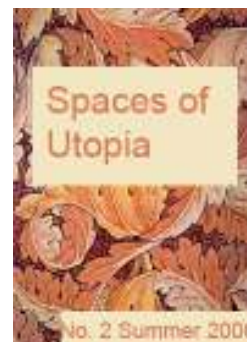


Utopia and the Socialist Project

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The propositions I contest in this paper are taken from T. Kenyon's 1989 book: *Utopian Communism and Political Thought in Early Modern England*. They are the following:

- (1) "Marx and Engels undoubtedly contributed to the development of a pejorative view of [utopianism]" (Kenyon 1989: 19);
- (2) Marx and Engels "failed to distinguish the categories of *means* and *ends* within utopianism" (*ibidem*).

I shall argue that both these propositions are false. I shall attempt to show that not only did Marx praise (rather than disparage) his socialist predecessors but also that in characterising their achievements as utopian, he had a clear understanding of the relationship between the means and ends of the socialist project. I shall discuss Marx's critique of Robert Owen's perception of these means and ends in order to illustrate this point – in particular the role of political economy as a means to realising the end of establishing a classless society.

My aims for the paper are therefore: firstly, to test the hypothesis that Marx's assessment of the unviability of projects for human liberation is based on objective theoretical criteria. These are philosophical and economic.

Secondly, I aim to develop an interpretation of Marx's concept of utopia as a partial understanding of – or solution to – a universal or global problem. I derive this from the work of the Hungarian Marxist philosopher, Istvan Meszaros.

Finally, I aim to prepare the ground for a rehabilitation of the distinction Engels makes between science and utopia.

This paper is part of a grander project. This is to interrogate a consensus that Marx's conception of the socialist project is – in itself – utopian.¹ My ambition is to develop a Marxist understanding of utopianism in general and utopian socialism in particular.²

My stipulative definition of “utopianism” is the following: Utopianism is the doctrine that a society of free individuals can be established on the basis of a partial understanding of social and economic reality world-wide.³

This definition will no doubt change as the project develops.

The argument of the paper is in three parts. In the first part I examine evidence for the pejorative view. I contest the notion that Marx was opposed to speculative thinking. I challenge the idea that Marx's criterion for judging the unviability of the means to socialism of his Owenite predecessors was subjective.

The second part of the paper examines philosophical criteria for Marx's examination of means and ends within utopianism. I mention briefly aspects of Marx's essentialist, holistic and dialectical method. I discuss Meszaros's understanding of partiality and I give the examples of nationalism and Owen's views on education as examples of partiality.

The third part examines economic criteria for the examination of means and ends within utopianism. I discuss the ends shared by Marx and Owen and how they differed on means. I discuss the example of the Owenite labour-theory of money as an example of a partial understanding of means. I argue that Marx showed that this has an effect on ends and the nature of the socialist goal itself.

The Pejorative View

The first interpretation of the pejorative view of utopianism holds that imaginative speculation on the nature of a socialist alternative to capitalism is dangerous and contrary to Marxist doctrine. Speculation is, as Kenyon puts it, divorced “from the workings of history, from mankind's immediate condition, and effectively from ‘reality’” (Kenyon 1989: 19). Socialists should therefore avoid it.

Evidence for this interpretation can be found in Marx and Engels' use of “fantastic” when they criticised Owen, Saint Simon and Fourier in the *Communist Manifesto*. A declamatory tone can be read into the manifesto and the word “fantastic” appears to have an emotive meaning – one of disapproval or condemnation.

Fantasy is a product of the imagination. The suggestion is that an imaginary world is subjective. There is no possibility of realisation of this in objective social reality. The contention is that Marx and Engels disapproved of the use of the imagination to speculate about socialism. Thus Marx and Engels described social experiments inspired by Owen, Fourier and Cabet as “castles in the air” (Marx / Engels 1978: 499).

Steven Lukes adopts this interpretation in his 1984 article on *Marxism and Utopianism*. Lukes states that Marx and Engels criticised the early socialists for “drawing up utopian *blueprints*” and that “they saw the very project of speculating about the ideal society as ‘utopian’” (Lukes 1984: 157). Lukes suggests that Marx, Engels and their followers – such as Kautsky, Lenin and Trotsky, were opposed in principle to what Vincent Geoghegan has called the “utopian disposition, a utopian impulse or mentality (...) grounded in the human capacity, and need, for fantasy” (Geoghegan 1987: 2).

The problems with this interpretation are well-known. Firstly, far from disparaging Owen, Saint Simon and Fourier's socialism, Marx not only praised and commended aspects of their doctrines but also, as Lukes states, "synthesised and incorporated" them into their own understanding (Lukes 1984: 156).⁴

Secondly, Marx clearly speculated on the nature of a non-market classless society and the possibility of realising this in the present. Speculation involves the exercise of the imagination. As a follower of Hegel, he recognised speculation is an essential aspect of the intellectual labour process.⁵ Speculation is involved in the creation of theory. It is an activity that generates ideas of where current tendencies and trends might lead.

Setting imaginative goals and creating blueprints to guide action are not only a necessary feature of democratic planning but, for Marx, an essential aspect of understanding history, intentionality and human consciousness. If Marx was opposed to blueprints, then it seems strange that he chose the figure of the architect – and her or his use of the imagination – to exemplify what he thought is distinctively human in the labour process.⁶

Both Marx and Engels used their speculative imaginations to describe the non-market society of the future. They had clear conceptions of the socialist project both as viable goal and means. For Marx, the goal of the socialist project is the emergence of free individuality and the recovery of human sociality from the effects of exploitation and oppression.⁷

Marx argued that the socialist project needs certain objective conditions for the goal of free individuality to be realised.⁸ The means to establishing these conditions are well known. They involve, on the one hand, the formation of a global non-market classless society and, on the other hand, the creation of a class of producers whose interests coincide with those of the majority of the world's population. The assumption is that workers create the world's wealth and that

through their formation into a class, they become the only class with a future – the only class that has no interest in reproducing class relations.⁹

The leaders of the Second International had similar perceptions of socialist means and ends to Marx and Engels's. The French scholar Marc Angenot claims to have analysed eighty examples of literature in French and German produced by intellectuals active within the European socialist movement from 1889-1914. He describes these as “detailed blueprints and precise visions of the post-revolutionary society” (Angenot 2000: 98).

He notes that it was Eduard Bernstein, the founder of modern social democracy, and opponent of revolutionary social change, who as Angenot puts it: “loathed speculating about the future” (*idem*, 99).¹⁰ In his 1899 book *The Presuppositions of Socialism*, Bernstein argued that Marx forbade socialists from using their imagination to speculate about the socialist goal and that to do so was utopian and antipathetic to the cause of workers' liberation.¹¹

If Marx did not conceive of all forms of the exercise of the speculative imagination about the socialist future as utopian, the question arises of how he distinguished between non-utopian speculations and utopian ones.

The easiest answer is that Marx thought speculation on ends and means he approved of were viable, practical and realisable. They were therefore non-utopian. Speculation on means and ends he did not like were unviable, unrealisable, and impractical. They were utopian. Basically, someone who thought of her or himself as a socialist but who disagreed with Marx risked being disparaged as a utopian. This is a second version of the pejorative view.

According to Mannheim, such disapproval corresponds to the ideology of the representatives of a ruling order. Rulers label all challenges to their rule as utopian “from their point of view” (*apud* Geoghegan 1987: 6). Judgements of viability, possibility and practicality are relative to a set of ideas that function

exclusively to articulate the interests of certain individuals or groups either already in power or aspiring to take power. These judgements are subjective and unrelated to any notion of objective reality or universal criteria. As Geoghegan puts it, they are “dreams masquerading as an attack on dreaming” (*ibidem*).

A recent example might be a scientist I heard on the radio who was critical of a committee set up to examine the disposal of nuclear waste. He thought the committee was wasting time. Much time had been spent talking about whether it was viable to put nuclear waste in rockets and send the rockets to the sun. In his opinion, the proposal was obviously unviable and he was highly disparaging of scientists on the committee who had taken the proposal seriously.

From this scientist’s “point of view” – from the authority of his knowledge as a scientist and a citizen – sending rockets full of nuclear waste to the sun is an impractical means of disposal.

The radio report presented the disagreement between the committee and the dissident scientist as a difference of subjective opinion. There was no mention of any objective criteria for judging whether the method of disposal was viable or unviable.

It is possible to imagine a range of reasons. One could be scientific. For example, there might be a law of nature that made it impossible for a rocket to get to the sun.

Another could be moral. There might be too great a health & safety risk for the people working on putting nuclear waste in rockets or the risk of a rocket carrying nuclear waste falling back to earth is not worth taking.

Yet another might be economic. No government or private company might want to invest in the research and development of such a programme because the financial return on the investment might be too small.

None of these questions were raised in the radio news report. Yet in order to have an informed opinion of the viability of the proposal the question of the criteria being used needs to be raised.

If questions of the viability of proposed scientific (and political and economic) projects are reduced to the subjectivity of particular group or individual interests in a struggle for power or influence – as Mannheim suggests – then public discussion of objective criteria – necessary for a democratically organised decision process – can be ignored.

Philosophical Criteria for the Assessment of the Means and Ends of Utopianism

Are there any criteria by which it is possible to judge whether a particular speculation concerning the relationship between means and ends is utopian or not? Are some dreams realisable and others not? Marx clearly thought there were. He used philosophical and economic criteria to argue this point.

An analogy is the idea of teleportation. Teleportation is a speculative and imaginative idea. It would be wonderful to say “beam me up Scotty” and be transported immediately across the expanse of space.

Whether, as a goal, teleportation is realisable depends on philosophical and scientific criteria and, as far as I know, there are good reasons for thinking that, however desirable the goals of teleportation might be, they cannot be realised with our present understanding of the existing laws of nature.

Likewise, the goal of combining the best features of the market and socialist planning might be a desirable and imaginable goal for many individuals and social groups but unviable for good philosophical and economic reasons.¹² Put differently, Marx used philosophical criteria for assessing the ends and means of utopianism. These were objective.

My starting point here is a quotation from Marx's *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Marx writes of the struggle for German liberation in 1843 that:

It is not radical revolution or universal human emancipation which is a utopian dream for Germany; it is the partial, merely political revolution which leaves the pillars of the building standing. (Marx 1992: 253)

Istvan Meszaros states in his 1970 book *Marx's Theory of Alienation* that Marx's insight here is enormously important methodologically. It offers a "key to understanding the nature of Utopianism as the inflation of *partiality* into *pseudo-universality*" (Meszaros 1970: 75).

In this case the partiality was a form of political action that excluded economic understanding and transformation. In effect, Marx thought that, in order to engage with the socialist project, a moral position that condemns the way in which particular people are enslaved, brutalised, and oppressed is necessary but not sufficient.

Political action inspired by the goal of ending all forms of oppression, exploitation and degradation is similarly necessary but insufficient.

An understanding of the economic causes of these phenomena and how they impact on people globally is necessary. Economic categories of explanation with universal instantiation such as labour, commodity, value, and capital are required for a global perspective on the task of liberation. Explanations of capitalism that have a partial understanding of its nature will produce partial programmes for liberation. Partial forms of anti-capitalism and perceptions alternatives to it will be utopian.

This interpretation of Marx contrasts partiality with universality. It is concerned with categories informing the understanding. However Meszaros also opposes a partial to a global form of movement. This is movement within an

evolving social totality. It is an ontological opposition and Meszaros contrasts this with Marx's method in the following:

Utopianism is, by contrast, necessarily inherent in all attempts which offer merely partial remedies to global problems. (*idem*, 297)

Here the focus is on global problems caused by contradictions within the social totality.

For Marx, the chief global problem is, of course, the social form that human social labour takes within a commodity-capitalist society. As Scott Meikle has shown, Marx and Hegel were Aristotelian essentialists.¹³ Marx was concerned to discover the laws that govern the birth, maturation, development, decline, and passing away of social forms of human labour and their supersession by new forms. These social forms include different methods of the extraction of surplus labour.

The law of the normal life of the entity of essence is the law of the unfolding of its contradiction. In the process of transition from one social form to another there will be an interaction between the contradictions of the social form that is declining and dying and the contradictions of the newly emergent social form. Ontological partiality is therefore an expression of the interaction between the contradiction between the objective potentialities of the emergent form and a subjective awareness of these potentialities.

The global problem for socialists is the subordination of human labour power to the accumulation of capital. Contradictions between forms of exchange and use value generate global crises on a regular basis.¹⁴ These cause systemic global misery and impoverishment to both high and low paid workers. However, these contradictions also create the technological and social conditions for the resolution of the problem globally.

Solutions that ignore the global character of the social problem are, according to Meszaros's interpretation of Marx, partial and therefore utopian. These include solutions at a local or national level. They include solutions limited to exclusively political, exclusively economic, or exclusively educational projects. They include solutions that promote the interests of a particular oppressed or exploited group to the exclusion of others.¹⁵

The global problem Marx addressed in 1843 when he wrote *The Jewish Question* and the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* was that of human emancipation. He criticised strategies of national, religious and ethnic liberation that focused on politics to the exclusion of other spheres of social action as a partial means and therefore utopian.

Marx argued that political action aimed at securing civil liberties for Jews and for a unified independent state for Germans – however noble and inspiring – would not solve the problem of liberation for these groups as individuals. Jews and Germans are humans oppressed in ways other than on the basis of their nationality, religion or ethnicity alone – the most obvious of which is their economic oppression as workers. This is an oppression which has a global character. Within this interpretation, nationalism – especially the nationalism of the oppressed – is a utopian political doctrine.

Meszaros restates this interpretation when discussing Owen's plans for workers' liberation. Owen realised, according to Meszaros, the fact that employers regard employees as "mere instruments of gain" and that, in a capitalist society, human relationships are subordinated to profit-seeking. This is a cause of workers' economic misery. However, through an adequate socialist education – Owen thought – everyone would come to realise that employers no longer needed to inflict misery on their employees.¹⁶

Meszaros argues that Owen's position is utopian because it is partial. It is not that Meszaros thinks socialist education is unimportant or that the socialist project can take place without education. He thinks socialist education is an integral and crucial means to the realisation of the emergent proletarian collectivity, the establishment of a classless society and the struggle for free individuality. However, it is insufficient and requires other conditions in order for the project to be completed.¹⁷

Owen's position was utopian, according to Meszaros, because Owen recommended education as a universal solution to the dual problem of workers' alienation and capitalists' hostility to socialism. Owen was correct to notice that socialist education is an important means to achieving the goal of a classless society, but – for good historical and intellectual reasons – he was unable to recognise that it is only part of the project. An exclusive focus on education makes the goal of workers' liberation unrealisable.

Economic Criteria for the Assessment of the Means and Ends of Utopianism

Marx's essentialist and dialectical social science can be distinguished from the scientific aspirations of his predecessors. One reason is that one of Marx's claims to have developed a social science rests upon a holistic rather than an empiricist method. This starts from an analysis of the social whole rather than observable events.¹⁸ It attempts to identify law-like phenomena within an evolving social totality.¹⁹ Despite disagreeing with their method, Marx recognised that Smith and Ricardo had made serious attempts to theorise the laws underlying the phenomena of a capitalist economy.

However, Marx did not recognise that his socialist predecessors had made any such intellectual contribution. This is clear if one compares Marx's conception of the socialist project with Owen's. Both Owen and Marx recognised the potential

that machinery has for liberating workers from economic compulsion. Moreover, although Owen's notion of planning was paternalist and Marx's democratic, they both had a conception of a planned classless society as an alternative to capitalism. In Owen's case this was the negative goal of ending misery and degradation for workers.²⁰ In Marx's case this was the positive goal of free individuality – a goal which is, of course, inclusive of Owen's.

Marx and Owen, however, differed on the means of achieving a planned classless society. They had different notions of the role of social science in the transition to socialism. Owen's notion of a social science was what he called "the science of the influence of circumstances over the whole conduct, character, and proceedings of the human race" (Owen 1991: 278). Gregory Claeys has shown that this is a combination of utilitarian moral philosophy stressing individuals' natural sociability (as developed by Scottish moral and social theorists such as Adam Smith) with necessitarianism derived from Godwin's appropriation of Joseph Priestley's materialist determinism. Claeys states that the first premise of Owenite necessitarianism is that "character was formed *for* rather than by the individual" (Claeys 1989: 115).

This differs from Marx's position that free will is compatible with determinism. Marx's notion of free will is that it consists in the consciousness of necessity. It was derived from German idealism.²¹ It informed his criticism of eighteenth century materialism in the third *Theses on Feuerbach*.²² This form of one-sided materialism characterised Owen's social science.

Marx and Owen's relationship to classical political economy was different. Marx investigated the laws which regulate labour within capitalism. Owen used it to give moral justification for his social experiments. Claeys discusses the influence of labour theories of value, property, and production on Owen and suggests that when Owen presented his economic thinking in the *Report to the County of Lanark*

in 1820, he might have borrowed insights on labour as the standard of value from Smith.²³ Within the Marxist tradition, Rubin states that Owenite economics took over the notion that labour is the sole source of value from Ricardo. Owen's followers, such as William Thompson, John Gray and John Bray, turned it into a moral postulate substituting the doctrine of the "worker's right to the full product of labour" for a theoretical conception of value. Rubin states that this was a step backwards to the normative way that thinkers of the Middle Ages had posed the question of value (Rubin 1979: 348).²⁴ Following Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas had condemned the sinfulness of usurer's and merchant capital or of "buying cheap to sell dear".²⁵

Owen claimed to have studied political economy for thirty years before he wrote his *Report*, however he made no contribution to the development of its theory. Claeys has stated that Owenism was neither a form of "economic discourse, a variety of political economy or for that matter a moral philosophy or anthropology alone" (Claeys 1987: 56). Rather, Owen used the notion of labour as the source of value to underpin the moral basis of his plans for realising a classless society.

At the heart of these plans was the imperative that money be abolished as gold and silver. Money must take the form of labour notes. This involved equal exchanges between the amount of labour-time performed and the amount of labour-time embodied within a commodity.²⁶ As it is well known, Owen became an advocate of various labour-for-labour experiments including labour exchanges, and a national bank based on labour notes (Claeys 1987: 56). These experiments and reforms were based on what Roman Rosdolsky has called the labour-money theory (Rosdolsky 1977: Ch. 4, 99-108).

Marx addressed this theory both in his preliminary studies for *Capital*, and in his polemic with Proudhon. He suggested that Proudhon had made no further

theoretical advance on economic ideas originally put forward by Owen and his followers (Marx 1978: 64-72). Marx subjected the economic means for realising the socialist project put forward by Owenites to a thorough critical analysis in the *Grundrisse*. This critique formed an important part of the development of his own theory of money as the universal equivalent of the value of all commodities in production, consumption, distribution and exchange.

The aim of Marx's critique was to show that the labour-theory was utopian in a double sense. Firstly, it was a partial understanding of the nature of money. Secondly, labour exchanges and a central exchange bank for social planning were unviable means of abolishing money. He argued these experiments were limited exclusively to one of the aspects of the regulation of working time in the global economy through the law of value. This is distribution through circulation. As long as the commodity form dominates the labour process in the spheres of production and consumption, Marx argued, then market forces would destroy such experiments.²⁷

The experiments were partial in that they attempted to undermine the law of value in only one aspect of its operation. By implication, the only practicable way of abolishing money and the law of value, Marx argued, would be to remove all aspects of the mode of production from its global form as commodity and value, including labour power itself. The only means to achieving this end could be the global movement of workers towards the collective appropriation of the means of production including machinery, raw materials and labour. Workers, as a class, liberate their labour power at the same time as liberating the products of labour from their value form as money, wages and capital.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have argued that Marx's critique of utopianism was inspired by the historical imperative of providing a social scientific explanation of the causes of human degradation, brutality and slavery. The theories of history, the human condition and political economy he developed enable socialists to ground their speculations on the future society in categories that have global instantiation. These include alienation, atomisation, the extraction of surplus, and abstract and concrete labour. Marx did not disparage speculations on how alienated social forms of human labour could be superseded, nor on the means to realise the goal of free individuality within a classless society. His critique of utopianism was not therefore pejorative. If his followers have made it so requires explanation. I guess the climate of defeat after 1917 and Cold War terror might have a role to play in this.

Following Meszaros on the early Marx, and Marx's own critique of Owenite socialism, I have argued that Marx had philosophical and economic criteria for assessing the relation between means and ends in utopianism. Not only was he able to distinguish between the two but he used a dialectical method to understand their relationship. Thus the poles of the contradiction between the subjective and objective within utopianism interact and pull it apart. Historically these changes in goals and means brought into being what are now understood to be the Stalinist and social democratic projects, both of which, it is arguable, have proved to be utopian.²⁸

Notes

¹ My interest in this topic began four years ago when I was asked to write a review of *The Faber Book of Utopias* edited by John Carey. A friend suggested that I read *Necessary and Unnecessary Utopias* – the 2000 edition of the *Socialist Register*. I found out that scholars and commentators of different political orientation and opinion are in agreement that the socialist project is utopian. People who are hostile and dismissive and people who are sympathetic and critically engaged both agree that socialism is a utopian doctrine. See Geras 2000: 41-54. Geras asserts that the goal of socialism “is, and (...) always has been utopian, including its most influential version to date, namely Marxism” (*idem*, 41).

² By “Marxist”, I mean “inspired and informed by Marx’s writings”. This, of course, includes selective reference to other scholars and activists who have been similarly inspired and informed by Marx’s intellectual achievements. My influences therefore include the writings of academic Marxists active within the English speaking world such as Hillel Ticktin, Bertell Ollman and Istvan Meszaros – all of whom have had articles published in the journal *Critique*.

³ The stage of my inquiry is preliminary. My guess is that pro-market criticism such as that developed by the Austrian school of economists and philosophers, including, Bohm Bawerk, von Mises, Hayek and Popper used a definition something similar to my own in order to characterise Marx as a utopian.

⁴ Lukes argues that Marx’s criticisms of his predecessors are an inconsistent form of “anti-utopian utopianism” – the anti-utopian element of which has not only “totally failed to bring social and political imagination to bear upon real-life problems” but has also been responsible for stalinism and “the destruction of the very ideal of communism as an object worthy of allegiance or even serious attention” (Lukes 1984: 166). Lukes suggests that Marx’s criticisms of his predecessors and his blindness to the utopian nature of his own project was the cause of both the emergence of one of the most inhumane regimes in history and an abhorrence of the Marxist perception of the socialist project amongst the contemporary intelligentsia. Lukes comes close here to reproducing Karl Popper’s position that Marx’s ideas are responsible for modern totalitarianism.

⁵ “By this [‘speculation’ in common life] we only mean (...) that the subject-matter of such speculations, though in the first place only subjective, must not remain so, but be realised or translated into objectivity” (Hegel 1975: 120).

⁶ “We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality” (Marx 1946: 157).

⁷ “Free individuality, based on the universal development of individuals and on their subordination of their communal, social productivity as their social wealth, is the third stage” (Marx 1973: 158). “Communism is the act of positing as the negation of the negation, and is therefore a real phase, necessary for the next period of historical development, in the emancipation and recovery of mankind” (Marx 1992: 358). I assume that Marx did not distinguish between the concepts of “socialism” and “communism” and understood them to be interchangeable terms.

⁸ Ticktin lists seven “material preconditions”: first, the victory of socialism in the advanced capitalist countries; second, robots making robots; third, relative abundance; fourth, the progressive reduction of necessary labour-time; fifth, the distribution of goods on a free basis; sixth, the abolition of banks and insurance companies; seventh, the end of wasteful production including unemployment, arms production and bureaucratic forms of management and control. See Ticktin 1993b: 149-153. All of these are necessary conditions for the establishment of a classless society. The first condition presupposes the formation of a political and economic collectivity from the class of individuals that alienate their labour power. The six others would also, no doubt, form part of the transitional programme and policies of this emergent form.

⁹ “The communist revolution (...) does away with *labour*, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognised as a class, and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc. within present society” (Marx / Engels 1970: 94).

¹⁰ Angenot mentions works by Bebel, Kautsky, Jaures and Vandervelde as the most prominent of those leaders that produced “detailed blueprints of the ‘collectivist’ society that was to succeed the – supposedly imminent – proletarian revolution and the collapse of capitalism” (Angenot 2000: 98).

¹¹ “Bernstein was (...) not justified in invoking Marx’s authority for his views” (Kolakowski 1978: 109). Kolakowski states that Marx did not want socialists to “limit their horizons to urgent or immediately attainable ends, but only that their aims (...) should be based on observation of real historical tendencies and not arbitrary imaginings of a perfect world”. He mentions certain “premisses” that Marx thought “made socialism possible and even necessary” (*ibidem*). I shall discuss some of these below. I prefer “partial” to “arbitrary” and “non-market” to “perfect” to characterise utopias.

¹² See Ollman 1998, for a thorough discussion of this issue.

¹³ “Marx has arrived at his starting point, and he has done so through a critical appropriation of Hegel. He has Hegel’s dialectical process of history in which, through a series of stages each with its own ‘principle’ or law, an essence undergoes changes that realise its potentialities.” This essence is human labour and its various social forms. See Meikle 1985: 48.

¹⁴ For Marx’s theory of crisis, see Kennedy 1998. Also Ticktin 1993a.

¹⁵ Thus today, Marxists tend to argue that movements for women, black, gay or national liberation are utopian if they promote partial solutions to their oppression and ignore the connection with the global struggle for freedom from economic oppression and for a classless society.

¹⁶ “It is confidently expected that the period is at hand, when man, through ignorance, shall not much longer inflict unnecessary misery on man; because the mass of mankind will become enlightened, and will clearly discern that by his acting they will inevitably create misery to themselves” (*apud* Meszaros 1970: 296).

¹⁷ “The task of transcending the capitalistically alienated social relations of production must be conceived in the global framework of a socialist educational strategy. The latter, however, should not be confused with some form of educational utopianism” (Meszaros 1970: 290).

¹⁸ “Mutual interaction takes place between the different moments [of consumption and production]. This is the case with every organic whole” (Marx 1973: 100). See also Gould 1978.

¹⁹ “The totality as it appears in the head, as a totality of thoughts, (...) the subject society, must always be kept in mind as the presupposition” (Marx 1973: 101-102).

²⁰ “The science may be truly called one whereby ignorance, poverty, crime, and misery, may be prevented; and will indeed open a new era to the human race; one in which real happiness will commence, and perpetually go on increasing through every succeeding generation” (Owen 1991: 280).

²¹ “The usual definition of freedom, which is taken from Hegel, is that freedom is the recognition of necessity. In other words, the understanding of nature and society creates the scope for human freedom because mankind can utilise both the forces of nature and its own talents to create a society adequate to itself” (Ticktin 1993b: 145).

²² “The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself” (Marx 1970: 121).

²³ “According to Owen’s new conception – which could have been derived from Smith or any number of other sources – articles had originally exchanged according to the value or amount of labour contained within them” (Claeys 1987).

²⁴ Owen studied Ricardo when attending McCulloch’s lectures “shortly before he had left for New Harmony” in 1824 (Claeys 1987: 53).

²⁵ “Whosoever buys a thing (...) in order that he may gain by selling it again unchanged and as he bought it, that man is of the buyers and sellers who are cast forth from God’s temple” (*apud* Rubin 1979: 35). See also Claeys 1987: 2-9. Claeys accounts for Owenite moralism – what he calls the “principle of just transfer” – differently. He states “it represented a reversion to an anthropological concept of how exchange worked in primitive societies rather than revival of the subversive views of any earlier theorists” (*idem*, 189). This again suggests an origin in Smith’s assumption that in a society of simple commodity producers exchange takes place according to equal amounts of embodied labour-time.

²⁶ Other advantages of “introducing a natural standard of value, and abandoning an artificial one” include the improvement of human nature, the end of poverty, the end of bargaining over prices, free trade between nations, and expanded domestic markets (Owen 1991: 256-257). Owen was therefore the founder of the doctrine that the market is compatible with socialism. This is noted by McNally 1993: Ch.4, 104-138. He states that Owen and his followers were “the first market socialists” (*idem*, 4).

²⁷ Thus he argues that labour-money would be unable to deal with a rise in the productivity of labour; that there would be no way of distinguishing and resolving the antagonism between value and price; and that a central exchange bank would have to have a despotic control over all spheres of production, consumption and distribution as general buyer and seller of all commodities. See Rosdolsky 1977: 99-108.

²⁸ “Dialectical materialism does not know dualism between means and end. The end flows naturally from the historical movement. Organically the means are subordinated to the end. The immediate end becomes the means for a further end. In his play *Franz von Sickingen*, Ferdinand Lassalle puts the following words into the mouth of one of the heroes:

Do not only show the goal, show the path as well.
For so closely interwoven with one another are path and goal
That a change in one means a change in the other,
And a different path gives rise to a different goal” (Trotsky 1992: 49-50).

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