

Six month struggle ends

Meszaros teaches first seminar at York

By CARL STIEREN

Istvan Meszaros, noted Marxist scholar, started his first seminar at York last Friday by recommending the works of three bourgeois theorists.

When the choice of texts was discussed, Meszaros strongly urged discussion of Ralf Dahrendorf and Karl Mannheim, and John Kenneth Galbraith, because these writers are so important to the Western Social and political thought.

Meszaros was given permission to teach just this month after a six-month struggle with the Department of Manpower and Immigration, which had at first denied him landed immigrant status for undisclosed "security reasons."

Before the seminar last Friday, some students had feared that Meszaros would want the class to run in a more formal European manner, but these fears proved unfounded. Meszaros participated in the seminar as an equal member and resource person. The class, a graduate seminar on ideology and class consciousness, had been running on an interim basis with two other professors and six students.

Nine people, including Meszaros, gathered around a conference table in Atkinson college last Friday to discuss the tasks and contradictions of a worker's state in Lenin's State and Revolution, and stayed on twenty minutes after the class had ended.

The issues were ones that had been argued before in cafes among small groups of exiles in Zurich and in secret meetings of many more in Czarist Russia: Does the state become oppressive only when the working class becomes conscious of its nature? If this is true, would the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat eventually become the oppressor of the masses? With these questions, Jim Moran opened the seminar and finished by asking whether belief in the inevitability of revolution was really abandoned for Lenin's insistence on professional revolutionaries rather than a spontaneous workers' revolt.

The questions provoked thought, disagreement, and sometimes even passion. D.C. Davies replied to Moran's opening question by saying that the proletarian state would become less oppressive only after classes were successfully abolished. Mark Boekelman emphasized that the reason Lenin gave so much attention to the question of a proletarian state was a specific tactical one — to consolidate the Russian Revolution which was going on at the time and to protect the revolution from internal and external forces. Meszaros replied that State and Revolution was unfinished because Lenin wanted to participate in a revolution rather than theorize about it. When someone asked if the Soviet state could be subjected to Lenin's criticisms, Meszaros replied, "That is the unwritten chapter."

The repartee continued with Daniel Drache asserting that technocratic material developments must be accompanied by a change in the relationship of the worker to his work. Meszaros replied that it does not necessarily follow that consciousness must develop parallel to technology:

"How do you reconcile the development of Soviet society, which was the product of technocratic changes, with the lack of parallel modification in consciousness?"

Then the class ended, and the armchair radicals went to lunch.



With his six month struggle with the government over Istvan Meszaros taught his first class last Friday. Although many students feared he would

attempt to run the class in a stricter more European manner Meszaros participated as a member of the class.

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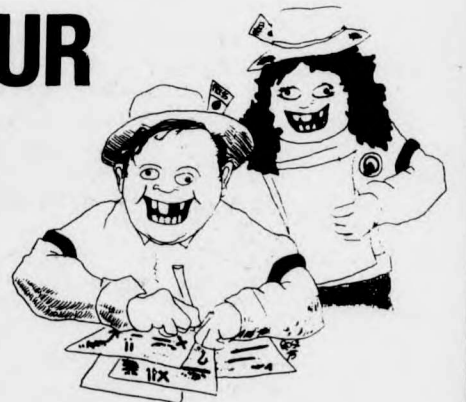


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