On the 'Crisis of Transition'

The crisis of transition - from capitalism to communism - must be seen in the context of, a) the historical tendency for leaderships and intellectuals towards the 'volte face' or a 'reconciliation with reality', with or without duress; b) the poisonous legacy of the Stalinist interregnum; c) finally, both of these (interrelated) factors have contributed to and exacerbated the 'epoch of capitalist decay' (not just the economic base, but also the superstructure). Thus the 'crisis of transition', instead of becoming easier, becomes even more difficult to overcome.

The phrase 'crisis of Transition' is used by Istvan Meszaros in his book , 'The Power of Ideology' (1989). Essentially it is an ideological problem, because although marxism is a science of history and society, individual marxists and indeed whole collectivities, can and have been corrupted by bourgeois ideology. After all marxism does not develop in a vacuum; rather it has to develop under capitalism, including its own rise and decline as a system.

It is in this context that we must approach the transition in question, i.e. problems, which are both theoretical and practical, the outcome of which affects how the proletariat, as the agency of human emancipation, can proceed from what IS to what OUGHT to be - concretely, from existing reality to the revolution, followed by the transitional phase to the final goal of a communist society. As Marx says in his EPM of 1844, this will require the transformation of 'anti-social', 'inhuman man' to 'social', 'human man', who by so doing, realises his full potential as a

‘species being, at both the subjective and objective level. Somehow, man must be able to transform himself from his existing state to a new condition - from existing man, whose bodily and mental powers are fragmented by the bourgeois division of labour, as well as being progressively atomised, both mentally and physically in his social relations, by commodity capitalism - to future man, whereby, given all his attributes, he is able to achieve a a unityof his previously divided powers, i.e. between ‘the play of [his] bodily and mental powers’ and his ‘conscious will’ .

But if man is to become a full-developed species being, this will require the complete abolition of private property relations, along with class society and the existing ‘man-crippling’ division of labour; in a word, present-day capitalism. However, this cannot be achieved merely as a result of the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

Rather the transitional phase, in which the post-capitalist society must proceed towards a fully developed communist one, is really the most crucial period, as well as the most challenging. The first thing that the revolution will encounter is the bourgeois counter-revolution, which allows scope for the old ideology to reassert itself; especially if the revolution suffers a setback or becomes isolated.Yet it is during this period that the proletariat and its leaders have to develop democratic institutions, which are capable of doing two things at once: Firstly they have to be able to take all the necessary practical steps to ensure that the workers have complete control over the production process. Secondly, these institutions have to work out a successful strategy for dismantling the commodity system, along with

the bourgeois division of labour, upon which existing production depends. Yet the existing division of labour is one of the main obstacles to the achievement of social, human man, i.e. one who is no longer fragmented and atomised; whose raison d'etre is bourgeois practical reason, or means/end necessity. As Marx says in his EPM, under this regime,

'Sense which is a prisoner of crude practical need has only a restricted sense... [Mankind is the equivalent of the starving man. And] For a man who is starving the human form of food does not exist, only its abstract form exists; it could just as well be present in its crudest form, and it would be hard to say how this way of eating differs from that of animals.

The man who is burdened with worries and needs has no sense for the finest of plays; the dealer in minerals sees only the commercial value, and not the beauty and particular nature of the minerals;...thus the objectification of the human essence, in theoretical as well as a practical respect, is necessary both in order to make man's senses more human and to create an appropriate human sense for the whole wealth of humanity and of nature.' 1 [EPM, pp 353-4]

Many years later, Marx continues this theme in 'Capital' III: Only in a communist society, will it be possible to achieve the 'all-sided development of the whole individual', in which the 'associated producers regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled as by some blind power [as at present, which is the] basis for 'the development of human power for its own end [whereas, under the capitalist mode of production, the

opposite is the case]. Only then can man at last say he has attained 'the true realm of freedom'. Given the marvels of modern technology and mechanisation, 'the shortening of the working day' must be viewed as a realisable first step. 2 ['Capital III', Moscow, 1966, p820]

But once again, how is this to be achieved during the transitional phase to communism? Unless a successful strategy is in place to abolish the 'man-crippling' bourgeois division of labour, upon which the existing productive forces depend, then the revolution will begin to degenerate. Meanwhile, as we move into the second decade of the 21st century, in the aptly named period of late capitalism, given the historical defeat of the proletarian revolution in the previous century, man is more fragmented and atomised than ever. Thus he is in danger of becoming more anti-social and inhuman, at both the subjective and objective level; i.e. he might be regressing as a species being.

Therefore, it is imperative that we few marxists who remain, should also undertake our own sober assessment of the history of the revolution itself. Our starting point must be the Paris Commune of 1871: The fundamental problem is the establishment of a theory and practice that is adequate for the necessary transition between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' ; concretely, a strategy for the creation and development of 'communist-mass-consciousness' (as Marx puts it), which is able to cater for the revolution as a first step, followed by the much more challenging transition period to communism. As Trotsky said, 'this will take more than a generation or two'. Whereas, on the basis of the experience of the 20th

century, right from the start, the revolution found itself immersed in insoluble problems. Of course, the enormous problems that confronted the Bolsheviks after 1917 cannot be forgotten. These problems merely reinforced Lenin and Trotsky's conviction that all they could really do was to hold the line; since they were optimistic about the chances of a successful revoltion in the west, the sooner the better, particularly in Germany. Yet despite existing reality, which is always going to be unfavourable to the revolution, the real, fundamental challenge of working out a complete strategy for the transitional phase to communism continues to elude a whole range of marxists - and pseudo marxists - ranging from Marx to Stalin, as well as many others in between.

Let us begin with Marx himself: In his 'Power of Ideology', Meszaros points out that the key text for any understanding of Marx's thoughts on the theme of transition is the 'Civil War in France'. This was written in 1871 in order to defend the Paris Commune from its bourgeois critics. Therefore it is not surprising - indeed it is appropriate - that Marx adopts an optimistic attitude. On the other hand, this was always Marx's 'default' position. After all, he was the embodiment of the Enlightenment spirit, which envisaged the triumph of reason over unreason, as the basis for human progress. The Jacobin revolution had swept away such out-moded ideologies as the divine right of kings, if not religious alienation. But whereas the revolutinary bourgeoisie had submitted to the rule of private property and the 'man-crippling' bourgeois division of labour, as well as a deity in some form or another, the 19th century was the epoch of the proletariat, the universal class, who had nothing to lose but their chains. Thanks to the 'nihilism' of the

capitalist system, which reduces everything to mere exchange value, a new epoch was emerging. As the Communist Manifesto proclaims, 'All that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind.' It is clear from these words that Marx is thinking of the proletariat, primarily, not just the intelligentsia, such as himself. What follows is a summary of Meszaros' analysis of Marx's 'Civil War in France' . In this regard, all words and phrases which appear in quotes belong to Marx's 1871 text; except for those that belong to Meszaros, which I shall acknowledge in the course of the argument.

From the outset, Marx posits the notion of the Commune as an expression of the revolution against the bourgeois state, which is 'separate and independent of society' . The social soil of the bourgeois state is the 'superstucture of a centralised state power', whose basis is 'the systematic and hierarchic division of labour'. This latter cannot be abolished immediately, along with the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. As long as this exists, it is able to renew and strengthen itself, at the same time as the transformation of the institutions of civil society is undertaken. Therefore the revolution is faced with the state's continued domination of society, which refuses to 'wither away'. This is especially the case if the revolution finds itself isolated by continued bourgeois 'encirclement'. However Marx did not really explore the latter possibility, because he anticipated the 'harmonious national and international co-ordination of the revolution'.

On the other hand, Marx did anticipate that the attack on the foundations of the state might be delayed. This is because the first task of the revolution is to 'work out the economic emancipation of labour' through a new political form, so that 'free and associated labour should assume the form of united co-operative societies' in order to 'regulate national production upon a common plan'. Marx therefore envisaged a new transitional state which is 'called upon to act simultaneously as both master and servant of the long drawn-out process of emancipation'. [Meszaros] This transitional state 'has no interests of its own to defend', despite its 'strategic function' as the new political form which is required for the 'national co-ordination of social life' - in 'the division of labour, whose continuation is unavoidable (even if progressively diminishing for the whole period of political re-structuring'). [Meszaros]

However Marx does not see any contradiction between the new political form based on the existing division of labour and its task which 'is to work out the emancipation of labour, since 'the working class is now in complete control of the political process'. [Meszaros] But Marx does acknowledge that the working class 'will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming the circumstances of men'. At this stage he is able to avoid any contradiction, because 'the communist consciousness of the working class is already given' . The latter is defined in 'The German Ideology' as 'the consciousness of the neeeds of a fundamental revolution' on a mass scale.
To return tothe Commune, we find that Marx is 'ascribing to the working class...'the full consciousness of their historic mission'. The problem here is that

Marx shifts from the consciousness of 'us' or 'the communists' to that of the working class as a whole; despite postulating that communist consciousness requires an understanding of 'the necessity for a fundamental revolution', which is really a challenging task', because it has to be acquired on a mass basis before the revolution, as well as be sustained during the long period of transition to socialism.

Meszaros continues, 'the ultimate 'withering away' of the state is inconceivable without the progressive reduction and simplification of its tasks...and their transfer to the 'self-working and self-governing' social body. To suggest, however, that this process...at the political level can be accomplished by immediately substituting for the state an unproblematical 'new political form', whereafter [the only difficulties that remain relate to] economically emancipating society from the division of labour, is to take short cuts to the future....since the social soil of the 'systematic and hierarchal division of labour' is inseparable from the 'superstructure of a centralised state power'. In reality, the state can only be laboriously 'dismantled' (in the process of the political 'de-alienisation' and 'communalisation' of society) to the extent to which the inherited division of labour itself is correspondingly changed, and thus the social metabolism as a whole is effectively restructured....

'[But] Under the unavoidably premature conditions of the... 'social revolution' - when capitalism is acknowledged by Marx to be in the ascendency on by far the geater part of the planet - only the stipulated communist-mass-consciousness can bridge this great historical gap and provide the desired guarantee for maintaining the impetus of the necessary structure....

‘[Thus] In the marxian perspective the fragmentation of the working class is greatly underestimated and the necessary political consequences of such fragmentation (and comcomitant stratification) remain largely unexplored. [Rather] The accent is on the proletariat constituting the ‘universal class’ [which is] eminently suitable to understand the the qualitative change from the old to the ‘new political form’, but full of ambiguities and question marks as regards practical constraints [then and now]....

‘There is no hint in Marx that, in addition to the fragmentation ‘between capital and labour’, etc., one must also face the fragmentation within labour itself as a major problem for the proletariat both before and after the conquest of political power...[Instead the proletariat’s ability to act as a united force is predicated as a matterof course, in sharp contrast to the peasantry’. 3 [Istvan Meszaros, Power of Ideolog, Wheatsheaf, London, 1989. p 272- 77]

Today, of course, certainly in the developed world, we would also have to add to the problem of fragmentation and stratification of the proletariat - or the mass of direct producers - the equally difficult problem of the latter’s atomisation, first of all in the physical sense, as a result of the collapse of its traditional organisations and communities; secondly, in the psychical sense, at the hands of the ‘societe de consummation’ and now the ‘society of the spectacle’ (news or propaganda, advertising, not forgeting the passive ‘consumption of entertainment’); i.e. late capitalism.

Meszaros is realistic enough to be one of the very few marxists to examine the 'gaps' in Marx and the serious questions that they may raise, both in relation to the failure of the post-revolutionary or transitional societies (with the Soviet Union at its centre) and the struggle for the revolution in the future.

Marx remained steadfast to his position, i.e. he never engaged in a volte face or made his own reconciliation with existing reality (cf. his predecessor and former mentor, Hegel, as well as those who followed in Marx's footsteps). This was despite the problems of transition, in both the theoretical and practical sense, that were immediately posed by the Paris Commune of 1871. But at the same time, it must also be appreciated that Marx did not have time to deal with the 'gaps' in his work during his own lifetime. In particular, this applies to the question of what sort of 'material mediation' is required to ensure that the proletariat attains the necessary 'communist-mass-consciousness' , firstly, in order to make the revolution and, secondly, to carry it through during the long and difficult period of transition to socialism.

Lenin, of course, was the first and most important of those who followed in Marx's footsteps - who was confronted with the same dilmma of 'what is' and 'what ought to be' : Concretely, at the end of the Civil War, Lenin and the leadership of the Bolshevik Party were forced to make their own reconciliation with reality; albeit under extreme duress: This concerns the circumstances which led to the adoption of The New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921. The Bolsheviks found themselves in charge of a revolutionary regime, which had barely survived the first stage of the

counter-revolution: the war of intervention (or 'Civil War'), which lasted from 1918 until 1921. The country was exhausted both economically and politically. Although the the Bolsheviks had won the Civil War, this came at great human cost. Now the revolution was isolated too: Firstly, the Party of Revolution was now isolated from the masses; given the latter's exhaustion there had been a corresponding decline in revolutionary consciousness. Secondly, the infant Soviet Union was surrounded by its bourgeois enemies, which would seize any opportunity to launch further attacks on 'godless communism'. The isolation of the revolution was further exacerbated by the defeat of the first German Revolution in 1918.

Therefore Lenin decided that realism was of the essence: ClearlyWar Communism - or the forcible extraction of farm produce from the rich peasants - or Kulaks - had failed. Food production had fallen below pre-revolution levels. Mass starvation stalked the land. Instead of achieving a balance between food production in the countryide, that was sufficient to sustain industry and services in the cities, the Soviet economy was on its knees. As a first step, in order to kick-start the economy once again, the Kulaks must be persuaded to produce more food for the proletariat; only then could the factories begin to produce badly needed goods once again. But an economic incentive was required; otherwise the Kulaks would not agree to such an idea. Faced with this new reality, Lenin argued that, if the revolution had taken 'three steps forward, it now had to take two steps back', i.e. embrace his New Economic Policy (NEP). Briefly, the competition of the market had to be restored, at least partially, so that the most efficient producers among the

peasants could make a profit for themselves. In return, it was hoped that they would once again produce more food.

Lenin realised that the NEP was the only way to ensure that the revolution might survive; at least long enough until the next revolutionary wave. Therefore the role of the Third International, as the agency of the world revolution, would be of the utmost importance. Once there had been a successful revolution elsewhere, then the world's first workers state, which was in and of itself a contradictory and temporary arrangement, would no longer be isolated. Thus with the help of the revolution in an advanced country - such as Germany- the young Soviet state could begin to progress towards socialism; wherein the hierarchal division of labour is gradually abolished, along with the state, which begins to wither away; instead of the coercion of the market or a centralised state directive, workers self-management would be able to develop, leading to a society of freely associated producers, etc.

Of course, when Lenin made his own reconciliation with existing reality in 1921, he saw this strictly as a temporary expediency, in the hopes that the historical conjuncture might change for the better. If ever there was one, this was a position that had been taken up under extreme duress. Therefore Lenin's volte face from War Communism does not add up to a 'great historic compromise'. As to whether socialist and communist leaders like Kautsky and Stalin belong to this camp, there can be no doubt. But Meszaros also insists on adding leftwing intellectuals such as Adorno and Lukacs. As to whether or not all three of these figures made their

‘reconciliation with existing reality, albeit under duress’ , this must be argued case by case. (See below.)

So what about Stalin? Considering his subsequent crimes against both the revolution and humanity, it is easy to forget that he did not start out as a counter-revolutionary. Rather he became one, due to the setbacks that the revolution suffered between 1917-24. Hence the infant Soviet state became a battleground for the struggle between the old ideology and the new, in which the former gained the ascendency. It was a question of could the Bolshevik Party turn things around? However it was now in a more disadvantaged position than ever, in both the subjective and objective sense: On the one side, it no longer had a leader of Lenin’s quality, i.e. a genuine Marxist theorist and tactition, who remained committed to the ideals of the October revolution. On the other, the party was now even more isolated from its base; viz the proletariat, both at home and abroad.

In a famous pamphlet, Trotsky characterised Stalinism as the ‘antithesis of Bolshevism’. But to answer this question properly, we must go back to the situation prior to 1924: The proletariat at home was exhausted from the sacrifices that had to be made during the Civil War. The international revolution was in retreat. Apart from the destruction of Russia’s tiny industrial sector, there was the enormous weight of a backward peasantry or a system of agriculture which had yet to be brought into the 20th century. Meanwhile the bureacratic and parasitic caste - that had been unleashed by Lenin’s temporary expedient (the NEP) - now threatened to take over the state. Like the Kulaks, if the educated middle classes were to contribute to the future development of the Soviet state, then they

demanded that the privileges which they already enjoyed, should be continued and even extended.

The revolution had been defended, but at what cost? By 1924, as General Secretary of the Bolshevik Party, Stalin not only held the reigns of power, he was also ready to make his own 'great historical compromise' with existing reality, which turned out to be the most damaging of all: Given his low level of theoretical expertise, as well as his conservative nature, the juxtaposition between his own particular qualities and the unfavourable historical conjuncture dictated that he make an ideological adjustment; albeit now the situation required another volte face, which was of the same nature and order as the betrayal of the world revolution by German Social Democracy in 1914: When the Kautsky and his comrades sided with the other bourgeois parties and voted for war credits, on the 4th August, not only did they set the wheels in motion which would lead to the outbreak of the first imperialist war; they also destroyed the Second International of Marx and Engels, viz the instrument for organising the world revolution.

History repeated itself in 1924, when Stalin enunciated the theory of 'socialism in one country': At the conscious level, he succeeded in deluding himself that this was possible. But in the objective sense, faced with huge adversity, Stalin chose to put his own narrow interests above that of the revolution, both in the Soviet Union and abroad. He decided that the easiest way forward was to step in as the representative of the emerging parasitic bureaucracy. The latter, which already had a foothold in the state, was now poised to take over the Bolshevik Party itself.

Once the Stalin faction was firmly in control, the next step was the Stalinist takeover of Lenin's Third International. Once again, it would be turned into its opposite. Henceforth, for Stalin and his supporters in the comintern (as it was now called), the international revolution had to be subordinated to the interests of the bureaucracy.Thus Stalinism became 'the grave-digger' of the revolution.

Worst of all, however, was the fact that this volte face was done in the name of socialism and communism! Overnight the Party leadership had regressed back to a pre-existing great Russian chauvinism; whilst it committed itself to the policy of autarky or self-sufficiency. Yet the only way in which the Soviet Union could drag itself into the 20th century, economicaly - let alone lay the foundations of socialism and communism - was by means of a highly centralised and authoritarian state, the mirror image of the Stalinised Party at its head. (N.B. The Stalinised Soviet Union also provided the model for all future communist states.) Not only were millions of workers atomised into individual and expendable units; they were kept under the kosh by the threat of arbitrary arrest and deportation to the gulag (slave labour camps); but because conditions there were so appalling, this was tantamount to a death sentence.

The only way out of this hell-on-earth for anyone was to become an informer for Stalin's secret police or to join them; they could also try and become a party member. For some, this was merely an expedient, a means to live more comfortably and in relative safety (or so they believed); but for others, the Party had become the mystical equivalent of the Papacy: the Party had somehow become

the infallible instrument of history, even if the leaders made mistakes. (In this regard, Arthur Koestler's novel, Darkness at Noon, which was first published in 1940, offers a chilling insight into this aspect of Soviet history. Those who were about to be shot went to their deaths in the false belief that they did not die in vain. One day the revolution would be victorious!)

That this should happen to a single person is a tragedy, let alone to many of the leading Bolsheviks, who had taken part in the revolution of 1917, as well as a similar number of poets and artists. But in the case of rank and file party members, who fell foul of a paranoid leadership, which changed the party line, as well as its definition of 'counter-revolutionary', as often as not, they number in the tens of thousands. Whereas a staggering 20 million souls perished in the gulag. (Whilst another 20 million died between 1941-45, as a result of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.)

As for the leftwing intelligentsia, specifically those who reconciled themselves to the existing reality of the 1930s, they did so under duress; concretely they were witnesses to 'the midnight of the century' ; i.e. it was their misfortune to be living during the period when Stalinism and Fascism faced each other, and, frankly, there was little to chose between these two evils! If these intellectuals can be defended at all, they certainly they have a stronger case than their illustrious predecessor, i.e. Hegel himself. (N.B. By the 19th century, Hegel had also made his own reconciliation with existing reality: He recognised that the bourgeois state, characterised by the 'paralysing effects of the division of labour, the increasing mechanisation of all forms of activity, the engulfing of quality by quantity' was

'inimical to poetry'. But this did not stop Hegel from acknowledging capitalism as 'the essential foundation of progress'. Perhaps his position as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Heidelberg, etc. had something to do with it!)

Like Hegel, both Adorno and Lukacs were also guilty of idealist deviations. For his part, Adorno was so appalled by events in the Soviet Union, as well as the failure of the KPD in his native Germany to stop the rise of fascism, he decided to oppose the idea of political struggle at all costs; hence he could only fall back on the work of leftwing intellectuals, such as the critical theory tradition, espoused by himself, along with the Institute of Social Research. On the downside, there is evidence that Adorno, as its leading member, also insisted on doctoring Benjamin's writings before publishing them. In the postwar period, the Institute was re-established in Frankfurt, Germany (henceforth known as the Frankfurt Institute). But according to Meszaros, this was done, 'with the benevolent approval of the Adenauer regime'.

Therefore it is not surprising that Adorno was attacked by Lukacs. He famously characterised the latter's newfound position as the equivalent of a man who has 'taken up residence in the 'Grand Hotel Abyss'. Certainly, from his comfortable position within German academia, Adorno was able to theorise such social phenomena as the rise of the culture industry and late capitalism as a system of 'total control'. (N.B. Then again, today this has become a self-fulfilling prophecy, at least in developed societies.) Adorno also wrote his magnum opus or 'Aesthetic Theory' based on the German aesthetic tradition. (So at least it is not all bad!) In

this regard, Adorno even leaves a chink of light in the darkness. This is the 'truth content' of 'authentic art'. (By the latter Adorno means art which is not generated by commercial considerations. Of course, this does not mean that artworks can escape commodification. On the other hand, the burgeoning culture industry, which first appeared in the United States during the twenties, is 'the correlate of a mechanised and rationalised labour process'.) But in order to provide this chink of light in the darknes, Adorno had to resort to subjective idealism.

To return to Lukacs, according to Meszaros, he also comes down on the side of the critical theory tradition: Following the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution in 1919, he gradually disengaged himself from 'the social agency of emancipation' (the proletariat), 'opting instead for the most abstract and generic terms of opposition and negation whose target could hardly be identified' . This can be clearly seen in the gap which opened up between History and Class Consciousness, completed in 1923, and his Theory of the Novel, which was written at a later date. On the one hand, the former provides us with the - now widely accepted - theory of reification, i.e. generalised alienation, associated with the fully-developed commodity system, which now pervades all aspects of life; on the other, Lukacs is still able to posit the proletarian revolution; albeit on the basis of an ascribed class consciousness. (Cf. Marx. in 1871.) However, in Theory of The Novel, argues Meszaros, Lukacs' critical theory is now infused with various 'leitmotifs'; therefore his hitherto 'genuine social criticism...had been watered down... by ...meaningless categories like 'absolute commodity' and 'absolute reification'.' By then, Lukacs himself had taken up another kind of residence within academia;

viz the Academy of Philosophy and Science in Moscow. At the same time, unlike Adorno - or his colleague, Walter Benjamin - Lukacs has made his own reconciliation with reality; only this reality was the Stalinist bureaucracy which now ruled the Soviet Union. For Lukacs, the latter had to be supported 'warts and all', because it was the only bastion against imperialism; no doubt privately Lukacs rationalised that the Stalinist system was the lesser of two evils. This meant that he was compelled to turn a blind eye to the Show Trials of the 1930s and the burgeoning gulag (slave labour camps), etc.

The Stalinist interregnum may be evaluated as follows: Above all, the mistakes, betrayals and utter barbarism of Stalinism were all committed in the name of socialism and communism.

First there was the dreadful mistake of the Five Year plans, which were imposed from above.. Secondly there were the betrayals of the world revolution at the hands of the Stalinised comintern - especially Gemany after 1929. Thirdly, the defeat of the German revolution in 1933 led to the Nazi invasion of Russia in 1941, which virtually destroyed it. Fourthly, prior to the horrors of the Nazi invasion, the latter was preceded by the barbarism of the Show Trials and the gulag in Soviet Russia during the 1930s. Fifthly, we have Stalin's postwar venture into eastern Europe, which began in 1945; since he needed a number of satellite states to exploit, so that the Soviet Union might survive the destruction of World War Two. This led to the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, which was brutally suppressed by the Red Army. Finally, we have the ignominious collapse of the system itself in the 1990s. Taken

altogether these events represent a terrible legacy for marxism, from which it might not recover. As I have already intimated, this legacy has had a deeply negative effect on the intelligentsia everywhere.

Thus, as we enter the second decade of the 21st century, the 'crisis of transition' - from the revolution itself to the post-revolutionary period of socialist construction - has deepened even further. At the same time, capitalism itself undergoes its own decline.