously also proclaiming the utter futility and even dangerously counter-productive (in his view fascism provoking) character of all practical political negation of that order.”(10) However, as opposed to this simplification we can emphasise that the ultimate beginning for Adorno is with the consciousness of the individual and its rejection of repressive conformity. In this sense we can argue that only the unity of the individual with the collective can overcome the domination of oppression and create the basis for the realisation of freedom. Thus there is enduring hope in the work of Adorno despite the bleakness and the apparent absolute rejection of human emancipation. He cannot deny the tension between the individual and the lack of freedom, and we would add that this reconciliation of the individual with the world requires the role of collective praxis. The point is that Adorno’s rejection of practice does not mean the futility of his criticism, as Meszaros claims, but rather the implicit impulses of criticism and the role of individual conscience require collective praxis for their realisation, and so the role of praxis is the absence that haunts the standpoint of Adorno. Hence rigid rejection of his approach is not required if we are to continue to advocate the strategic superiority of Marxism. Instead we can indicate that the apparent rejection of practice in the name of theory in the work of Adorno is actually an implicit recognition that the aspirations of theory require practice, even if practice has historically had detrimental effects. There is no other means of achieving the implicit aims of theory except at the level of practice, and this is the contradiction of Adorno rather than his standpoint representing a simplistic rejection of practice.

It is true that Meszaros can locate many comments by Adorno which suggest an emphatic rejection of the Marxist perspective of collective praxis, but this does not necessarily mean that the emphasis on the ‘autonomous mind’ is diametrically opposed to the Marxist perspective. Instead we can suggest that the self-imposed limitations of Adorno can be overcome through combination with Marxism. The approach of Adorno and Marx are not irreconcilable. However, instead of recognising the possibilities of reconciliation, Meszaros is intent on indicating the apparent unresolved differences: “How could it be possible for the mind to be so ‘autonomous’ and consciousness to be so ‘advanced’ under the totally reified conditions of ‘advanced industrial society’ was never revealed…….What became abundantly clear, however, was that such a conception of the mysteriously self-generating and self-sustaining ‘most advanced consciousness’ - which could contemplate its diametrical opposition to the existent – could not be reconciled with an alternative view that tried to understand and transform the world through the dialectical unity and dynamic interrelationship of social being and social consciousness. This is why there could be no place for Marx in this critical theory.”(11)

But we can argue there is the possibility to indicate how the ‘negative’ dialectic can only be reconciled with the world via the role of collective praxis. This is the only effective basis to emancipate mind from the limitations of alienation and instrumental reason. What Marxists have to outline is how collective praxis and emancipatory consciousness are compatible and not opposed, as Adorno suggests. The role of critique, which is connected to the perspective of consciousness, means outlining the limitations of capitalism and proposing the unity of theory and practice. The Frankfurt school can imaginatively outline the problem of instrumental reason, and Marxism can argue that the only effective possibility of hope remains with the role of labour. The Frankfurt school has outlined why the task of emancipation is more difficult than originally envisaged because of the alienating influence of instrumental reason, and Marxism can absorb this understanding and recognise that the development of collective praxis is more difficult than originally envisaged. Hence both Marxism and critical theory are undermined by justification of their separation. This differentiation is upheld by both Adorno and Meszaros. Instead of an emphasis on what divides we can establish a principled methodology that attempts to provide for philosophical unity, and so on the one hand indicates the limitations of individual consciousness and on the other hand acknowledges the difficulties in developing collective praxis. The resolution of this tension is to outline the connection between the dynamics of individual consciousness and the role of collective praxis. This means Marxism is required to locate more emphasis on the individual, and critical theory has to reject its scepticism about the emancipatory possibilities of the collective. In other words enhanced epistemological value is realised by this process of unification and effective rejection of the contrast between contemplative critique and unreflective praxis. The result of this epistemological advance is to establish greater reflection on class consciousness. In contrast, Meszaros rejects the conclusions of critical theory as being an expression of unprincipled politics, and their adherents would reject his standpoint as expressing intransigent Marxism. Instead of this absolute polarisation we have to establish the practical and active philosophical basis of critique, as Marx did in relation to the role of the Left Hegelians.(12) This means suggesting that the contemporary role of critique is passive and inactive, and therefore the only basis to improve and transform it is by a ‘new’ connection with Marxism. Unfortunately, Meszaros seems to reject this dialogue in the name of the principled character of Marxism, and so ignores the possibility that critical theory may be establishing relevant questions about the difficulties involved in developing emancipatory and revolutionary consciousness. His criticism of Habermas would also suggest that Marxism as a revolutionary doctrine has no important questions to answer, and therefore any attempt to ‘improve’ and ‘transform’ Marxism is unprincipled. This is the opposite view of the dedicated revisionism of analytical Marxism.

Meszaros outlines the various tensions and contradictions of Marcuse’s conception of the integrated character of the working class into the priorities of capitalism because of the development of the consumer society.(13) However, this does not explain the full complexity of the dilemmas that are involved in the approach of Marcuse. This is because despite his critique of the apparently passive role of the contemporary working class, he admits that it is still the most viable agency of human emancipation: “By virtue of its basic position in the production process, by virtue of its numerical weight and the weight of exploitation, the working class is still the historical agent of revolution; by virtue of its sharing the stabilizing needs of the system, it has become a conservative, even counterrevolutionary force. Objectively, ‘in-itself’, labour still is the potentially revolutionary class, subjectively, ‘for-itself’, it is not.”(14) The result of this dilemma is that Marcuse cannot elaborate a realistic strategy for revolutionary change, and instead in an idealist manner he envisages the creation of a ‘new man’ that is able to promote the formation of a society based on need and not profit. Indeed, he admits that: “The search for specific historical agents of revolutionary change in the advanced capitalist countries is indeed meaningless. Revolutionary forces emerge in the process of change itself; the translation of the potential into the actual is the work of political practice.”(15) This view is an admission that without the role of the working class as the strategic and primary agency of change, the possibility of the overthrow of capitalism is problematical. However, he cannot envisage that the present level of consciousness, and connected practice, could make the working class receptive to the message of emancipation. This seems to be a powerful critique of the Marxist approach, but Meszaros does not reply to it directly and instead is content to outline various limitations in the standpoint of Marcuse. However, what Marcuse has carried out has considerable merit. He asks the important question concerning whether the contemporary working class can change society. This is a crucial question for Marxist’s to address.

Marcuse’s alternative is ambiguous and vague, in that he ultimately rejects the very conception of primary revolutionary agency, but to a Marxist we would suggest that his standpoint is the beginning of an understanding of how a contemporary working class, with a stake in the development of capitalism, is reluctant to overthrow the system, as Erik Olin Wright explains: “But the weakness of system challenging class capacity also reflects ways in which capitalist democracies have offered people real opportunities to organize for significant improvements in their conditions of life within the constraints of capitalism. In taking advantages of these opportunities, one of the central constraints imposed by the state has been abandoning any attempt at revolutionary organization and mobilization. The resulting “class compromises” - in the form of the labour movement and welfare state – have enabled workers to make real gains….Given the robustness of capitalism and the strength of its institutions that reproduce it, at least in mature capitalist democracies, such class compromises are probably still a credible course of action for working class organizations.”(16) Hence without the moralism and elitism of Marcuse it is possible to outline the very real reasons why class compromise seems preferable to the struggle for revolution. This is a central question for Meszaros to tackle, which in a limited manner, he does in ‘Beyond Capital’. What is ultimately of interest to Marxists is the issue of whether the changes within capitalism modify the class struggle into becoming an expression of negotiation and not one of revolution. In this context, the working class remains an important social agency, but it is no longer potentially revolutionary. In contrast, the task of Marxists is to address and not avoid this issue, and instead outline reasons why the strategy of revolution and the aim of socialism have not become irrelevant. This task can be most effectively tackled if we recognise the influence of bourgeois ideology and the relative weakness of the alternative of Marxism. Unfortunately, Meszaros does not seem to recognise this starting-point because he can only comprehend the problem of renegades who have deserted the Marxist camp.

Meszaros outlines in eloquent detail how the cold war led to the desertion from Marxism of many intellectuals like Merleau-Ponty. He indicates that the reason for this right-wing trend was the rejection of the working class as the agency of universal emancipation. The conclusion is that: “In the final analysis, the question of radical criticism is inseparable from that of a social agency in relation to what is feasible to envisage a structural alternative to the given social order. In other words, it is not possible to articulate the content of a radical social criticism in terms of the necessary institutional and instrumental complexes – i.e. with a fairly precise indication of its practicability on the appropriate historical time scale – without the identification of an adequate social force capable of becoming the hegemonic alternative to the ruling class (or classes) of the established order.”(17) Only by posing a hegemonic alternative social force is it possible to undermine any dependency on the ruling ideology. The problem was that the romantic view of the working class held by the radical intelligentsia in the 1930’s was undermined by the sociological changes of the 1950’s. Instead of welcoming increased affluence as an expression of the social improvement of the working class, and an indication of growing strength, this situation was actually interpreted as an end to the connection of poverty with the cause of socialism. The working class was considered to have accommodated to capitalism despite the continued popularity of the trade unions and the role of Social Democracy. This ideological malaise of the previously Marxist inclined intellectual was expressed in the very view that the working class was no longer a social agency with aspirations for socialism.

Meszaros refutes this ideological demoralisation with the view that the validity of the agency of the working class is stronger than temporary social fluctuations, but it was precisely these changes which justified the accommodation made by left wing intellectuals with the ruling ideology. Thus it was not principled to define the character of the working class by its temporary historical situation, and yet this is precisely what the intellectuals elaborated and justified in order to argue that the working class had become integrated into capitalism. However, this very rationalisation was a reaction to what had been a romantic view of the working class which had been defined by a homogenous class consciousness and aspiration for change. This standpoint was based on a nostalgic view of the 1930’s which was imposed onto the 1950’s. The result of this inverted romanticism was repudiation of the supposed betrayal by the working class of its historic mission. In actuality, what was being justified was the accommodation of the intellectuals with the hegemony of USA capitalism and an uncritical view of the prosperity created by boom. Meszaros outlines how principled Marxism must avoid unprincipled compromises with the dominant forces of the present whilst not transforming its strategy into an abstract dogma. In contrast, the radical intellectuals of the 1950’s – with a few notable exceptions – made their peace with capitalism and placed the blame for this accommodation onto the working class. What had really been undermined was the nostalgic conception of the working class, which it had not been possible to uphold given the sociological changes of the 1950’s. In fact, working class integration was still subject to the contradictions of a system based on the exploitation of labour power, and this aspect became apparent in the period of the offensive of capital. By this time the intelligentsia had new reasons to reject the social importance of the working class.

Meszaros concludes from this discussion that it is necessary to reject the pressures of the dominant ideology because the possibility of socialism can never be more than a tendency within capitalism. Ideological support for socialism cannot be based on the justification of historical inevitability, which was the standpoint of the politics of the CPSU. Instead: “In any case, the socialist transcendence of the prevailing order can only be envisaged as a tendency, since its practical manifestations always refer to the particular social forces and their institutional practices, with the possibility of relapses and even major reversals. This must remain the case so long as the tendency in question is not successfully accomplished on a global scale; or at least so long as one cannot speak of a radical breakthrough in the relation of forces between global capital and the totality of labour which unambiguously points in the direction of the effective fruition of the tendency within a short period of time.”(18) However, the problem was that the radical intelligentsia of the 1950’s conceived of the period in terms of definitive defeat and could not establish a more reasoned understanding of the balance of class forces. The working class had actually become stronger in this period, and so was still capable of challenging capitalism. This historical view was not recognised by the intellectuals who could not differentiate appearance from essence.

But it could also be suggested that despite the fluctuations of intellectual opinion there was an issue of class consciousness which Meszaros does not address. The development of the cold war divided the international working class into either pro-American or pro-Soviet camps. This meant the tasks of promoting the aim of socialism became reduced to supporting the Soviet effort to construct an alternative economic and political order to capitalism. The importance of the struggle for proletarian revolution became secondary because of the supposed primary importance of the building of socialism in one country. Consequently the international working class became concerned with the reform of capitalism and often believed that the success of the USSR would ultimately promote socialism in international terms. However, significant sections of the working class also believed in the benefits of the ‘American dream’ and so they upheld the view that capitalism was more successful than socialism. This view seemed to have an objective basis in reality given the dynamism of the American economy and the prolonged period of the boom.

The approach that was most discredited in this period was that of revolutionary Marxism, the perspective of Trotskyism that the world war would result in the intensification of the class struggle had been falsified and instead there was a period of stability. This meant the end of world revolution, but the Trotskyists tried to uphold their perspective with the ludicrous view that new world war would usher in a revolutionary process. This meant the Soviet bureaucracy was considered to have a potential revolutionary role. But the Soviet bureaucracy was more concerned with establishing peaceful coexistence in relation to consolidation of the ‘socialist bloc’. It is not surprising that the Trotskyist movement produced few works of intellectual value in this period, and instead was preoccupied with its own factional struggles and an obsessive concern with the issue of the class character of the USSR. Hence it is not surprising that the work which was most effective in upholding Marxism was Lukacs’s: ‘Destruction of Reason.’(19) This work argued that bourgeois ideology expressed the philosophy of irrationalism because of its defensive character and rejection of the progressive political possibilities of proletarian revolution. The problem was that this work could not extract what was potentially oppositional in the various works of philosophy, such as Sartre’s version of existentialism. Nor could this work tackle the fact that capitalism seemed to have a progressive historical mission because of its ability to develop the productive forces. Indeed, this dynamism of capitalism was the major reason for the crisis of the left-wing intellectual and their inability to explain the effectiveness of capitalism and the increasing standard of living of the working class in Marxist terms.

For example, John Strachey, a former Marxist theorist, argued that the very action of the trade unions had refuted the Marxist conception of the increasing misery of labour: “What has really happened is, on the contrary, that the wage earners by political and trade unionist efforts, sustained over a century, have forced up their standards of life in the teeth of the economic tendencies of the system…..Capitalism, if it had functioned automatically according to the orthodox economists text books, instead of being faced with the “countervailing power” of a labour movement, would indeed have tended to reserve the whole increase in wealth to a small class of owners.”(20) The very trajectory of the class struggle had taken forms that were not predicted by Marxism such as the success of trade union militancy, and the role of reformist intervention in the economy. These developments were made possible by the growth of capitalism which meant concessions could be made. The forces of Marxism could have responded by suggesting that the increasing strength of the working class meant the prospect of proletarian revolution had become more favourable. Instead there was an ideological collapse of the independent Marxist intelligentsia, and the orthodox Marxist parties (Stalinism) tried to deny the importance of the boom and the improvement of the social situation of the working class.

It seemed that the Hungarian revolution undermined this intellectual malaise because this represented an undoubtedly proletarian revolt and led to the formation of workers councils. However the event was interpreted in terms of a national uprising that consisted of the role of the people, and so it’s proletarian character was underestimated. Furthermore, the intellectuals were preoccupied by the situation in Western Europe, and this implied that the era of revolutionary struggles was over. Furthermore, Marxism responded by becoming preoccupied with the question of the ‘Young Marx’ and ‘Old Marx’, and so the historical materialist emphasis on the class struggle was rejected by the concept of working class integration into the system. Thus Marx’s understanding that the possibilities for emancipation were developing within the contradictory development of capitalism, or the tension between the productive forces and existing relations of production, was effectively rejected and replaced with the contention that the system was able to develop science and technology without any problematical consequences. This situation was said to be expressed in the acquiescence of the alienated worker to the imperatives of capital accumulation. The ideologues of capitalism were able to present the situation as one of progress, but the former Marxist intellectual increasingly presented the situation in terms of the domination of instrumental reason. However, this did not seem to promote the possibility of human emancipation. This situation seemed to be confirmed by the development of the military-industrial complex and its destructive character. The pacifist movement opposed this development, but the working class seemed unmoved, and instead seemed to have accepted this situation. Consequently, apparent working class passivity produced a situation of intellectual malaise, and concentration on non-political questions concerning culture.

But Meszaros outlines how this apparent attempt to concentrate on culture at the expense of politics was in vain because: “Thus, the – no matter how abstract and mediated – methods of competing philosophies are inseparable from the practical concerns which they champion in their own way. They originate on the soil of such concerns and they can accommodate within their framework the epochally defined interests of the social forces with which whose standpoint the thinkers who conceptually articulate such interests happen to identify themselves more or less consciously.”(21) Thus the apparent retreat from politics in the 1950’s still resulted in the increasingly philosophically complex attempt to promote human liberation. The extent of the influence of irrationalism was not as strong as Lukacs believed because the apparently irrational could still generate – even in a diluted form – the aim of human emancipation. However, it is true that this irrationalism could not effectively oppose the consistent and intransigent defence of the ruling ideology and social order. Meszaros contends that Marxism is not undermined even in this situation of intellectual retreat because the very claims of the most complex and diverse philosophies are contrasted with the most contemporary and progressive philosophy, which is Marxism. In this context the practical relevance of Marxism will continue despite an apparent retreat because: “For as long as it can successfully reproduce itself in the context of an ongoing social antagonism, nothing more is needed to sustain its claims to vitality than its power to fight its adversary with efficacy on the relevant planes of social and intellectual life.”(22) However, this point underestimates the problem created by the intellectuals internally undermining Marxism because of doubts and scepticism. In this sense, the malaise within Marxism must promote the standpoint of bourgeois ideology. In this context the ultimate result of this intellectual stagnation must be the undermining of the ability of the working class to oppose capitalism. Meszaros seems to suggest that this problem is offset by the fact that we are in the midst of a ‘profound crisis of the social order’, but the irony is that this crisis is not recognised by many of the Marxist intellectuals. Instead they can only contemplate the situation of being one of stability, which is expressed by a passive working class. In this situation these demoralised intellectuals promote the revision of the major principles of Marxism. Meszaros contends that the process of the radical restructuring of society will last a whole historical epoch, but the problem is that many of the Marxist intelligentsia do not have this level of patience and instead they can quickly become despondent in response to any immediate setback or retreat in the class struggle. This is why they often neglect the task of ideological intervention in the class struggle because of pessimism about the prospects of realising socialism. In contrast, Marx outlined how constant ideological struggle is necessary if the political requirements of the class struggle are to be realised. But instead of this conscientious understanding of this task many of the faint-hearted Marxist intellectuals are willing to contemplate defeat and the end of the struggle for socialism. This occurred in relation to the response to the demise of the USSR. (23)

However, Meszaros adopts a more confident posture. He suggests that the very antagonistic character of society will result in the renewal of left-wing ideological conviction: “Nevertheless, the unavoidable choice of one specific alternative, in preference to others, carries with it an equally unavoidable ideological commitment to a determinate position. Moreover, such choice also carries with it the necessity to realign one’s overall perspective, in tune with the practically adopted course of action implicit in the chosen alternative, thereby dismissing not only the adversary but even the rival possibilities that might arise on the same side of the fundamental social confrontation.”(24) However, this is not what the various strands of Marxist opinion have successfully realised because of the very problem of ideological accommodation to other competing ideologies. Instead they have justified the dilution of the perspective of universal emancipation by the working class, and even become ambivalent about support for militant action. In this situation the forces of Marxism, which equate to the criteria of Meszaros concerning principled ideologies, are marginalised and often characterised by the dogmatic defence of what they consider to be a doctrine. The dominant trend is always some form of dilution of Marxism in the name of social science, being explanatory, or flexible and relevant. In contrast, principled Marxism rejects adaptability in the name of principles, and so often represents an ossified doctrine. Hence the forces of a genuine creative and revolutionary Marxism can be very small. Thus the dominant trend is often opportunism in the name of Marxism, and so the optimistic view that the choosing of principled positions is unavoidable is optimistic. Instead it can be argued that for many periods, despite revolution and Marxist influenced class struggle, the ideology of Marxism has been in crisis. It has not been able to present and advocate a determinate position with an agreed course of action, instead what constitutes Marxism has become a matter of dispute and there has been controversy about rival strategies. Indeed, the very relationship of Marx and Engels has become characterised by controversy and dispute, as the work of Norman Levine testifies. (25)

Ultimately Meszaros ignores these ideological problems because he argues that at some point the objective logic of the structural antagonisms of capital must assert themselves in struggle to realise socialism: “In the end there can be no ‘half-way house’ between the rule of capital and the socialist transformation of society on a global scale. And that in turn necessarily implies that capital’s inherent antagonisms must be ‘fought out’ to an irreversible, structurally safeguarded conclusion.”(26) Hence it is suggested that the role of the objective generates resolution of the ideological disputes in terms of unification around the political struggle for socialism. In other words the increasingly favourable situation for the intensification of the class struggle is said to promote the ideological clarity of Marxism. This viewpoint underestimates the problem of the enduring ideological crisis of Marxism which is caused by the very durability and continuation of capitalism. Hence the standpoint of Meszaros is hopeful because the predicted crisis may not result in the intensification of the class struggle, and practice will not necessarily resolve complex theoretical questions. Furthermore, the present situation is characterised by the offensive of capital against labour which has raised new issues about the validity of Marxism. It is difficult to envisage how this enduring defensive situation can become an offensive for socialism. The result of the failed militancy of the 1980’s raised new questions about the Marxist conception of agency and praxis, and sociological changes led to an emphasis on the importance of the new social movements.

Difficulties in the development of victory in the class struggle has historically led to an emphasis on the role of the party as expressing the most effective possibility of success. To Meszaros this is a false standpoint, and often leads to an underestimation of the capacity of capitalism to continue despite opposition. This seems to be a correct analysis, but historical experience has indicated that parties can be invaluable for promoting class consciousness. However, the Stalinist degeneration of the Leninist party led to a new ideological crisis for the intellectuals who supported its interpretation of Marxism. This ideological crisis was possibly the most important because the Stalinist party was both influential in the working class and yet could not advance the cause of the emancipation of this social force. On the other hand, Social Democracy adapted to capitalism, and so the major parties of the working class opposed in practice the aims of socialism. The role of the ideologues of Stalinism was to obscure the importance of Marx and to repudiate his programme of human emancipation. Meszaros contends that the major expression of this rejection of Marxism was the effective rejection of the goal of social revolution in favour of political revolution, and related justified domination of the state by the monolithic party. Socialism was reduced to the aim of nationalisation of the economy on the basis of the role of the party-state, and the necessity of the primary role of labour in the relations of production was repressed in practice. Hence it could be argued that the ultimate expression of the crisis of Marxist ideology was its rejection of the principles of an emancipatory socialist society and there replacement by the justification of a despotic party regime. Consequently, Marxism was undermined by the formation of a Communist International which was loyal to the Stalinist bureaucracy, and this regressive process was consolidated by the creation of an exploitative society which was defined as socialism. The ultimate result of this situation was that the international working class preferred to strive for improvements within capitalism rather than become subordinated to the party state. Ultimately, it was the role of Stalinism which undermined the development of the ability of the working class to struggle for socialism. Consequently, Meszaros has the lonely task in re-elaborating the principles of Marxist ideology after the period of Stalinist distortion of those principles, and the retrogressive effect of intellectual demoralisation caused by the lack of success in the class struggle.

Consequently the issue of realising socialism must be not merely the negation of capitalism but instead the result of mass practice that represents the act of change, and revolutionary transformation is genuinely proletarian. This means socialism cannot be established by decree and is instead the outcome of popular action: “Evidently, such objectives cannot be realized without the work of emancipatory ideology through which the necessary motivational framework of transforming the social individuals ‘whole manner of being’ is defined and constantly redefined. Not from above but as a matter of consciously pursued self-activity.”(27) Hence Marxism as an ideology has to be transformed from being the elitist preoccupation of the concerns of intellectuals and vanguard parties and instead has to return to its original premises of being the theory and practice of proletarian revolution. This ideological process does not automatically resolve questions of representation and the involvement of individuals within a mass movement. These are complex questions, but the point is that historical practice has indicated that Leninist vanguard parties are problematical in relation to the aims of realising human emancipation, and so there is no alternative superior to the return to the Marxist party on the basis of the re-elaboration of the Marxist project of proletarian revolution. This is not to say that Marx is the infallible guide to the creation of communism, but what we know is that the various Leninist and Stalinist interpretations of Marxism are unsuitable for realising revolutionary goals. Possibly this has been the major lesson for the renewal of Marxist ideology. But we also have to be concerned that ‘Marxism’ has become an intellectual creed that is often indifferent to the task of proletarian revolution. It is one thing to argue thoughtfully that the working class has changed and therefore the task of revolutionary strategy has become more complex, but it is another thing entirely to reject the very significance of the class struggle. In other words we should reject the pessimistic dilution of Marxism which accommodates to the view of the end of history and the victory of liberal capitalism. Hence, analytical Marxism is irresponsible in claiming that Marxism can be improved without its revolutionary goals. (28)

The point is that we are not making the argument for the inevitable success of revolution if we also maintain that socialism and communism continue to have validity as alternative forms of society. Instead all that we are suggesting is that the very character of capitalism creates the possibility of the emergence of socialism because of the dynamics of class struggle. Indeed, Marx was aware that individuals within the working class may object to the goal of revolution despite their antagonistic relationship within the social metabolic order. The point is individuals have the free will to oppose the promotion of class struggle, and this opposition is frequently expressed in votes for conservative parties. Thus Marxist ideology should not be based on trying to deny the difficulty or complexity of the task of proletarian revolution, and it should not assume the imminent prospect of transformation. Hence Marxism should not assume that the working class is a homogenous class with a uniform interest, and instead it has to recognise the significance of distinct strata with views that may conflict with those of other sections. This mean the creation of a common interest is immensely difficult, and the differences within the class have to be taken into account when developing a realistic strategy of change. In contrast, the ruling class is often united in defence of the system: “In complete contrast, the internal stratification of the subordinate class tends to intensify the contradiction between immediate and long-term interests, defining the latter as merely potential (anticipated, hypothetical, etc.) whose conditions of realization escape the immediate situation. Hence arises the need for an inherently critical attitude towards the requirement of unity in the subordinate class, implying the practical articulation of modes and means of action in order to positively mobilize and coordinate the diverse forces of its numerous strata, without superimposing on them a separate bureaucratic structure of ‘unification’ from above which tends to defeat its original purpose.”(29)

The reformist standpoint tends to reject the revolutionary approach as being unrealistic and over-ambitious, but the problem for reformism is that the protracted crisis of capitalism has led to the undermining of reforms and there replacement by the systematic introduction of measures detrimental to the interests of the working class. This should be the very time to popularise Marxism, but the legacy of the past failures of Stalinism, and the ideological hegemony of the ruling class, is having an effect. Furthermore, the attempt to argue for Marxism is being undermined by the cautious standpoint of it interpreters, such as Analytical Marxism. Meszaros considers that these types of problems are primarily explained by the dynamism of capitalism in the past historical period, but he is confident of revolutionary changes in the present because this period of expansion is over. This may be part of the explanation of reformism and conservatism but the major issue is connected to the limitations of Marxism, which has been unable to effectively undermine the hegemony of bourgeois ideology. (The reasons for this situation have been outlined) Thus we are only beginning the arduous process of improving Marxist ideology in order to tackle the challenges posed by bourgeois ideology. This does not mean that there is one definitive understanding of Marxism, but the unifying task should be an emphasis on the goal of proletarian revolution. This may seem an old-fashioned view, but the alternative is to embrace reformism. It could be argued that very few people support this goal, but its validity is not determined by its popularity, and instead it is the intensification of the contradictions of capitalism which are renewing the political basis for an aim which has been temporarily discredited by the reactionary role of Stalinism.

Meszaros outlines how even if we elaborate Marxism in terms of its principled and revolutionary character, and so enhance its capacity to oppose rival ideologies, there are still limitations that must be addressed. Primarily, the question of how to develop communist mass consciousness, and to maintain this condition in order to overcome any tendencies tending to generate the formation of an exploitative society in the complicated transitional period before communism: “Accordingly, if there is an identity of purpose among the vast majority of the population – an identity which, under the prevailing circumstances, only the working class’s ‘full consciousness of its historic mission and historic resolve to act on it’ can produce – in that case the state immediately becomes a fully controlled transitional ‘political form’ and a mere means to emancipatory action, since the difference between rulers and the governed disappears by definition.”(30) Thus the overcoming of the separation between the present and the possible future is created by communist mass consciousness. The problem is that this development has effectively never happened in history, and so there is doubt as to whether it is practically possible. Indeed, Marxism has failed to address this issue because the prevailing emphasis has been on the role of the party providing the necessary leadership that will bring about the success of the revolution. Thus the fact that the party cannot establish a genuinely transitional regime with the possibilities of realising socialism is glossed over. Consequently the emancipatory potential of communist mass consciousness has not been elaborated, and instead Marxism is ideologically opposed as a form of elitism. Hence the suggestion is that we have to develop a strategy – which has not yet been successfully articulated – of a conception of proletarian revolution which is based on the importance of developing communist mass consciousness.

The supporters of Trotskyism would argue that this task is addressed in the Transitional Programme. The problem with this programme is that it assumes the pre-revolutionary character of the immediate situation: “The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie…..All sections of the proletariat, all its layers, occupations and groups – should be drawn into the revolutionary movement. The present epoch is distinguished not because it frees the revolutionary party from day-to-day work but because it permits this work to be carried on indissolubly with the actual tasks of the revolution.”(31) This programme was written in an era of intense class struggle when this comment had genuine validity. But how do we promote communist class consciousness when the working class is on the defensive, and even considered a marginal social force? Meszaros does not emphasise the intensification of the process of class struggle, which is outlined in the Transitional Programme, instead he refers vaguely to the objective importance of the structural crisis: “It is under the circumstances of such elemental structural crisis that labour can successfully assert its claims to being the only feasible hegemonic alternative to the established order in all its dimensions, from the basic material conditions of life to the most intricate political and ideological aspects of social interchange.”(32)

The problem with this approach is that it underestimates the very problem of ideological hegemony of the ruling class that has accumulated in the very period of the defensive situation of the working class. This means that successful ideological struggle has to be carried out if there is to be symmetry between the situation of crisis and the development of unrest within the working class. Therefore Marxism has to be developed in order to be suitable for the tasks of promoting communist mass consciousness. Hence the beginning of ideological struggle has to occur within Marxism if the trend of revolutionary orientation is to become influential and so equipped to promote the emergence of communist mass consciousness. Hence Marxism has to overcome the retrogressive influence of the period of defeats and the necessarily defensive character of class struggle. Instead it has to connect the character and generation of communist mass consciousness with the perspective that capitalism can be overcome and defeated. This standpoint requires the discrediting of all trends within the labour movement that uphold accommodation with capital. Thus the first measure that has to be promoted is the rejection of an empty and vague conception of unity within the working class. Instead the principle of solidarity has to be connected to the aims of revolutionary transformation, and so in this context Marxism has to become hegemonic within the working class. Hence there is no alternative to ideological struggle with reformism and other trends of conciliation with capitalism. But this task does not imply ideological conformity and the repression of diverse viewpoints. Instead the very task of revolution should imply the development of polemic and argument concerning how this aim will be realised. In other words the very victory of Marxist ideology should not result in closure and the rejection of discussion about the class struggle. But Meszaros seems to underestimate this importance of ideological struggle because of his emphasis on the role of the structural crisis of capitalism combined with the increasing social weight of the proletariat. These factors may be important but they merely represent a potentiality as long as the effectiveness of Marxist ideology is not realised. There is no alternative to the ideological task of Marxists attempting to convince the working class of the goal of communism. The development of favourable objective factors for this struggle does not mean this task of propaganda and ideological struggle becomes superfluous.

Meszaros implies that the aim of the economic emancipation of the working class has to replace the political objectives of Leninism. He provides strong reasons for his standpoint. But what is unacceptably assumed is that this view is the only ‘truth’ or genuinely principled perspective. In contrast to this homogeneity of standpoint, the very ideological ascendency of Marxism should express a flourishing of opinions about the tasks of revolution and the character of the communist society. Certainly we can argue that our particular opinion is more explanatory and more likely to result in communism, but this does not mean that different views on these subjects should not be tolerated. Indeed, it is entirely possible that by the process of discussion and theoretical reflection that our opinions will be changed. However, what is crucial is that the aim of proletarian revolution should not be diluted by this process of democratic discussion, and maintaining this revolutionary perspective will be realised to the extent that the flourishing of Marxist ideology will generate communist mass consciousness. Indeed, in this context resolving the ideological crisis of Marxism will immensely facilitate the possibility of making progress in relation to the task of proletarian revolution. This is why Meszaros is wrong to contend that Lukacs has over-exaggerated the importance of ideology. It may not be the most crucial aspect undermining the possibility of proletarian revolution, but it certainly is very significant. The point is that as long as bourgeois ideology is hegemonic the possibility of proletarian revolution will not be realised. Furthermore, bourgeois ideology will only be undermined and effectively challenged when Marxist ideology becomes influential. This does not mean that ideology is more important than class struggle, but ideology interacts with the class struggle either to advance, or undermine, the prospect of revolution. Indeed, it can be argued that Marxist ideology is in some form of crisis as long as proletarian revolution does not occur. Hence it is precisely the task of Marxist theorists to make progress in the struggle for ideological hegemony. To avoid this task in the name of objectivism does not promote the aim of revolution, and instead can undermine it because of indifference to the importance of theory.

The approach of Meszaros is contradictory. On the one hand he outlines the various limitations of the influential interpretations of Marxism such as the Leninist neglect of the task of the economic emancipation of the working class. On the other hand he defines the Lukacsian emphasis on ideology as being idealist because of the apparent denial of the importance of objective factors like crisis and the durability of capitalism. However, Meszaros’s intransigent standpoint actually represents an ideological intervention in favour of for a particular conception of revolutionary Marxism and the related outline of the limitations of rival views. This means in the last analysis he understands the importance of ideology and its relationship to the tasks of proletarian revolution.

Meszaros considers the challenge of reformism in relation to the legacy of Bernstein, who is personified as the expression of a strategy that was limited, flawed and often based on illusions about capitalism. (33)Consequently he did not establish the major challenge of Bernstein, which was to outline how social progress for the working class meant the prospect of reforms, and therefore revolution was not the most appropriate basis for the advance of the socialist movement. The point being made was that the conception of society elaborated by Marx had become anachronistic, and so the perspective of proletarian revolution had become superfluous. Meszaros does not reply to this point, and he does not outline how Bernstein was refuted by the tragedy of the First World War, which indicated that the situation was maturing for the possibility of world revolution. Instead his position provides no basis for opposing Bernstein because he considers the capitalist system to be dynamic and so able to provide for reforms in certain countries. This standpoint is reinforced when he considers that the most gifted and principled revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg could not realise her objectives: “The tragedy was that under the prevailing historical circumstances, notwithstanding the clarity of Rosa Luxemburg’s vision and the depth of her revolutionary socialist commitment, the course of action which she was advocating with exemplary consistency throughout her life could not be successfully accomplished.”(34) In other words Luxemburg’s strategy is considered unrealistic because of the problem of the strength of reformism, which was connected to the dynamism of German capitalism and the isolation of the revolutionary movement. Meszaros is suggesting that the aims of revolution were very unlikely to be realised because despite the importance of imperialist war the system of capital was still able to expand and develop. Hence the objective basis for the initiative of the revolutionary movement was unfavourable: “The dilemma which the leaders of the revolutionary forces had to face concerned the possibility of initiating a socialist assault on the established order at a time when the latter seemed to be able to expand and consolidate it positions all over the world, despite its inner antagonisms. Thus, if the revolutionary forces wanted to make a breakthrough in the direction of an eventual socialist transformation, they had to exploit whatever opportunities they could see arising from the contradictions of imperialist rivalry. At the same time there could be no guarantee that the processes set in motion by the very attempt at a first break-through would lead to the realization of the envisaged socialist objectives, since so much had to remain under the prevailing relation of forces, well beyond the control of the revolutionary social agency.”(35)

This standpoint effectively maintains that revolutionary activity is not possible in what are defined as unfavourable objective conditions in the inter-war period because of the situation of the continued expansion of world capitalism. But in fact, the first imperialist war led to general unrest within Europe and to revolution in Russia. The situation in Germany was also maturing for radical change, but the role of Social Democracy was vital for repressing the increasing prospect of proletarian revolution. This is not to suggest that proletarian revolution would have happened because of the unrest at the end of the First World War, but it was also pessimistic to contend that objective conditions would mean that revolution was unlikely. The actual problem was the role of political parties. Thus Social Democracy acted against revolution, whilst the emerging Communists were not effective and unable to promote a viable revolutionary strategy. Instead of this understanding, Meszaros justifies a pessimistic perspective: “This is why the way out of the historical tragedy of the socialist movement can only lead through the ultimate unification of the complementary revolutionary perspectives of Lenin and Luxemburg. Once, that is, the global development of capital productive potentialities – as well as the of its inseparable contradictions which turn the positive potentialities into devastating realities – effectively alters the historical relation of forces, so as to replace the long prevailing ‘fateful circumstances’ by more favourable ones as regards the general objective of socialist emancipation.” (36) The conclusion is that the possibility of revolution was remote in the inter-war years because of the continued dynamism of capitalism.

This perspective is flawed because it ignores the very importance of ideology, or the battle of ideas. The important aspect of the global development of capitalism seemed very remote, and even irrelevant in 1918, because of the increasing unrest of the international working class and the increasing maturing of the conditions for revolutionary developments. The result of this situation was several attempts to overthrow the bourgeois regimes, and these culminated in the formation of the Hungarian Soviet republic. An important aspect that led to the political stabilisation of the situation was the immaturity of the emerging Communist parties and the continued strength of the bourgeois parties and Social Democracy. In this context, ideological struggle to obtain the support of the working class for the aims of the Communist party was vital, as the Communist International was aware.(37) However, the strength of Social Democracy meant the Communist parties were put on the defensive and so they had to adopt a different and modest united front tactic. This did not mean that revolution was not possible because this conclusion was to ignore the potential of the mass unrest in Europe. It was the development of Stalinism that undermined the ability to develop principled revolutionary strategies, as was indicated by the influence of opportunism in the British general strike and the Chinese revolution. In this context, the leadership of the CPSU utilised the fact of the temporary stabilisation of capitalism in order to justify the dilution of revolutionary principles and uphold the adoption of centrist vacillation. The point is that with a different national and international leadership of the Communist International the aim of proletarian revolution could have made advances. To deny this possibility is to accommodate to the limitations of the Stalinist leadership of the Communist International. This is not the intention of Meszaros, but he does not provide an alternative because of the contemplative implications of his standpoint. To imply that proletarian revolution was premature before the present period is to effectively reject the necessity of revolutionary strategy between the 1920’s to 1970’s. This approach may have had immaculate Marxist reasoning but it cannot provide an alternative to the opportunist role of Stalinism.

Nor can Meszaros explain what the role of Marxist ideology would have been in this period? Certainly, the standpoint of Marxism as a perspective of proletarian revolution would have been diluted, and effectively rendered impotent. Marxism would have been reduced to being a posture of passive propaganda for a long-term aim of social transformation, which would in turn have denied any effective and practical relationship to the present. Any attempts to obtain support for Marxism in these terms would have become untenable, because the role of the class struggle would have been pronounced as being impractical and unable to promote success. Indeed, Marxism would have been reduced to an historical tragedy, and based on the separation of theory and practice. Hence, it is not surprising that working people preferred the practical alternative of the Communist International which attempted to elaborate various action programmes for the overthrow of capitalism. Unfortunately, the diplomatic aims of the USSR conflicted with the aim of world revolution. Thus the requirements of the class struggle were increasingly subordinated to the attempts of the USSR to uphold the Popular Front despite it being a strategic rejection of revolutionary aims. (38) However this political opportunism was not explained by an objective situation that was unfavourable for revolutionary Marxism, instead the economic situation was one of crisis that was generating the very prospect of a second inter-imperialist war, as the theoreticians of Stalinism acknowledged. (39) The point was to them that the defence of the USSR was more important than the development of world revolution. Indeed the former was the basis of the latter. Hence it was not the durability of capitalism that was the basis of the failure of proletarian revolution, but instead the political role of Stalinism and its undermining of the consciousness of the most advanced sections of the working class. Ultimately the Nazi-Soviet pact led to the Second World War and the related weakening of the forces of the international working class. Eventually the defeat of fascism led to the cold war, which created new political and ideological forms that denied the possibility of international proletarian revolution. Hence it was the dynamic distortion of the class struggle by reactionary and imperialist forces that denied the real possibility for proletarian revolution in the inter-war years. Only with the cold war was capitalism able to resume a process of expansion that had been effectively interrupted in 1913. It was in this period that the objective situation was not favourable for proletarian revolution.

Meszaros articulates the various limitations of reformism which has become based on an accommodation to capitalism and so has rejected any pretence of adherence to the socialist project. But this standpoint will be increasingly tested: “Thus, the traditional usefulness of social democracy as such for managing the system of capital and containing the conflicts within the boundaries of the established system is being questioned under the severity of the deepening structural crisis.”(40) This comment represents the deterministic assumption that economics will determine politics, and so it is suggested that Social Democracy will be seriously tested by the pressure of the working class responding in an increasingly militant manner to the effects of crisis. In fact, the most direct and effective pressure has been that of the representatives of capital who are attempting to influence the representatives of reformism to reject their traditional programme and instead replace it with recognition of the policies of austerity, deflation and de-nationalisation. The crucial issue is about more than getting the working class to support ‘popular capitalism’ and the aspiration of affluence and social mobility, this was the project of the past. Instead what is at stake was trying to obtain working class support, via the role of Social Democracy, for acceptance of an undermining of its material needs in the name of economic ‘common sense’ or the ‘national interest’. This was because the capitalist system was in increasing crisis, especially after the 2008 recession, and so the system required the very support of the working class in order to resolve the crisis at its expense.

Meszaros contends that the action of the working class will generate a crisis of Social Democracy, but whist this may have had some truth in the 1980’s what is presently more important in this situation is the role of capital and its economic and ideological pressure. The representatives of capital maintain that only the perspective of bourgeois political economy is acceptable and that the achievements of the welfare state are becoming an unnecessary luxury. Even the left-wing leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn is under this pressure to accept the end of the era of reforms. The working class is disorientated by this situation because the crisis of Social Democracy only reinforces the ideological hegemony of the ruling class. The result is an unprecedented decline in the development of the class struggle. Thus the conclusion of Meszaros about the present situation is over-optimistic: “For the class struggle – in a multiplicity of its forms - simply refuses to go away and thereby conform to the wishful strategies of reformist parliamentarianism. This is why the structural crisis of capital is simultaneously and also the crisis of Western social democracy.”(41) Instead, for the reasons given, it is capital which is the active factor in generating the ideological malaise of Social Democracy. Hence the representatives of reformism are unable to justify reforms in a situation of crisis, which also suggests the necessity to dismantle the Welfare state.

Meszaros bases his confidence on the perspective that the situation of the unevenness of the rewards of labour on a global scale, which has undermined international solidarity, is coming to an end. This development may represent the possibility of developing unity but this prospect is challenged by the ideological effects of the offensive of capital against labour since the 1980’s and the connected hegemony of bourgeois political economy. The working class lacks its independent political voice which means it is unable to articulate the aim of proletarian revolution as the alternative to the crisis. Indeed, the very development of militant action is problematical. Furthermore, this problem is intensified by the apparently enduring problem of nationalism which acts ideologically to undermine any possibility of working class internationalism. Meszaros responds and suggest that the capital system is inherently global and so the objective basis for proletarian solidarity is established. This is true, but the very influence of ideology seems to actively undermine the possibility of this development despite the actuality of crisis. Meszaros seems to suggest that the increasing sharing of similar social conditions will promote the possibility of international solidarity. This is possible, but this view ignores the enduring character of nationalism which is not just a product of differential material situations within the world economy. Nevertheless even despite his optimistic view, Meszaros admits that the issue of developing international solidarity is one of the greatest challenges for the working class. The question of transforming what is potential into actual is very complex and could be undermined by countervailing tendencies.

Indeed it is necessary to view the enduring character of nationalism in relation to the significance of the defeats of the working class. It is possible that history could have been different if the Second International had carried out its anti-war resolutions in 1914. The international working class would have been confronted with the direct dilemma of support for nationalism or internationalism. Even if the majority had upheld nationalism, a militant minority would have been prepared to defend internationalism. The First World War would have occurred under different conditions and it is possible that the war could have been quickly resolved under these circumstances. However, the capitulation of the Second International led to Social Democracy supporting the foreign policy of the national state and therefore legitimised the popular character of nationalist ideology. The Russian revolution revitalised the principles of internationalism but the cautious foreign policy of the CPSU legitimised the bourgeois nationalism of the liberal democracies. The most progressive cause of the international working class became support for anti-fascism led by the democratic capitalist powers. Then the cold war only reinforced national sentiment, and Social Democracy was a reliable supporter of USA imperialism. In other words since 1914 there has been popular nationalism and its ideological justification is upheld by daily practices and institutions. Consequently, the development of globalisation has not led to the international organisation of the working class. Instead the legacy of nationalism is still influential in terms of the organisational character of the trade unions and political parties. Furthermore, the capitalist crisis has led to the intensification of nationalist sentiments in the form of increasing support for right-wing populism and anti-migration views. Thus it will require the development of support for Marxist ideology to begin to challenge these sentiments.

It is also vitally important that the prospect of a No vote in the EU referendum in the UK is defeated. This is because the ideological result of a No vote will be to reinforce reactionary nationalism and discredit any conception of even liberal internationalism. Such an apparent vindication of nationalism will be utilised to support thereactionary politics of deflation and austerity. However, the Kantian view of internationalism is inadequate, as Meszaros was aware. An ethical approach of liberal humanitarianism is utopian in a world characterised by imperialism and economic inequality. The only perspective that is realistic is that of proletarian internationalism, but this also seems to be difficult to realise because of formidable ideological and historical problems. However, as Meszaros outlines, the increasing uniformity of social conditions can provide an objective basis for internationalism. The difficult task is to undermine the popular and long-standing character of popular nationalism, which is ultimately based on the construction of distinctive identities that go back to the middle ages, if not before. In comparison the contemporary working class movement is about 150 years old, and its successes have been few and far between. In comparison the British state has the ideology of the victory in the Second World War and the traditionalism of monarchy. However, it would be defeatist to suggest that nationalism can never be undermined. What should be the beginning of this change of views is the promotion of Marxism, the most effective ideology of internationalism. This process does not mean a nihilistic rejection of the achievements of the nation, but instead the undermining of the supposed link between nation and capitalism. The point is to create ideological support for the view that the aim is to oppose capitalism, and so indicate that the role of the nation represents mythical support for that economic system, which is actually inherently international and implies the goal of universal human emancipation.

The main purpose of Marxist ideology, to Meszaros, is to outline the possibility of universal human emancipation, and to indicate that practical constraints can be overcome within the objective material constraints. This standpoint contrasts with all the various Enlightenment ideologies that have become the justification of what exists, or the Hegelian defence of the ‘real as rational.’ Hence the character of ideology is not false consciousness, or mystification, even if this may be involved, but instead what is relevant is their location within the system and whether they are apologetic or critical. The durability of the ruling ideology is defined by its ability to convince the mass of the working people that they do not have an interest in trying to overthrow the system: “For the great masses of the ‘converted’ not only recognise the fundamental characteristics of the prevailing social intercourse in the discourse of the ruling ideology, but also acknowledge that such characteristics constitute the limits of their own practically feasible action under the stable conditions of successfully self-asserting capitalist normality.”(42) This situation of normality has not existed since the mid 1970’s when the significance of crisis has become increasingly important. But the ideological hegemony of the ruling class has been able to define the narrow limits of ‘acceptable’ political behaviour. This has meant the aims of Social Democracy are defined as extreme and unacceptable and anti-trade union laws are introduced in order to restrict the effectiveness of militant action. However, this situation has not led to unrest because the supposed ‘wisdom’ of bourgeois political economy is accepted by the majority of the population. The response to a previous situation of crisis was different.

Meszaros suggests that the economic crisis of 1929-33 did not result in ideological questioning of the validity of capitalism. In fact this situation did result in the polarisation between the extremes of fascism and the socialist alternative. However, the Communist International acted to stabilise capitalism. The point was that the intensification of the class struggle in that period did not result in the overthrow of capitalism because Marxist ideology was undergoing acute crisis because of the degeneration of the Communist International. The identification of Marxism with Stalinism meant the former could not assert itself as an ideology of universal emancipation. Instead the specific interests of the Soviet bureaucracy were dominant. This does not mean that if Stalinism had not existed the result would have been proletarian revolution. But Stalinism did undermine the realisation of this prospect. What was the major force in upholding capitalism was not the role of bourgeois ideology, which was in a crisis because of the failures of orthodox political economy, and instead the continuation of the system was because the major socialist parties did not uphold a principled revolutionary strategy. They were the ‘last resort’ defenders of the system. Thus the conditions were maturing for socialist transformation in terms of a chronic decline in the development of the productive forces, but instead what occurred was a political crisis connected to the lack of revolutionary will of the socialist mass parties. There was actual support within the working class in favour of change, but the ideology of Marxism had become diluted in favour of the narrow interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. The mass strikes in France, as well as developments in Spain, indicated the possibilities, but the Communist party was limited to the aim of upholding bourgeois democracy. Thus it was the role of ideology that became the most dynamic aspect explaining events in the 1930’s. Firstly, the ultra-leftism of the German Communist Party had unintentionally promoted the victory of Fascism, and then the Popular Frontism had undermined the potential for revolution in France and Spain.

In other words this situation could possibly have been improved by the popular influence of principled Marxist ideology. But this standpoint had been relegated to the role of intellectuals. (43) The actual attempt to develop Marxism did not occur independently of the role of the political parties. This meant Marxism became a rationalisation of opportunist political practice. For example, the character of the class struggle and the socialist regime is reduced to the formation of the party state, as John Strachey explained in the 1930’s: “The coming of communism can alone render our problems soluble. A working class dictatorship can alone open the way for Communism. A working class dictatorship can only be successful if the workers as a whole achieve a clear understanding of the historic destiny of their class. And this understanding, in turn, cannot be developed unless the working class succeeds in organising its most conscious and clear-sighted members into that indispensable instrument of the workers will, a Communist Party.”(44) Thus the class struggle is reduced to the imperatives of party-revolution and the character of communism is defined by the vanguard role of the party. This suggests that the workers can only struggle for communism with the ‘permission’ of the party, and so the aspirations of revolutionary transformation are only ‘allowed’ under the dictates of Stalinism. The class struggle and communism are bureaucratised and based on the strict restrictions of Stalinism.

It is the response of Gramsci to the apparent ineffectiveness of the Communist parties, in relation to the tasks of proletarian revolution, to try and develop an alternative strategy that is able to establish a more effective relationship of the party and class. Meszaros argues that this attempt is a failure because of Gramsci’s emphasis on the role of ideology and the limitations of the spontaneous consciousness of the working class: “Gramsci’s dilemma is in part self-imposed, in the sense that he ascribes too passive a role, and grants an excessively small amount of rationality to the ‘amorphous mass element’ and its ‘common sense’. As a result, the constitution and transmission of an overall view of the world…. cannot be visualized as a creative process. Rather it must be considered as no more than directly subsumed under the dominant ideology, from which follows that the masses can experience philosophy ‘only as a faith’.”(45) This seems to be an unfair view because to Gramsci the very ideological limitations of common sense can be challenged. Instead the major problem in the approach of Gramsci was his failure to connect the limitations of Stalinism with the role of international class struggle. (46) Instead he concentrated on national issues and so his ‘Prison Notebooks’ attempted to establish the ideological problems of the realisation of proletarian revolution in a manner that glossed over the role of the Communist International. However, Gramsci implicitly understood that the approach of the Bolshevik revolution – the insurrectionary revolution – would be unsuccessful in the West where the long-term role of attrition would be more appropriate. But his emphasis on the importance of the party intellectuals meant he was not able to entirely overcome the limitations of a Jacobin analysis of the revolutionary process in the West. (47)

What Meszaros does not recognise is that Gramsci understood that the limitations and tensions of Marxist ideology are connected to its inability to establish an appropriate political strategy for revolution in the West. His view was that the strategic problem was the tendency to try and repeat the character of the Bolshevik revolution may have been flawed, but he was unsure whether this was because of the increasing opportunism of the parties of the Communist International. However, he was able to recognise that Marxist ideology had to be improved if the reactionary limitations of popular common sense were to be overcome. This task was integral to the possibility of enhancing the class consciousness of the working class and enabling it to become an agency of revolution. Unfortunately, Meszaros does not recognise this progressive quality to the work of Gramsci because he actually considers that it represents pessimistic tendencies about the prospect of overcoming capitalism. Instead Gramsci in an often very complicated manner has unintentionally recognised that the Stalinist leadership of the Communist International has generated problems for the process of proletarian revolution, even if this is not directly referred to because of the emphasis on the limitations of popular consciousness. The implicit view is that the improvement of the Communist International is required if it is to tackle the complex ideological issues of revolution. Hence he can both directly gloss over the limitations of the Communist International and yet allude to them in a very opaque manner.

Meszaros contends that at some point the ideological complexity of the defence of capitalism will become reduced to the question of whether the self-management of the producers can be realised because of the increasing crisis of the hierarchical character of the capital system: “Obviously, then the gap between these two conceptions of authority is quite unbridgeable, indicating the persistence of objective antagonisms as their ground of determination.”(48) However, this economic, political and ideological polarisation has not yet been realised. The historical experience of the class struggle, and its mediation by the role of political parties, has indicated that the Marxist approach towards proletarian revolution, as the emancipation of labour, has not been consistently articulated. For various reasons, the following definition of socialism has not been promoted: “This radical uprooting of capital by the self-emancipating individuals from its present domination of the social metabolism is precisely what the socialist project is all about.”(49) Instead of this objective recognition of what the realisation of socialism should consist of, the actual ideological development of this approach has meant the emphasis is on the statist importance of public ownership and centralised planning. Stalinism is influenced by the approach of Fabian thinking to conceive of socialism in technocratic and elitist terms. Hence the importance of labour has been dismissed as a syndicalist deviation. Only a few marginal currents like guild socialism have upheld the importance of industrial self-management and so maintained the ‘spirit’ of Marx.(50) It has taken the imaginative textual interpretation of Meszaros to ‘re-discover’ the meaning of the Marxist project in the aim of the emancipation of labour from the domination of capital.

Meszaros argue that the supposed ideological problems of the complexity of the contemporary capital system can be resolved by the practical restructuring of the division of labour by the producers. This may be true in terms of the effectiveness of conscious human actions, but the problem is the ideological generation of the view that the producers are not capable of organising and administering economic activity has been very influential. This view has actually been reinforced by the Stalinist emphasis on the primary economic role of the state bureaucracy, which has been responsible for the development of centralised planning, and so upheld the subordination of labour within the process of production. Hence the aspiration to develop democratic planning is presently outlined at the level of theory and is not expressed by practice. In this sense democratic socialism seems to be a utopia that is not realistic, or the representation of the imagination of Marx and some of his followers. In contrast, we have the actual practice of the activity of capital, and its justification by the ruling ideology, and this situation seems to be more reliable than the ‘leap’ into the ‘unknown’ of the genuine socialist project. Furthermore, it could be argued that the increasing sociological composition of the population as white collar workers means that social mobility becomes more important than the class struggle in terms of the increasing importance of aspirational attitudes. Meszaros tries to deny the significance of this development because he contends that white collar labour is still subordinate to the command structure of capital. This point may be true, but the dynamic issue is how these changes are ideologically interpreted. The problem for Marxists is that white collar labour strives for respectability which promotes social conformity, and so the effective layer of opposition to capital is expressed by the declining manual section of society. Consequently, the generation of opposition to capital must be a minority of workers who are able to understand the alienating quality of the command of capital within the production process: “Understandably, therefore, socialist ideology at first cannot be other than ‘counter-consciousness’, so as to be able to negate the dominant material and ideological practices of the established order. Under the circumstances of capital’s ideological hegemony, the fundamental premises of the socialist alternative cannot help being articulated as a defiant counter-consciousness to internalized coerciveness and as a clear – even if necessary qualified – rejection of the fallaciously absolutized alternative denying power of the given, socio-historically contingent constraints, no matter how real they might be within their own terms of reference.”(51)

Unfortunately, Meszaros does not outline any examples of this development. However, we can suggest that this situation is very rare given the influence of bourgeois ideology and the statist manner in which socialist ideology has been articulated. But Meszaros does not compromise because his answer to the problem of bourgeois ideology and the domination of capital is intransigent: “For only the associated producers can work out, for themselves, the practical modalities through which the now ubiquitous dual crisis of authority and development can be resolved.”(52) In principle this standpoint is what genuine Marxists are aiming to emphatically advocate. The most ‘ideal’ and ‘preferable’ situation would be one in which labour is able to develop its own conclusions about its exploitation, and to therefore articulate emancipatory alternatives. There can be compromise on this principle in theory. But in practice, it is necessary to recognise that because of the problem of bourgeois ideology, and the alienating influence of the domination of capital, it may be necessary for principled Marxists to provide ideas as to why labour should act for the purpose of self-emancipation. However, the very success of this task would mean that this advisory role would be temporary and should only last as long as necessary in relation to what is a process of self-education. There should be no suggestion of the permanent leadership of the party in relation to the class. Instead the task of the party is to generate a situation in which the working class becomes ready to emancipate itself from the advisory role of the party.

In contrast, Meszaros seems reluctant to support this approach because of the problem of Leninist vanguardism. However, historical experience seems to have indicated that the process of self-emancipation at the level of both consciousness and practice is difficult to the point of being virtually impossible. But, the alternative of the dominating role of the Leninist Party has also not led to human liberation. Instead what is necessary is to develop a compromise in which the leading role of the party is strictly temporary, and it has a goal which is to enhance the very capacity of the working class to be able to articulate its own strategy of universal emancipation. It is premature to suggest that this task is too ambitious because since the time of Marx it has not been tried and tested. Instead the very development of the German Social Democratic Party implied the justification of an elite party that basically instructed the working class in how to achieve socialism. This approach became the model for the Bolsheviks and influenced the character of the October revolution. As a result the primary Marxist goal of the emancipation of labour became obscured and neglected. It was the achievement of Meszaros to re-discover this standpoint, but he often underestimated the difficulties involved in developing the mass basis of this perspective. Primarily, it is important to understand how bourgeois ideology constantly undermines the credibility and feasibility of the perspective of the emancipation of labour. This situation can only be challenged by the development of the most effective arguments in support of the emancipation of society by labour. This task has been begun by Meszaros, but plenty of additional theoretical work has to be elaborated in order to establish the most effective defence of the view that labour can emancipate society. Hence the most important ideological task is to provide arguments that uphold the perspective of proletarian revolution and the role of labour in liberating society.

FOOTNOTES:

(1)Istvan Meszaros: The Power of Ideology, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Sussex, 1989 p10

(2) ibid p11

(3)Ibid p52

(4) ibid p56

(5) ibid p56-57

(6)Tom Mayer: Analytical Marxism, Sage, London, 1994

(7)Meszaros op cit p101

(8)Roy Bhaskar, Dialectic, the Pulse of Freedom, Verso, London 1994

(9)Theodor Adorno: Negative Dialectic, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1973 p265

(10)Meszaros op cit p103-104

(11) ibid p130

(12)Norman Levine: Marx’s Rebellion against Lenin, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016 p150-159

(13)Meszaros op cit p140-146

(14)Herbert Marcuse: An Essay on Liberation, Penguin, London, 1969 p25

(15) ibid p82

(16)Erik Olin Wright: Envisioning Real Utopias, Verso, London, 2009 p105-106

(17)Meszaros op cit p169

(18) ibid p174

(19)Georg Lukacs: Destruction of Reason, London, 1980

(20John Strachey: Contemporary Capitalism, Victor Gollancz, London 1959 p109-110

(21)Meszaros op cit p236

(22) ibid p237

(23)Ronald Aronson: After Marxism, Guildford Press, New York, 1995

(24)Meszaros op cit p241-242

(25)Norman Levine: Divergent Paths, Lexington Books, Lanham, 2006

(26)Meszaros op cit p248

(27)Ibid p259

(28)Jon Elster: Making Sense of Marx, Cambridge University Press, 1985

(29)Meszaros op cit p262-263

(30) ibid p275

(31)Leon Trotsky: The Transitional Programme for Socialist Revolution, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973 p114

(32)Meszaros op cit p282

(33) ibid p302-312

(34) ibid p318

(35) ibid p328

(36) ibid p337

(37)Leon Trotsky: These On The Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, in Theses, Resolutions and Manifestoes of the First Four Congresses of the Third International, Ink Links, London, 1980 p 129-139

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(39)R. Palme Dutt: World Politics 1918-36, New Left Book Club, London, 1936

(40Meszaros op cit p347

(41) ibid p359

(42) ibid p397

(43)Paul Flewers: The New Civilization, Francis Boutle, London 2008

(44)John Strachey: The Coming Struggle for Power: Victor Gollancz, London 1932 p357

(45)Meszaros op cit p403

(46)Emanuele Saccarelli: Gramsci and Trotsky in the Shadow of Stalinism: Routledge, London, 2008 p1-85

(47)Perry Anderson: The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci: New Left Review Number 100, 1977 p1-78

(48)Meszaros, op cit p437

(49) ibid p440

(50)G.D.H Cole The World of Labour, G.Bell and Sons, London, 1915

(51)Meszaros op cit p455

(52) ibid p462