

## 217 Marx and Marxism

Bruno Leipold | bruno.leipold [at] politics.ox.ac.uk

### Week 1: Alienation and the Young Marx

#### Questions

- 'The main difficulty with Marx's account of alienation is that it depends on a wholly implausible account of human nature.' Discuss.
- Outline and assess Marx's account of human nature.
- How plausible is Marx's denial that alienation is an inevitable feature of all industrial societies?
- What is the species-being and is it plausible that capitalism alienates the worker from it?
- Can the concept of alienation provide a convincing and exhaustive critique of capitalism?

#### Core Reading

Leipold, David. *The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Introduction and Ch. 3 and 4.

Marx. *On the Jewish Question*, 1843 (MECW 3).

Marx. *Comments on James Mill*, 1844 (MECW 3).

Marx. *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 1844 (MECW 3).

#### Supplementary Reading

Althusser, Louis. *For Marx*. London: Verso, 2005. Ch. 2 'On the Young Marx'

Marx. *Contribution to the Critique Of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, 1843, and *Introduction* 1844 (MECW 3).

Marx, extracts on alienation in *Karl Marx: A reader* ed. Jon Elster. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Ollman, Bertell. *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in a Capitalist Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Wood, Allen. *Karl Marx 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. London: Routledge, 2004. Part One.

Geras, Norman. *Marx and Human Nature: Refutation of a Legend*. London: Verso, 1983.

Stedman Jones, 'Introduction' in Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*. London: Penguin 2002, pp.120-139.

## Week 2: Historical Materialism

### Questions

- 'Readings of Marx's theory of history that give primacy to technological development are unable to make sense of the role of class struggle in that theory.' Discuss.
- How successfully does the theory of historical materialism explain the actual progression of history?
- If contract and property rights, and the modern state, are necessary conditions for capitalist relations of production, how can they be determined by the economic base?
- 'The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life'. What are the main problems arising out of this formulation of historical materialism?

### Core Reading

Cohen, G. A. *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978. Chs. 1-4, 6, 8, 10.

Marx and Engels. *The German Ideology*, 1846, (MECW 5). Esp. Part I.

Marx and Engels. *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848, (MECW 6).

Marx. *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1859, (MECW 16).

### Supplementary Reading

Cohen, G. A. *History, Labour and Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Chs. 1, 2, 5, 6, 9.

Cohen, Joshua. 'Review of G.A. Cohen's Karl Marx's Theory of History', in *Journal of Philosophy*, 79(5) 1980, pp. 253-273.

Engels, *Letters to C. Schmidt, and J. Bloch*, 1890 (MECW 49, pp.6-9, 33-37).

Hobsbawm, Eric. *Age of Revolutions: Europe, 1789-1848*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962.

James, C.L.R. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. London: Penguin Books, 2001 [1938].

Levine, Andrew and Erik Olin Wright. 'Rationality and Class Struggle'. *New Left Review*, I/123, 1980, pp. 47-68.

Lukes, Steven, 'Can the Base be Distinguished from the Superstructure?', in Miller, David and Larry Siedentop (eds), *The Nature of Political Theory* (Oxford, 1983).

Marx. *Letter to Annenkov*, 28 Dec 1846, (MECW 38, p.95).

Marx. *The Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847, (MECW 6).

Marx. *Grundrisse*, 1858, (MECW 28-29), Penguin ed., 1973, esp. Introduction, pp.83-111, and p.331.

Marx. *Letter to Lassalle* [on Darwin], 16 Jan. 186, MECW 41 pp. 245-247.

Marx. *Capital, vol. 1*; Preface, Chapters 26-33 and *Afterword* to 1st and 2nd German editions, 1867, 1873 (MECW 35, Penguin edition).

Marx. *Letter to the Editors, Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, 1877, (MECW 24, pp. 196-201) or *Letter to Mikhailovskii*

Sayers, Sean. 'Marxism and the Dialectical Method: A Critique of G.A. Cohen' (1984), in Sayers, S. and P. Osborne (eds.), *Socialism, Feminism and Philosophy: A Radical Philosophy Reader*. London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 140-68.

### **Week 3: Classes**

#### Questions

- Why, if at all, is class a more important category for explaining conflict and historical change than other social cleavages such as race, gender and religion?
- Can women be adequately included in Marx's account of class and class analysis?
- 'Neo-Marxist attempts to adapt Marx's class theory to fit the realities of advanced capitalism succeed only in abandoning that which was distinctively Marxist.' Do you agree?
- How can Marxists explain the weakness of class consciousness in late twentieth century capitalist societies?
- Does Marx give a satisfactory account of the process by which a class 'an sich' becomes a class 'für sich'?

#### Core Reading

De Ste Croix, G. E. M., *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*. London: Duckworth, 1981. Ch. 2.

Hartmann, Heidi. 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union.' In Sargent, Lydia (ed.). *Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1981.

Marx. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852 (MECW 11).

Marx. *Capital Vol. III*, 1865/1894 (MECW 37). Chs. 48-52.

Wright, Erik Olin. *Classes*. London: Verso, 1985. Chs. 1-4.

#### Supplementary Reading

Cohen, G. A., *History, Labour and Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Chs. 12-13.

Davis, Angela. *Women, Race and Class*. New York: Vintage, 1983.

Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* (MECW 4).

Engels. *Germany: Revolution and Counter-revolution*, 1852, (MECW 11).

Marx, *The Class Struggles in France*, 1850 (MECW 10).

Marx, *Capital Vol. I*, 1867 (MECW 35), esp. chs.10-15, 33.

Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1963.

Weber, Max, 'Class, Status, Party' (1921) in Gerth, Hans and Wright Mills, C. (eds), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (1948, 1990).

## **Week 4: The State**

### Questions

- Is Marx and Engels' characterization of the capitalist state as simply the 'executive committee of the whole bourgeoisie' plausible?
- 'Marx's utopian belief that the state could wither away in a socialist society is a consequence of his misunderstanding of the role of the state in capitalist society.' Discuss.
- Why did Marx think that the dictatorship of the proletariat would be the final form of state power, after which it would wither away?
- If the state 'withers away' in socialist society does this make Marx an anarchist?

### Core Reading

Draper, Hal, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution. Vol.1: State and Bureaucracy* (Monthly Review Press, 1977). Chs. 11-13.

Hay, Colin. 'Marxism and the State', in A. Gamble et al. *Marxism and Social Science*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

Marx. *The Civil War in France*, 1871 (MECW 22).

Marx. *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 1875 (MECW 24).

Miliband, Ralph. *The State in Capitalist Society*. London: Weidenfeld, 1969. Chs. 1-3.

### Supplementary Reading

Bakunin, Michael. *Statism and Anarchy*, 1873. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press ed. Marshal Shatz, 1991.

Elster, Jon. *Making Sense of Marx*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. Ch. 7.

Hegel, G.W.F. (1821) *Elements of The Philosophy of Right*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press ed. Allen Wood, 1991.

Marx. *Contribution to the Critique Of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, 1843 (MECW 3).

Marx *Capital, Vol.1*, 1867 chs.10, 25-32 (MECW 35, Penguin ed. 1976).

Engels, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* 1884 (MECW 26).

Poulantzas, Nicos. *State, Power, Socialism* (1978).

Poulantzas, Nicos & Ralph Miliband. 'The Problem of the Capitalist State', in R. Blackburn (ed.) *Ideology in Social Science: Readings in Critical Social Theory*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972, pp. 238-262. Original articles in *New Left Review* #58, 59, 82, 95 (1969-76)

## **Week 5: Marx's Economic Theory**

### Questions

- What may be said for and against the labour theory of value?
- Is the labour theory of value necessary for Marx's conception of exploitation, and broader critique of capitalism?
- What is the significance of Marx's distinction between labour and labour power?
- If we abandon the labour theory of value, can we salvage anything of worth in Marx's economic theory?

### Core Reading

Marx, *Capital Vol. I*, 1867 (MECW 35). Chs. 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 26-28.

Harvey, David. *A Companion to Marx's Capital*. London: Verso, 2010. Introduction and Ch. 1. Or his 'Reading Capital' lectures 1 and 2: <http://davidharvey.org/2008/06/marxs-capital-class-01/> and <http://davidharvey.org/2008/06/marxs-capital-class-02/>

Robinson, Joan. *An Essay on Marxian Economics*. London: MacMillan, 1942.

### Supplementary Reading

Cohen, G.A. *History, Labour, and Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Ch. 11.

Marx, *Value, Price and Profit*, 1865 (MECW 20).

Marx, *Capital Vol. III*, 1865/1894 (MECW 37). Chs. 1-4, 8-10, 13-18, 1881.

Marx, *Letter To Dr. Kugelmann, 11 July 1868* (MECW 43 pp. 67-9).

Hollander, Samuel. *The Economics of Karl Marx: Analysis and Application*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Roemer, John. *Analytical Foundations of Marxian Economic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

## Week 6: Utopian and Scientific Socialism

### Questions

- Is Engels' distinction between utopian and scientific socialism defensible?
- Outline and assess Marx's critique of 'utopian socialism'.
- Is Marx's account of communism 'utopian'?
- Was Marx's opposition to utopian socialism always 'total and unwavering'?
- Do Marx and Engels have any intellectual debts to utopian socialism?
- Why was Marx reluctant to discuss in detail the nature of communist society?

### Core Reading

Engels. *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, 1880, (MECW 24).

Fourier, Charles. *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love and Passionate Attraction*. Ed. Jonathan Beecher and Richard Beinvenu. London: Cape, 1972. Esp. Ch. I, II, III, and V.

Leopold, David. 'The Structure of Marx and Engels' Considered Account of Utopian Socialism', *History of Political Thought*, 26:3 (2005), pp. 443-466.

Owen, Robert. *The Life and Ideas of Robert Owen*. Ed. A.L. Morton. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1962. Esp. Part Two: Selected Writings.

### Supplementary Reading

Fourier, Charles. *The Theory of the Four Movements*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Geras, Norman. 'Minimum Utopia: Ten Theses', *Socialist Register*, 36 (2000), pp. 41-52.

Marx, *Letter to Sorge* 19 October 1877, (MECW 45, pp.282-84).

Marx, *Letter to Kugelmann*, 9 October 1866, (MECW 42, pp. 325-27).

Marx and Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848 (MECW 6) part III 'Socialist and Communist Literature'.

Leopold, David. 'Socialism and (and the Rejection of) Utopia', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 12:3 (2007), pp. 219-237.

Paden, Roger. 'Marx's Critique of the Utopian Socialists', *Utopian Studies*, 13 (2002), pp. 67-91.

## Week 7: The Revolutionary Transition to Socialism – Lenin and Luxemburg

### Questions

- Does Lenin's conception of the vanguard party follow from Marx and Engels' account of revolution?

- Was Lenin a democrat, or did he lay the seeds for Stalin's bureaucratization of the Soviet Union?
- How far do Lenin and Luxemburg differ in their views on spontaneity and organization in the workers' movement?
- Does Lenin or Luxemburg have the better claim to being closer to Marx conception of revolution?

### Core Reading

Lenin, Vladimir I. *What is to Be Done?*, 1903, (LCW 5, LSW).

Lenin, Vladimir I. *State and Revolution*, 1917, (LCW 25, LSW).

Luxemburg, Rosa, 'Organizational Questions of Russian Social Democracy', 1904. In *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*, (ed.) Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004.

Luxemburg, Rosa. *The Russian Revolution*, 1918. In *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*.

McLellan, David. *Marxism after Marx*. London: Macmillan, 1979. Chs. 2, 3, 5- 7.

Topper, Henry. 'Lenin or Luxemburg: Alternative Views of the Party', *Praxis International*, 2:1 (1982), pp. 34-51.

See also Stuart White's lectures on WebLearn:

[https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/socsci/politics/students/undergraduat/reading\\_list](https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/socsci/politics/students/undergraduat/reading_list)

### Supplementary Reading

Kautsky, Karl, *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. Manchester: National Labour Press, 1918.

Kolakowski, Leszek. *Main Currents of Marxism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1978). Vol.2, chs.16-18.

Lenin, Vladimir I. *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 1916 (LCW 22, LSW).

Lih, Lars. *Lenin Rediscovered. 'What is to be Done?' in Context*. New York: Haymarket, 2008.

Lukács, Georg. *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought*. London: Verso, 2009 [1924].

Luxemburg, Rosa. *Social Reform or Revolution?* In *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*.

Luxemburg, Rosa. *The Junius Pamphlets*. In *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*.

Harding, Neil, *Lenin's Political Thought*. London: Macmillan, 1977, 1988.

von Trotta, Margarethe (dir.). *Rosa Luxemburg*. 1986.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiR0MmxB2qU>

## **Week 8: Gramsci – Ideology and Hegemony**

## Questions

- Is Gramsci's conception of the 'modern prince' at all different from Lenin's theory of the party?
- How much does Gramsci's theory of hegemony add to Marx's account of ideology?
- 'Between the economic structure of the state with its legislation and its coercion stands civil society; and the latter must be radically transformed'. (Gramsci). How great is the contrast between this theory and Marx's own?
- How useful is the concept of hegemony for understanding the resilience of capitalist society and for revolutionary action against it?

## Core Reading

Althusser, Louis. 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Essays on Ideology*. London: Verso, 1984.

Anderson, Perry. 'The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci', *New Left Review*, 100 (1976), pp. 5-78.

Femia, Joseph. *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness and the Revolutionary Process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981. Chs. 1, 2, 6, 7.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections From The Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971. Esp. 'Intellectuals', 'Notes on Italian History', 'State and Civil Society' and 'The Modern Prince'.

## Supplementary Reading

Fontana, Benedeto. 'The Concept of Caesarism in Gramsci'. In *Dictatorship in History and Theory: Bonapartism, Caesarism, and Totalitarianism*, ed. Peter Baehr and Melvin Richter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. 103-128.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart 1995.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Pre-Prison Writings*. ed. Bellamy, David and Virginia Cox. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Letters from Prison*. Edited by Frank Rosengarten. Translated by Raymond Rosenthal. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Gramsci, Antonio, *Selections From Cultural Writings*. Ed. Forgacs, David and Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1985.

Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso, 2001. ch. 1 'Hegemony: the Genealogy of a Concept'.

Showstack Sassoon, Anne, *Gramsci's Politics: Second Edition*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987. Esp. Part 1.

Showstack Sassoon, Anne (ed) *Approaches to Gramsci*. London: Writers & Readers, 1982. Esp. chapters by Eric Hobsbawn ("Gramsci and Marxist Political Theory"), Giuseppe Vacca ("Intellectuals and the Marxist theory of the state"), Christine Buci-Glucksmann ("Hegemony and



Consent”), and both chapters by Showstack Sassoon (“Hegemony, war of position and political intervention” and “Passive revolution and the politics of reform”).

Simon, Roger, *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982.

Thomas, Peter. *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism*. London: Haymarket, 2011.