

# **Education for Socialists**

**Class Guides for the  
Study of Marxism**

**Volume 1**

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*Paris, May-June 1968*

# Preface

This pamphlet is the first volume in an ongoing series of collections of class guides for the study of Marxism. These classes have been developed and used over a number of years by the Democratic Socialist Perspective in educational for its members.

These classes are not an academic exercise but have a severely practical purpose. They are designed to provide DSP members with some of the essential ideas which they need in order to function as socialist activists in capitalist society. Thus the classes range over broad questions of Marxist theory — of history, economics and politics — as well as strategy and tactics in the struggle to replace capitalism with socialism.

The classes are designed to be fitted into the usually crowded schedules of the party's branches. Thus they consist of a modest amount of reading and a list of questions to provide a framework for a group discussion led by a class leader. Generally they take about one and a half to two hours. Whether there is time to address all the discussion questions during the class depends on the concerns of the group and the judgement of the class leader.

Of course, such classes — along with local, regional and national educational seminars and conferences — can only begin or stimulate the process of self-education of members. Ultimately, collective education must be combined with individual reading and study.

The first series, "Introduction to socialism", is somewhat different to the others. It is designed to introduce socialism to people new to the DSP and Resistance. Often it will be their first encounter with socialist ideas. Generally, the discussion in such classes tends to be wide-ranging and fairly free-flowing. It is up to the class leader to moderate the discussion according to the concerns and needs of the group.

Wherever possible we have used editions published by Resistance Books, the publishing house associated with the DSP and Resistance. ■

# Introduction to Socialism

The following three-part class series is intended to provide an initial and basic introduction to the ideas of socialism. The discussion points are designed to cover the key issues addressed in the pamphlet *What Resistance Stands For*.

## Class 1. How capitalism works & for whom

### Reading

- a. *What Resistance Stands For*, pp. 1-16

### Extra reading if you have time

- b. Mandel, *The Marxist Theory of the State*
- c. Mandel, *The Marxist Theory of Alienation*

### Discussion points

- What are the major causes of environmental destruction?
- What causes Third World poverty?
- Why is unemployment unavoidable under capitalism?
- What is the role of war for the capitalist system?
- What is the ruling class?
- What is the state and how does it serve the capitalist class?
- Why and how does capitalism oppress women?
- What role does racism play for the system?
- How does capitalism alienate people?

## Class 2. What's the socialist alternative?

### Reading

- a. *What Resistance Stands For*, pp. 16-29

### Discussion points

- How has capitalism made socialism its logical and practical successor?
- Why does socialism, unlike capitalism, need democracy?
- What led to the dictatorship of bureaucracy strangling the revolutions in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe?
- How has the Cuban Revolution tackled bureaucracy?
- Are people bound to be greedy and selfish?
- How does socialism set the basis for human freedom?

## Class 3. How can we win socialism?

### Reading

- a. *What Resistance Stands For*, pp. 29-31

### Extra reading if you have time

- b. Camejo, *How to Make a Revolution*  
 c. Introduction, *Resistance Constitution*  
 d. Preamble, *Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Perspective*

### Discussion points

- What makes the working class capable of getting rid of capitalism and replacing it with a new society?
- Why do socialists fight for reforms in order to make a revolution?
- What characterises a potentially “revolutionary situation”?
- What's the role of socialists in the struggle to make a revolution?
- Why is a revolutionary party needed to make a revolution?

### Further discussion points

- What characterises the liberal approach to politics?
- What is the connection between ultraleftism and liberalism?
- Why do socialists advocate mass action?

- What is the attitude of revolutionary socialists to parliament?
- What is the attitude of revolutionary socialists to the ALP?
- Why is the acceptance of the democratic principle of majority rule essential to the functioning of a socialist organisation?
- Why does unity in action require centralised organisation and leadership?





# Introduction to Marxism

The following five class outlines are designed to provide an introduction to Marxist theory. These classes should be done before proceeding to the class series on the DSP program and constitution.

The study outlines are designed for a discussion group format, with those participating having read the recommended reading beforehand. The discussion points are aimed at highlighting the key ideas in the reading and at providing a framework for group discussion.

## Class 1. Social inequality & social classes

### Reading [29 pages]

- a. Mandel, *Introduction to Marxism*, Chapters 1 & 2 [16 pages]
- b. Lenin, “Social Classes”, Appendix 1 [1 page]
- c. Marx & Engels, “The Manifesto of the Communist Party”, *The Communist Manifesto and Its Relevance Today*, Part I, pp. 45-56 [12 pages]

### Points for discussion

1. “A pyramid of wealth and social power exists in all capitalist countries.” (Mandel; a, 5) Discuss.
2. “Nowadays it is not enough just to take stock of the social inequalities which exist in each country.” (Mandel; a, 6) Discuss the issue of global inequality.
3. “... throughout history we see social inequality crystallised into *class inequality*.” (Mandel; a, 8) Discuss.
4. Has social inequality always existed?
5. “The history of all class societies is the history of the class struggles which rend them apart.” (Mandel; a, 10) Discuss.
6. What was the neolithic revolution?
7. “The primitive conditions of social organisation were overturned as a result of

the appearance of a large and permanent surplus of food.” (Mandel; a, 13) Discuss.

8. “An egalitarian society ... can only be developed on the basis of an advanced economy ...” (Mandel; a, 15) Discuss
9. “Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.” (Lenin; b, 31) Discuss the Marxist definition of social classes, as given by Lenin. Why is it superior to the general definition given in bourgeois sociology, which determines social class purely by size of income (and thus uses the categories: upper, middle, and lower class)?
10. What defines the capitalist class? The working class? The petty bourgeoisie? What is the middle class? Is every person who receives a wage necessarily a worker (cops, military personnel, workplace supervisors, etc.).

## Class 2. The Marxist theory of the state

### Reading [40 pages]

- a. Mandel, *Introduction to Marxism*, Chapters 3 & 10 [17 pages]
- b. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, Chapters I & II [23 pages]

### Points for discussion

1. What is the state? Have states always existed?
2. “The state was born when the functions which were previously undertaken by all members of a society became the prerogative of *a separate group of people*.” (Mandel; a, 18) What are these functions? What were the economic and social conditions that caused the birth of the state?
3. “... the bourgeois, and particularly, the petty-bourgeois, ideologists ... make it appear that the state is an organ for the *reconciliation* of classes. According to Marx, the state could neither have arisen nor maintained itself had it been possible to reconcile classes.” (Lenin; b, 16) Why is the state a product of the inability to reconcile classes?

4. “Although, in the last analysis, the state is body of armed men, and the power of the ruling class is based on violent constraint, it cannot limit itself exclusively to this ... That is why the state does not only fulfil a repressive function, but also a function of ideological integration.” (Mandel; a, 20) Why cannot a ruling class maintain its power exclusively through repression? What is “ideological integration”? How does the state carry out this function? What other social institutions, besides the state itself, perform this function?
5. “In every class society *the dominant ideology is that of the ruling class.*” (Mandel; a, 21) Why is this?
6. What is the difference between a government and a state? Between a political revolution and a social revolution?
7. “We are in favour of a democratic republic as the best form of state for the proletariat under capitalism.” (Lenin; b, 25) Why is this?
8. “The whole of 20th century history confirms that it is impossible to use a bourgeois parliament and a government based on capitalist property and the bourgeois state against the bourgeoisie in any significant way.” (Mandel; a, 44) Why is this? What historical experiences demonstrate the truth of this view? How then can the working class attain state power?
9. “The suppression of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution.” (Lenin; b, 27) Why is this? Why does the proletariat need a state?
10. “Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably *the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.*” (Lenin; b, 37) What are the main political forms that have been exhibited by bourgeois states? Why have all these states, regardless of their political forms, been bourgeois dictatorships?
11. “... the period of *transition* from capitalism to communism ... is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms, and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie).” (Lenin; b, 36-37) How does proletarian democracy differ from bourgeois democracy? How is the proletarian state a dictatorship against the bourgeoisie?
12. “Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists ... Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat.*” (Lenin; b, 36) Why is this?

## Class 3. The capitalist mode of production

### Reading [22 pages]

- a. Mandel, *Introduction to Marxism*, Chapter 4, Chapter 5, parts 1-6

### Supplementary reading

- b. Myers ed., *Marxist Economics: A Handbook of Basic Definitions*

### Points for discussion

1. What is a commodity? What is petty commodity production and when did it arise?
2. What determines the value of a commodity? What is the difference between the value of a commodity and its market price? How is the price of a commodity determined?
3. What is surplus value?
4. “The existence of capital is not to be confused with the existence of the capitalist mode of production.” (Mandel; a, 29) What is capital? When and in what forms did it first appear? What distinguishes these earlier forms of capital accumulation from the capitalist mode of production?
5. “Modern capitalism is the product of three basic economic and social transformations ...” (Mandel; a, 31) What are these?
6. How does wage labour differ from slave and serf labour? What does the wage worker sell? What determines the value of this commodity? What determines the market price (wage) of this commodity?
7. What is the source of capitalist profit? Why are capitalists driven to maximise profits? Why does this drive lead to an equalisation of the rate of profit between capitalist firms?
8. What is absolute surplus value? Why cannot its volume be increased indefinitely? What is relative surplus value? How do the capitalists increase its volume?
9. Why does profit shrink relative to the growth of capital as a whole? What problems does this create for the capitalist system?
10. “All the inherent contradictions of the capitalist mode of production periodically blow up in crises of overproduction.” (Mandel; a, 41) What is a “crisis of overproduction”? Does this mean that more goods are produced than people need? How does this crisis differ from economic crises in precapitalist societies? What are the inherent contradictions of the capitalist mode of production and how do they periodically blow up in crises of overproduction?

## Class 4. The revolutionary potential of the working class

### Reading [31 pages]

- a. Mandel, “Revolutionary Strategy in the Imperialist Countries”, *Can the Working Class Make a Socialist Revolution?* [11 pages]
- b. Mandel, “Workers Under Neo-Capitalism”, *Can the Working Class Make a Socialist Revolution?* [17 pages]
- c. DSP, *Program of the Democratic Socialist Party*, Part III, Section 1, pp. 62-64 [3 pages]

### Supplementary reading

- d. Novack, “Can US Workers Make a Socialist Revolution?”, *Can the Working Class Make a Socialist Revolution?*

### Points for discussion

1. “A social revolution cannot be achieved until objective historical conditions have placed that revolution on the agenda. A social revolution cannot result from the desires, dreams, ideals of revolutionary-minded individuals.” (Mandel; a, 20) Why is this? What are the objective historical conditions that place a social revolution on the agenda?
2. “The keystone of Marx’s materialist theory of social evolution is ... the concept of the contradiction between production and property relations on the one hand and the productive forces on the other.” (Mandel; a, 22) How is this contradiction manifested in contemporary capitalist society?
3. “The question has been posed: Hasn’t the role of the working class been fundamentally changed in this changed environment? Hasn’t the long-term high level of employment and the rising real wage undercut any revolutionary potential of the working class? Isn’t it changing in composition, and more and more divorced from the productive process, as a result of growing automation? Don’t its relations with other social layers, such as white-collar workers, technicians, intellectuals, students, undergo basic modifications?” (Mandel; b, 6) What is the working class? Why do Marxists single out the working class as the prime social agency of revolutionary social change under capitalism?
4. “To state that an analysis of the working class as an agency of social change should start from how the workers act and not from what they think does not imply that the question of their thinking — of their level of consciousness — is

irrelevant to the processes of social change in the West. On the contrary: it is a basic thesis of Marxism that a socialist revolution, at least in an advanced industrial country, needs a high level of consciousness of the working class to be successful.” (Mandel; a, 24) Why is this?

5. “Neo-capitalism in the long run strengthens the working class much as did *laissez faire* capitalism or monopoly capitalism in its first stage.” (Mandel; b, 12) In what ways does “late monopoly capitalism” — “neo-capitalism” — strengthen the revolutionary potential of the working class?
6. “Even more important than the basic instability and insecurity of the proletarian condition which neo-capitalism hasn’t overcome and cannot overcome is the inherent trend under neo-capitalism to push the class struggle to a higher plane.” (Mandel; b, 14) How does “neo-capitalism” push the class struggle to a higher plane?
7. “The problems of the revolutionary potential of the working class cannot be answered by references to what goes on every day or even every year.” (Mandel; b, 17) Why is this?
8. “... only by trying to expand actual living working-class struggles toward an incipient challenge against the authority of the employers, of the capitalist system, and of the bourgeois state ... can the workers build the actual organisations through which they, tomorrow, themselves take over the administration of the economy and the state.” (Mandel; a, 27) Why cannot the masses of working people be convinced of the need for socialism and how to bring it into being simply as a result of revolutionary propaganda? Why does this require the progressive development of anticapitalist mass action?
9. “... the working class cannot as a whole or spontaneously acquire the political class-consciousness necessary to prepare and guide its struggle for socialism. For this, it is indispensable to develop a party uniting all ... who have developed a socialist consciousness and a commitment to carrying out revolutionary political activity irrespective of the conjunctural ebbs and flows of the mass movement.” (DSP; c, 63-64) Why cannot the working class as a whole or spontaneously acquire the level of political consciousness necessary to carry out a socialist revolution? Why is it indispensable to build a revolutionary socialist party?

## Class 5. Historical materialism

### Reading [30 pages]

- a. Engels, “The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man”, Appendix 2 [11 pages]
- b. Mandel, *Introduction to Marxism*, Chapter 17 [17 pages]
- c. Marx, “Historical Materialism”, Appendix 3 [2 pages]

### Supplementary reading

- d. Novack, *The Labour Theory of Human Origins*
- e. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Chapter IX

### Points for discussion

1. “Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us... Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature ...” (Engels; a, 39) What is the Marxist view of the relationship between humanity and nature?
2. “Labour ... is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labour created man himself.” (Engels; a) What is labour? How does it differ from the animal mode of procuring subsistence? How did labour create humanity?
3. “Historical materialism states that the way in which humanity organises its material production constitutes the base of all social organisation.” (Mandel; b, 51) Why is this?
4. “This base in turn determines all other social activities — the administration of relations between groups of humans (mainly the appearance and development of the state), spiritual production, morals, laws, religion, etc. These so-called superstructure activities always remain attached, in one way or another, to the base.” (Mandel; b, 51-52) What is the social base? Why and how does it determine all other social activities?
5. “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.” (Marx; c, 43) Why is this?
6. “Finally, if in the last analysis the social base determines phenomena and activities at the level of the superstructure, these latter can also react on the

former.” (Mandel; b, 52) Discuss.

7. What is the meaning of the following terms: (a) objects of labour; (b) instruments of labour; (c) means of production; (d) forces of production; (e) relations of production.
8. “In general, given relations of production correspond to a given degree of development of the productive forces, to a given sophistication (amount) of the means of production, to a given technique and organisation of labour.” (Mandel; b, 55) Why is this?
9. “Every social formation, that is, every society in a given country, in a given epoch, is always characterised by a totality of relations of production ... But every totality of social relations of production does not necessarily imply the existence of a stabilised mode of production, nor the homogeneity of these relations of production.” (Mandel; b, 56) What is a “mode of production”? What modes of production have existed throughout human history? When have social formations exhibited hybrid relations of production?
10. “At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or — what is but a legal expression for the same thing — with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution.” (Marx; c, 43) What is the motive force behind the development of the productive forces? Why do they inevitably come into conflict with the dominant relations of production? What is a social revolution?
11. “The history of human societies can be explained. It is not haphazard or arbitrary... In the last analysis it is explained by the fundamental structure of the society at each given epoch, and by the essential contradictions of this structure. For as long as society is divided into classes, it is explained by class struggle.” (Mandel, b, 58) What economic and social conditions gave rise to the division of society into classes? What is the root cause of class struggle? Why is an advanced economy a precondition for the creation of a socialist society?
12. “Humanity makes its own history. If humanity is the product of given material conditions, these material conditions are in turn the products of *human social practice*.” (Mandel; b, 58) Discuss.



# The DSP Program & Constitution

This five-part class series is designed to provide a guide for studying the *Program of the Democratic Socialist Party* and the constitution of the Democratic Socialist Perspective. It assumes that class participants are familiar with at least the main tenets of Marxist theory, for example as a result of having been through the Introduction to Marxism class series.

## Class 1. The origin & development of capital & labour in Australia

### Reading [17 pages]

DSP, *Program of the Democratic Socialist Party*, Part II

### Discussion points

1. “The colonial settlement of Australia was part of the same process that resulted in British colonisation of India, North America and parts of Africa. However, significant differences in these colonisations explain why Australia became a developed capitalist country while India and other former British colonies were condemned to semicolonial underdevelopment.” (p. 45) What were these differences and how do they explain how the British colonies in Australia became a developed capitalist country, rather than an underdeveloped semicolonial country like India?
2. “The introduction of parliamentary forms of rule was also achieved without recourse to revolution, though popular struggle played an important role in the extension of democratic rights beyond the propertied classes.” (p. 47) How were parliamentary forms of capitalist rule introduced into Australia?
3. “The Australian constitution was a practical agreement as to how the different

sections of the capitalist class would share political power among themselves.” (p. 49) How did the Australian federal constitution reflect the fact that an independent Australian nation-state did not come into being through a popular revolutionary struggle as, for example, the USA or the French nation-state did? How did it reconcile the conflicting interests within the Australian bourgeoisie? How did it ensure that real power remained firmly in the hands of the bourgeoisie while at the same time winning acceptance from workers and small farmers?

4. “Like every other developed capitalist economy in the 20th century, the Australian economy became dominated by monopoly capital.” (p. 50) How did this development alter the political structure of Australian capitalism? What is Australia’s economic position and political role in the world imperialist system?
5. “In the period from 1860 to 1890, a long capitalist boom in Australia provided ... the basis for collaboration between Australian capital and the leaders of the labour movement ...” (p. 55) What were the issues and ideas around which this collaboration was established?
6. “ALP governments ... are in no sense workers’ governments. On the contrary, they are capitalist governments. This fact is merely a reflection of the capitalist character of the ALP itself.” (p. 59) How did the ALP come into existence? Why is the ALP a capitalist party?
7. “Spurred on by the needs of monopoly capital in a period of accelerated expansion, these changes in the postwar period significantly altered the composition and character of the Australian working class ...” (p. 59) What were the major changes in the composition and character of the Australian working class during the long period of capitalist economic expansion after World War II? What impact have these changes had on the social psychology of the Australian working class?
8. “In the early 1970s capitalism, in Australia and internationally, entered a prolonged economic crisis.” (p. 61) What has been the impact of the long-term capitalist economic depression upon the relationship between capital and labour in Australia?

## Class 2. Socialist strategy & tactics

### Reading [50 pages]

- a. DSP, *Program of the Democratic Socialist Party*, Part III [28 pages]
- b. Lorimer, Introduction to Lenin, *'Left-Wing' Communism — An Infantile Disorder*, pp. 5-26 [22 pages]

### Discussion points

1. “The strategic task of the revolutionary party is to unite and mobilise the working class and its potential allies in a struggle for power. The accomplishment of this task requires the solution to two central, interrelated problems ...” (a, 67) What are these two problems, and how are they interrelated? What is the general solution to them?
2. “The sphere of economic struggle between workers and employers cannot alone provide the basis for the full development of working-class political consciousness.” (a, 67) Why is this? How, in general, can the working class be imbued with working-class political consciousness?
3. “Socialists promote methods of struggle in which the working class, because of its numbers and economic role, is strongest.” (a, 69) What are these methods of struggle? What methods of struggle do socialists oppose?
4. “In conducting its work, the party must be clear in distinguishing between strategy and tactics, and between propaganda campaigns ... agitational campaigns ... and slogans for action — and when it is appropriate to employ them.” (a, 69) What is the distinction between strategy and tactics, and between propaganda, agitation and slogans for action?
5. “While supporting, and helping to lead, struggles for immediate reforms, the party rejects the reformist illusion that the fundamental problems facing the masses can be resolved by partial solutions ...” (a, 71) Why cannot the fundamental problems facing the masses be resolved by partial solutions, by reforms to the capitalist system? Why then does the party support and help to lead struggles for reforms?
6. “Within the complex system of actions, methods and interconnected demands required to forge working-class unity in action, the united-front tactic has particular importance.” (a, 73) Why is this? What are the basic preconditions for the utilisation of this tactic?
7. “The party’s activity in the unions is designed to maximise their effectiveness as instruments of struggle for the defence of the immediate interests of the

workers, and in the course of such struggles to win the workers to a socialist perspective.” (a, 74-75) How does the party seek to do this?

8. “... socialists cannot afford a view that rejects participation in the parliamentary arena, even if this rejection stems from justifiable disgust at the sham of parliamentary democracy.” (a, 80) Why is this? What are the party’s aims in participating in the parliamentary arena?
9. “The struggle to replace the ALP with a revolutionary socialist party is a complex and lengthy process requiring a variety of tactics.” (a, 81) What are some of the tactics that are employed or that may be employed by the revolutionary party to win workers away from supporting the ALP?
10. “It would ... be fatal for the working class to attempt to forge an alliance with the middle classes by abandoning its own program and accepting some specious ‘middle-class program’ that respects capitalist political and economic power.” (a, 86) Why? What are the middle classes in Australian society? Why is it necessary for the working class to forge an alliance with them and how can they be won as allies in the struggle for workers’ power and socialism?

### **Class 3. Socialist solutions to the capitalist crisis**

#### **Reading [48 pages]**

- a. DSP, *Program of the Democratic Socialist Party*, Part IV [31 pages]
- b. Lorimer, Introduction to Trotsky, *The Transitional Program and the Struggle for Socialism*, pp. 3-21 [17 pages]

#### **Discussion points**

1. Why does the DSP stand for the defence of democratic rights (formal legal and political equality) under the capitalist system? What methods does the DSP advocate to defend democratic rights? Why does the DSP “reject attempts to identify democratic rights with the parliamentary institutions of the capitalist state”? (a, 91)
2. “The party fights for the replacement of the capitalist parliamentary state with a more democratic political system — a democratically centralised system of popular power.” (a, 91-92) How would such a political system be more democratic than the parliamentary system? How would it open the way to establishing democratic control over the economy?
3. “The oppression of women is integral to capitalist society ...” (a, 93) Why is this?

What are the economic and social preconditions required for the liberation of women from sexist oppression?

4. “The party supports the construction of a mass women’s liberation movement organised and led by women ...” (a, 96) Why is this? Does this mean that the party believes that such a movement on its own can end the oppression of women?
5. “The party regards the promotion of international solidarity as one of its major tasks.” (a, 114) Why is this? How does the party promote international solidarity?
6. “While maintaining its support for struggles centred on immediate demands aimed at defending and improving workers’ existing living standards and working conditions, the party also advocates transitional demands that provide a bridge from such struggles to a generalised offensive against the capitalist system.” (a, 116) In what way are demands such as those for a sliding scale of wages, a sliding scale of working hours, a massive program of socially useful public works, workers’ control over working conditions, a state monopoly of foreign trade, the abolition of all business secrets, and the nationalisation of the monopolies *transitional* demands? How do such demands differ from immediate demands aimed at defending and improving workers’ existing living standards and working conditions?
7. “The employers and their lawyers will undoubtedly claim that all these demands are unrealisable, and would drive them out of business.” (a, 118) What is the socialist response to such arguments?
8. “Defence of working-class living and working conditions is thus inseparably connected with the struggle for a *working people’s government*.” (a, 120) Why is this?

## Class 4. The socialist transformation of society

### Reading [71 pages]

- a. *Program of the Democratic Socialist Party*, Part V [35 pages]
- b. Lorimer, *The Collapse of ‘Communism’ in the USSR*, pp. 3-38 [36 pages]

### Discussion points

1. “[Marx and Engels’] fundamental conclusions about the necessity and character of the workers’ state have been confirmed by the experience of workers’

- revolutions in the 20th century, beginning with the 1917 Russian Revolution.” (a, 123) What were Marx and Engels’ fundamental conclusions about the necessity and character of the workers’ state and how have they been confirmed by socialist revolutions in the 20th century?
2. “The experiences of revolutionary struggles in the 20th century have also provided new insights into the process of establishing the democratic power of the working class ...” (a, 123) What are these?
  3. “All the norms of workers’ democracy may not be realisable under every circumstance.” (a, 127) What are the norms of workers’ democracy? Under what circumstances might it be necessary to restrict them?
  4. “... historical experience confirms the counterproductive character of administrative attempts to suppress reactionary bourgeois ideas.” (a, 130) Why are such attempts counterproductive? How best can bourgeois ideas be combated by the workers’ state?
  5. “The irreplaceable role of the conscious leadership of a revolutionary party becomes even more important with the conquest of state power by the working class ... However, no theoretical document of Marx, Engels, Lenin or the Marxist movement in Lenin’s time advances the view that a monopoly of political activity by one party is necessary to maintain working-class power.” (a, 133-134) Why is the leadership of a revolutionary Marxist party indispensable to the working class in taking and holding state power? Why isn’t a monopoly of political activity by the revolutionary Marxist party necessary to maintain working-class power?
  6. “The working people themselves, through their free vote, should determine which political parties are represented in the democratic organs of workers’ power.” (a, 135) Does this mean Marxists advocate a “multiparty” system in the transition period between capitalism and socialism?
  7. “Liberal opponents of revolutionary Marxism argue that the rise of Stalinist totalitarianism in Soviet Russia was the result of the use of revolutionary methods to solve Russia’s social problems. Others, including ‘left’ Social Democrats and anarchists, attribute the rise of Stalinism to Lenin’s concept of a revolutionary centralist organisation of the working-class vanguard ... Such arguments are unhistorical and idealist ...” (a, 139) Why is this? What were the real causes of the Stalinist system of rule in Russia?
  8. “Stalinism was not a distorted, bureaucratic form of ‘socialism’, but rather a stage on the road to capitalist restoration. The Stalinist bureaucracy was a petty-bourgeois stratum with interests hostile and opposed to those of the

working class.” (a, 147) How did the policies and methods of rule practiced by the Stalinist bureaucracies in Russia, China and eastern Europe demonstrate this?

9. “The main task of the first stage [in the transition to socialism] will be to break the political and economic power of monopoly capital.” (a, 148) What measures have to be taken to accomplish this?
10. “The consolidation of the socialist state will open the way to the second stage of the transition to socialism ...” (a, 150) How is a “socialist state” different from, firstly, a “working people’s government” and, secondly, a “workers’ state”? What are the main tasks to be carried out in the second stage of the transition to socialism?
11. “The development of the productive forces to a higher level than attained under even the most advanced capitalist economy is an essential material precondition for the emergence of the classless society.” (a, 153) Why is this? Why does this make the achievement of socialism only possible on a world scale?
12. “Basing themselves on a historical-materialist analysis of the tendencies inherent in the development of socialised productive forces, Marx and Engels distinguished two phases in the development of the future socialist or communist society.” (a, 154) What distinguishes both phases of socialist (communist) society from the transition period? What is the difference between the lower and higher phases of socialism?

## Class 5. Constitution & organisational principles of the DSP

### Reading [64 pages]

- a. Preamble, *Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Perspective*, pp. 3-6 [4 pages]
- b. *Program of the Democratic Socialist Party*, Part III, Section 1, pp. 62-67 [6 pages]
- c. Mohideen et al, *Organisational Principles and Methods of the Democratic Socialist Party* pp. 26-65, 83-98 [54 pages]

### Discussion points

1. “[The revolutionary party] must function as a politically homogeneous campaign party capable of setting realistic objectives and concentrating its resources with maximum effectiveness ... To achieve this homogeneity and unity in action the party must above all be democratic.” (b, 65) Why is this?

2. "The DSP bases its organisational structure and methods on the proven Leninist principles of organisation, summed up in the concept of democratic centralism ... at the heart of this concept is the democratic principle of majority rule ..." (a, 3) Why is the principle of majority rule at the heart of the concept of democratic centralism?
3. "... democracy in a Leninist party such as the DSP is not reducible to the right to discuss the policies and activities of the party." (a, 3) Why is this right essential to party democracy? What are the other principles of party democracy?
4. "The DSP is an organisation for revolutionary action, not a discussion club ..." (a, 4) How is this reflected in the party's organisational principles and methods?
5. "The entire experience of the labour movement demonstrates that the conquest of power by the working class requires the leadership of a politically homogeneous, centralised party of professional revolutionary activists." (a, 4) What is meant by (a) politically homogeneity; (b) centralised organisation; and (c) professional revolutionary activists?
6. "As a voluntary union of revolutionaries, the DSP has both the right and the obligation to demand an unconditional loyalty to its aims and organisation from all members and all who seek admission to its ranks." (a, 5) Why does the DSP insist upon unconditional loyalty from its members and those seeking admission to membership? How is this unconditional loyalty demonstrated?
7. "A democratic-centralist revolutionary party requires ... an experienced leadership which works together as a team and has the confidence of the party's membership ... One of the key functions of the Leninist organisational principle of democratic centralism is to make possible the development of such a leading team." (a, 5)
 

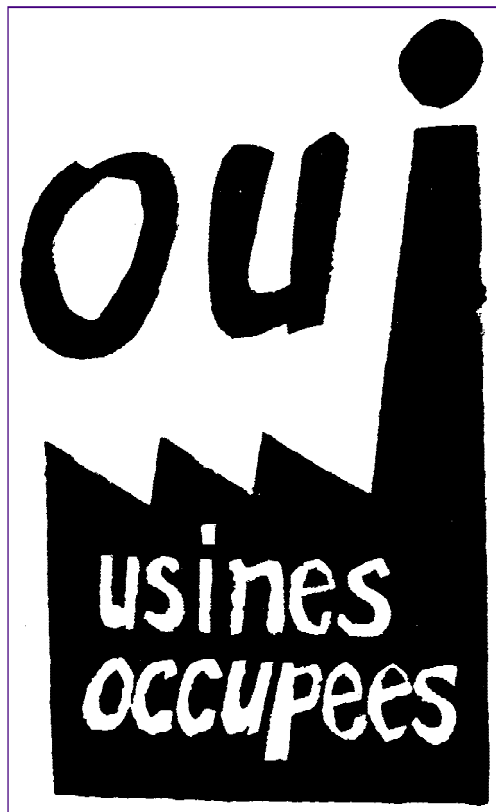
"Our strength lies in our ability to function as a team. Our concern with developing individuals as leaders is not to promote egocentric "self-fulfilment", but to increase our collective strength." (Mohideen; c, 53)

Why does a democratic centralist revolutionary party need an experienced leadership team? What is meant by a team leadership? What are the three aspects of leadership in a revolutionary working-class party? How does the principle of democratic centralism make possible the development of such a leading team?
8. "We defend the right to form factions, but are also aware of the potential dangers. The formation of a faction is a serious political step, one that ought not to be undertaken lightmindedly." (Mohideen; c, 42). Under what conditions does the DSP consider the formation of factions to be in line with its



organisational principles? What are the potential dangers inherent in the formation of a faction? What are the rights and responsibilities of a faction?

9. “When the questions around which a faction has formed have been resolved or superseded, it is normal for a faction to dissolve. Otherwise the danger of permanent factionalism is created.” (Mohideen; c, 43). What is permanent factionalism? How can it be avoided in a revolutionary organisation like the DSP?
10. “A faction is a temporary grouping, to be dissolved into the party once the entire party has ruled on the issues in dispute, but a clique is a permanent mutual-assistance society.” (Mohideen; c, 44). When and why should a faction dissolve itself back into the party as whole? What is the difference between a faction and a clique? What is wrong with the formation of cliques in the party? Under what circumstances can a faction develop into a clique?



# Feminism & Socialism

## Class 1. The origin & nature of women's oppression

### Reading [12 pages]

- a. DSP, *Feminism and Socialism*, pp. 15-26

### Supplementary reading

- b. Brewer, *The Dispossession of Women*

### Discussion points

1. "Sexual difference is a biological reality but oppression and discrimination have not always been attached to such a difference." (a, 18) Discuss.
2. What were the fundamental lines along which the oppression of women as a sex emerged?
3. How does the origin of the family institution relate to the development of private property, classes and the state?
4. "In class society, the family is the only institution to which most people can turn for the satisfaction of some basic human needs, including love and companionship ... Nevertheless, the main purpose of the family is not to provide for such basic needs." (a, 21) What is the family institution? What functions does it perform in class society?
5. "Capitalism has refined and modified the oppression of women to suit its own needs ... Yet the emergence of capitalist industrialisation contains many contradictory features for the maintenance of women's oppression ..." (a, 23) Discuss.
6. "It is thus the capitalist class — not men in general, and certainly not male wage earners — which profits from women's unpaid labour in the household." (a, 24) Why is this? Do men in general derive any benefits from the oppression of women?
7. "Under capitalism, the family system also provides the mechanism for the

superexploitation of women as wage workers ...” (a, 25) How does it do this?

8. “The struggle for women’s liberation poses the problem of the total reorganisation of society from its smallest repressive unit — the family — to its largest — the state.” (a, 17) Why is this?
9. Why is it absurd to speak of abolishing the family within class society?

## Class 2. The second wave of feminism

### Reading [24 pages]

DSP, *Feminism and Socialism*, pp. 27-50

### Discussion points

1. What were the gains of the first wave of feminist struggles in the 19th and early 20th centuries?
2. “The basis of the second wave of feminism lies in the economic and social changes of the post-World War II years ...” (pp. 28-29) What were these changes?
3. “Greater democratic rights and broader social opportunities have not ‘satisfied’ women, or inclined them to a passive acceptance of their inferior social status and economic independence. On the contrary, each achievement towards equality exposes even further ways, often in quite subtle forms, that sexist barriers operate in capitalist society.” (p. 33) Discuss.
4. “While the feminist radicalisation has an independent dynamic of its own ... it is not isolated from the more general upsurge of struggles and the emergence of other social movements.” (p. 35) What were the other social movements that impacted on the second wave of feminism?
5. “Under the pressure of women’s mobilisation and organisation most governments have introduced a series of legal reforms on women’s rights ...” (pp. 40-41) What has been the practical impact of these reforms on the daily lives of the majority of women?
6. What response has the ALP and the trade union bureaucracy adopted toward the feminist movement?
7. “... the rise of the women’s movement ... compelled the communist parties to modify and adjust their line.” (p. 47) What was the attitude of most of the communist parties toward women’s liberation from the 1930s until the new rise of feminism in the early 1970s? How did they modify and adjust their line in response to the second wave of feminism?

## Class 3. Women's liberation in the Second & Third Worlds

### Reading [26 pages]

DSP, *Feminism and Socialism*, pp. 51-76

### Discussion points

1. "The Russian Revolution and each subsequent socialist revolution brought significant gains for women, including democratic rights and integration into social production." (p. 51) What were the gains for women that were brought by the Russian Revolution? What subsequently happened to these gains?
2. "For women, the Stalinist counter-revolution led to a policy of reviving and fortifying the family system." (p. 53) Why did the Stalinist bureaucracy revive and fortify the family system?
3. "... the liberation of women cannot be achieved simply by abolishing the capitalist economic system. This is necessary, but by itself it is not sufficient." (p. 60) Why is the abolition of the capitalist economic system a necessary but *insufficient* condition for the liberation of women? What other measures are required?
4. "For women in the Third World, the penetration of the capitalist market has a contradictory impact..." (p. 63) Discuss.
5. "Economically and socially [women in the Third World] are under personal pressure to produce more, not fewer children." (p. 69) Why is this?
6. "The struggle for women's liberation has always been intertwined with the national liberation struggle." (p. 71) Discuss.
7. "The Cuban Revolution has more consciously taken up the struggle against women's oppression than any other since the early days of the Russian Revolution." (p. 73) Discuss.

## Class 4. Ideological trends within feminism

### Reading [21 pages]

DSP, *Feminism and Socialism*, pp. 77-87, 5-14

### Discussion points

1. "At the beginning of the 1980s there was a significant decline and a fragmentation of the feminist movement." (p. 78) Why did this occur, and what

consequences has it had for the women's liberation movement?

2. "The materialist analysis of the historical origin and economic roots of women's oppression is essential to developing a program and perspective capable of winning women's liberation." (p. 81) What are the two major errors that result from the rejection of a materialist analysis of women's oppression?
3. "The fragmentation of the women's liberation movement in the imperialist countries over the last decade has been accompanied, and to some degree caused, by the proliferation of theories about 'patriarchy'." (p. 83) What do these theories have in common? How have they promoted the fragmentation of the women's liberation movement?
4. "Of course these ideological developments within the women's movement in the imperialist countries haven't taken place in isolation from broader political and social developments. They are a reflection ... of the bourgeoisie's ideological offensive during the 1980s against the socialist movement, and even against the ideas espoused by Keynesian liberalism." (p. 85) How did the ideological developments within feminist movement, in particular the rise of "patriarchy" theories which celebrate differences between the sexes, reflect the bourgeoisie's "free market" ideological offensive of the 1980s?
5. "The shifts in the women's movement, both ideological, political and organisational, are part of the developing class struggle. The movement is polarising around just whose interests it should defend." (p. 86) How has this been manifested in the ideological divisions among feminists in the 1990s?

## **Class 5. The DSP and the women's liberation movement**

### **Reading [12 pages]**

DSP, *Feminism and Socialism*, pp. 88-99

### **Discussion points**

1. The radical restructuring of society is not a solution "that can be imposed from above. Freedom from oppression can only be forged by the oppressed themselves consciously struggling together to overthrow their oppressors. Such a struggle takes many forms and will require a complex system of alliances in order to overcome the divisions fostered by class society among the oppressed and weld them into a powerful, united movement. It will be only through the establishment of such alliances and the experience of joint actions that the

oppressed majority can, by democratic means, map out and implement a common strategy to achieve a society free from oppression and exploitation.” (pp. 88-89) Discuss in relation to the struggle for women’s liberation.

2. “The oppression of women as a sex constitutes the objective basis for the mobilisation of women in struggle through their own organisations. We support and help build the independent women’s movement.” (p. 89) What do we mean by the term *independent women’s movement*?
3. “The dominant organisational form of the women’s movement has been all-female groups.” (p. 90) Why does the DSP support such an organisational form within the women’s liberation movement? Why doesn’t the DSP *automatically* support the formation of all-women groups to fight for women’s liberation?
4. Why is the DSP committed to the struggle for women’s liberation?
5. “The DSP seeks to convince the women’s liberation movement to struggle for demands directed against those responsible for the economic and social conditions in which women’s oppression is rooted — the capitalist class, its government and agencies.” (p. 95) Why does the DSP seek to do this?
6. “The specific demands we advocate be taken up by the movement at any particular time will depend on the situation facing the movement and the general level of struggle.” (p. 95) What are the main themes of the demands the DSP advocates in order to develop the struggle for women’s liberation?

## Class 6. Women’s liberation & the struggle for the democratic rights of lesbians & gay men

### Reading [43 pages]

*Socialism and the Struggle for the Rights of Lesbians and Gay Men*, pp. 4-46

### Discussion points

1. “The oppression of lesbians and gay men is ... a by-product of the oppression of women.” (p. 43) Why is this?
2. Why is it in the interests of the working class to oppose the oppression of gay men and lesbians?
3. “Being oppressed isn’t a radical political act. Recognising that oppression and joining in common action with others to fight such oppression is.” (p. 34) Discuss in relation to the perspectives of “identity” politics and lifestyleism as strategies to end the oppression of lesbians and gay men.

4. "... queer politics does not offer an effective way forward for those seeking to end homophobia and the institutionalised oppression of gay men and lesbians under capitalism." (p. 40) Why is this?
5. "The DSP seeks to build a gay and lesbian rights movement whose tactics are based on the strategic understanding of the need to ally with the organised strength of the working class and oriented to winning support among the social forces that have the power to defeat those responsible for class exploitation and social oppression. Such a movement needs to involve all those willing to fight for the democratic rights of lesbians and gay men, relying on mobilising supporters of gay men and lesbians rather than lobbying parliamentarians." (p. 45) Discuss.

## Appendix 1

# Social Classes

*By V.I. Lenin*

And what does the “abolition of classes” mean? All those who call themselves socialists recognise this as the ultimate goal of socialism, but by no means all give thought to its significance. Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.

Clearly, in order to abolish classes completely, it is not enough to overthrow the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists, not enough to abolish *their* rights of ownership; it is necessary also to abolish *all* private ownership of the means of production, it is necessary to abolish the distinction between town and country, as well as the distinction between manual workers and brain workers. This requires a very long period of time. In order to achieve this an enormous step forward must be taken in developing the productive forces; it is necessary to overcome the resistance (frequently passive, which is particularly stubborn and particularly difficult to overcome) of the numerous survivals of small-scale production; it is necessary to overcome the enormous force of habit and conservatism which are connected with these survivals. ■



## Appendix 2

# The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man

*By Frederick Engels*

Labour is the source of all wealth, the political economists assert. And it really is the source — next to nature, which supplies it with the material that it converts into wealth. But it is even infinitely more than this. It is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labour created man himself.

Many hundreds of thousands of years ago during an epoch, not yet definitely determinable, of that period of the earth's history known to geologists as the Tertiary period, most likely towards the end of it, a particularly highly-developed race of anthropoid apes lived somewhere in the tropical zone — probably on a great continent that has now sunk to the bottom of the Indian Ocean. Darwin has given us an approximate description of these ancestors of ours. They were completely covered with hair, they had beards and pointed ears, and they lived in bands in the trees.

Climbing assigns different functions to the hands and the feet, and when their mode of life involved locomotion on level ground, these apes gradually got out of the habit of using their hands [in walking] and adopted a more and more erect posture. This was *the decisive step in the transition from ape to man*.

All extant anthropoid apes can stand erect and move about on their feet alone, but only in case of urgent need and in a very clumsy way. Their natural gait is in a half-erect posture and includes the use of the hands. The majority rest the knuckles of the fist on the ground and, with legs drawn up, swing the body through their long arms, much as a cripple moves on crutches. In general, all the transition stages from walking on all fours to walking on two legs are still to be observed among the apes today. The latter gait, however, has never become more than a makeshift for any of them.

It stands to reason that if erect gait among our hairy ancestors became first the rule and then, in time, a necessity, other diverse functions must, in the meantime, have devolved upon the hands.

Already among the apes there is some difference in the way the hands and the feet are employed. In climbing, as mentioned above, the hands and feet have different uses. The hands are used mainly for gathering and holding food in the same way as the forepaws of the lower mammals are used. Many apes use their hands to build themselves nests in the trees or even to construct roofs between the branches to protect themselves against the weather, as the chimpanzee, for example, does. With their hands they grasp sticks to defend themselves against enemies, and with their hands they bombard their enemies with fruits and stones. In captivity they use their hands for a number of simple operations copied from human beings. It is in this that one sees the great gulf between the undeveloped hand of even the most manlike apes and the human hand that has been highly perfected by hundreds of thousands of years of labour. The number and general arrangement of the bones and muscles are the same in both hands, but the hand of the lowest savage can perform hundreds of operations that no simian hand can imitate — no simian hand has ever fashioned even the crudest stone knife.

The first operations for which our ancestors gradually learned to adapt their hands during the many thousands of years of transition from ape to man could have been only very simple ones. The lowest savages, even those in whom regression to a more animal-like condition with a simultaneous physical degeneration can be assumed, are nevertheless far superior to these transitional beings. Before the first flint could be fashioned into a knife by human hands, a period of time probably elapsed in comparison with which the historical period known to us appears insignificant. But the decisive step had been taken, *the hand had become free* and could henceforth attain ever greater dexterity; the greater flexibility thus acquired was inherited and increased from generation to generation.

Thus the hand is not only the organ of labour; *it is also the product of labour*. Labour, adaptation to ever new operations, the inheritance of muscles, ligaments, and, over longer periods of time, bones that had undergone special development, and the ever-renewed employment of this inherited finesse in new, more and more complicated operations, have given the human hand the high degree of perfection required to conjure into being the pictures of a Raphael, the statues of a Thorwaldsen, the music of a Paganini.

But the hand did not exist alone, it was only one member, of an integral, highly complex organism. And what benefited the hand, benefited also the whole body it

served; and this in two ways.

In the first place, the body benefited from the law of correlation of growth, as Darwin calls it. This law states that the specialised forms of separate parts of an organic being are always bound up with certain forms of other parts that apparently have no connection with them. Thus all animals that have red blood out cell nuclei, and in which the head is attached to the first vertebra by means of a double articulation (condyles), also without exception possess lacteal glands for suckling their young. Similarly, cloven hoofs in mammals are regularly associated with the possession of a multiple stomach for rumination. Changes in certain forms involve changes in the form of other parts of the body, although we cannot explain the connection. Perfectly white cats with blue eyes are always, or almost always, deaf. The gradually increasing perfection of the human hand, and the commensurate adaptation of the feet for erect gait, have undoubtedly, by virtue of such correlation, reacted on other parts of the organism. However, this action has not as yet been sufficiently investigated for us to be able to do more here than to state the fact in general terms.

Much more important is the direct, demonstrable influence of the development of the hand on the rest of the organism. It has already been noted that our simian ancestors were gregarious; it is obviously impossible to seek the derivation of man, the most social of all animals, from non-gregarious immediate ancestors. Mastery over nature began with the development of the hand with labour, and widened man's horizon at every new advance. He was continually discovering new, hitherto unknown, properties in natural objects. On the other hand, the development of labour necessarily helped to bring the members of society closer together by increasing cases of mutual support and joint activity, and by making clear the advantage of this joint activity to each individual. In short, men in the making arrived at the point where *they had something to say* to each other. Necessity created the organ; the undeveloped larynx of the ape was slowly but surely transformed by modulation to produce constantly more developed modulation, and the organs of the mouth gradually learned to pronounce one articulate sound after another.

Comparison with animals proves that this explanation of the origin of language from and in the process of labour is the only correct one. The little that even the most highly developed animals need to communicate to each other does not require articulate speech. In a state of nature, no animal feels handicapped by its inability to speak or to understand human speech. It is quite different when it has been tamed by man. The dog and the horse, by association with man, have developed such a good ear for articulate speech that they easily learn to understand any language within their range of concept. Moreover they have acquired the capacity for feelings such as affection for

man, gratitude, etc., which were previously foreign to them. Anyone who has had much to do with such animals will hardly be able to escape the conviction that in many cases they *now* feel their inability to speak as a defect, although, unfortunately, it is one that can no longer be remedied because their vocal organs are too specialised in a definite direction. However, where vocal organs exist, within certain limits even this inability disappears. The buccal organs of birds are as different from those of man as they can be, yet birds are the only animals that can learn to speak; and it is the bird with the most hideous voice, the parrot, that speaks best of all. Let no one object that the parrot does not understand what it says. It is true that for the sheer pleasure of talking and associating with human beings, the parrot will chatter for hours at a stretch, continually repeating its whole vocabulary. But within the limits of its range of concepts it can also learn to understand what it is saying. Teach a parrot swear words in such a way that it gets an idea of their meaning (one of the great amusements of sailors returning from the tropics); tease it and you will soon discover that it knows how to use its swear words just as correctly as a Berlin costermonger. The same is true of begging for titbits.

First labour, after it and then with it, speech — these were the two most essential stimuli under the influence of which the brain of the ape gradually changed into that of man, which for all its similarity is far larger and more perfect. Hand in hand with the similar development of the brain went the development of its most immediate instruments — the senses. Just as the gradual development of speech is inevitably accompanied by a corresponding refinement of the organ of hearing, so the development of the brain as a whole is accompanied by a refinement of all the senses. The eagle sees much farther than man, but the human eye discerns considerably more in things than does the eye of the eagle. The dog has a far keener sense of smell than man, but it does not distinguish a hundredth part of the odours that for man are definite signs denoting different things. And the sense of touch, which the ape hardly possesses in its crudest initial form, has been developed only side by side with the development of the human hand itself, through the medium of labour.

The reaction on labour and speech of the development of the brain and its attendant senses, of the increasing clarity of consciousness, power of abstraction and of judgement, gave both labour and speech an ever-renewed impulse to further development. This development did not reach its conclusion when man became distinct from the ape, but on the whole made further powerful progress, its degree and direction varying among different peoples and at different times, and here and there even being interrupted by local or temporary regression. This further development has been strongly urged forward, on the one hand, and guided along more definite directions, on the other, by

a new element which came into play with the appearance of fully-fledged man, namely, *society*.

Hundreds of thousands of years — of no greater significance in the history of the earth than one second in the life of man\* — certainly elapsed before human society arose out of troupe of tree-climbing monkeys. Yet it did finally appear. And what do we find once more as the characteristic difference between the troupe of monkeys and human society? *Labour*. The ape herd was satisfied to browse over the feeding area determined for it by geographical conditions or the resistance of neighbouring herds; it undertook migrations and struggles to win new feeding grounds, but it was incapable of extracting from them more than they offered in their natural state, except that it unconsciously fertilised the soil with its own excrement. As soon as all possible feeding grounds were occupied, there could be no further increase in the ape population; the number of animals could at best remain stationary. But all animals waste a great deal of food, and, in addition, destroy in the germ the next generation of the food supply. Unlike the hunter, the wolf does not spare the doe which would provide it with the young the next year; the goats in Greece, that eat away the young bushes before they grow to maturity, have eaten bare all the mountains of the country. This “predatory economy” of animals plays an important part in the gradual transformation of species by forcing them to adapt themselves to other than the usual food, thanks to which their blood acquires a different chemical composition and the whole physical constitution gradually alters, while species that have remained unadapted die out. There is no doubt that this predatory economy contributed powerfully to the transition of our ancestors from ape to man. In a race of apes that far surpassed all others in intelligence and adaptability, this predatory economy must have led to a continual increase in the number of plants used for food and to the consumption of more and more edible parts of food plants. In short, food became more and more varied, as did also the substances entering the body with it, substances that were the chemical premises for the transition to man. But all that was not yet labour in the proper sense of the word. Labour begins with the making of tools. And what are the most ancient tools that we find — the most ancient judging by the heirlooms of prehistoric man that have been discovered, and by the mode of life of the earliest historical peoples and of the rawest of contemporary savages? They are hunting and fishing implements, the former at the same time serving as weapons. But hunting and fishing presuppose the transition

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\* A leading authority in this respect, Sir William Thomson, has calculated that *little more than a hundred million years* could have elapsed since the time when the earth had cooled sufficiently for plants and animals to be able to live on it. [*Note by Engels.*]

from an exclusively vegetable diet to the concomitant use of meat, and this is another important step in the process of transition from ape to man. A *meat* diet contained in an almost ready state the most essential ingredients required by the organism for its metabolism. By shortening the time required for digestion, it also shortened the other vegetative bodily processes that correspond to those of plant life, and thus gained further time, material and desire for the active manifestation of animal life proper. And the farther man in the making moved from the vegetable kingdom the higher he rose above the animal. Just as becoming accustomed to a vegetable diet, side by side with meat, converted wild cats and dogs into the servants of man, so also adaptation to a meat diet, side by side with a vegetable diet, greatly contributed towards giving bodily strength and independence to man in the making. The meat diet, however, had its greatest effect on the brain, which now received a far richer flow of the materials necessary for its nourishment and development, and which, therefore, could develop more rapidly and perfectly from generation to generation. With all due respect to the vegetarians man did not come into existence without a meat diet, and if the latter, among all peoples, known to us, has led to cannibalism at some time or other (the forefathers of the Berliners, the Weletabians or Wilzians, used to eat their parents as late as the 10th century), that is of no consequence to us today.

The meat diet led to two new advances of decisive importance — the harnessing of fire and the domestication of animals. The first still further shortened the digestive process, as it provided the mouth with food already, as it were, half-digested; the second made meat more copious by opening up a new, more regular source of supply in addition to hunting, and moreover provided, in milk and its products, a new article of food at least as valuable as meat in its composition. Thus both these advances were, in themselves, new means for the emancipation of man. It would lead us too far afield to dwell here in detail on their indirect effects notwithstanding the great importance they have had for the development of man and society.

Just as man learned to consume everything edible, he also learned to live in any climate. He spread over the whole of the habitable world, being the only animal fully able to do so of its own accord. The other animals that have become accustomed to all climates — domestic animals and vermin — did not become so independently, but only in the wake of man. And the transition from the uniformly hot climate of the original home of man to colder regions, where the year was divided into summer and winter, created new requirements — shelter and clothing as protection against cold and damp, and hence new spheres of labour, new forms of activity, which further and further separated man from the animal.

By the combined functioning of hands, speech organs and brain, not only in each

individual but also in society, men became capable of executing more and more complicated operations, and were able to set themselves, and achieve, higher and higher aims. The work of each generation itself became different, more perfect and more diversified. Agriculture was added to hunting and cattle raising; then came spinning, weaving, metalworking, pottery and navigation. Along with trade and industry, art and science finally appeared. Tribes developed into nations and states. Law and politics arose, and with them that fantastic reflection of human things in the human mind — religion. In the face of all these images, which appeared in the first place to be products of the mind and seemed to dominate human societies, the more modest productions of the working hand retreated into the background, the more so since the mind that planned the labour was able, at a very early stage in the development of society (for example, already in the primitive family), to have the labour that had been planned carried out by other hands than its own. All merit for the swift advance of civilisation was ascribed to the mind, to the development and activity of the brain. Men became accustomed to explain their actions as arising out of thoughts instead of their needs (which in any case are reflected and perceived in the mind); and so in the course of time there emerged that idealistic world outlook which, especially since the fall of the world of antiquity, has dominated men's minds. It still rules them to such a degree that even the most materialistic natural scientists of the Darwinian school are still unable to form any clear idea of the origin of man, because under this ideological influence they do not recognise the part that has been played therein by labour.

Animals, as has already been pointed out, change the environment by their activities in the same way, even if not to the same extent, as man does, and these changes, as we have seen, react upon and change those who made them. In nature nothing takes place in isolation. Everything affects and is affected by every other thing, and it is mostly because this manifold motion interaction is forgotten that our natural scientists are prevented from gaining a clear insight into the simplest things. We have seen how goats have prevented the regeneration of forests in Greece; on the island of St. Helena, goats and pigs brought by the first arrivals have succeeded in exterminating its old vegetation almost completely, and so have prepared the ground for the spreading of plants brought by later sailors and colonists. But animals exert a lasting effect on their environment unintentionally and, as far as the animals themselves are concerned, accidentally. The further removed men are from animals, however, the more their effect on nature assumes the character of premeditated, planned action directed towards definite preconceived ends. The animal destroys the vegetation of a locality without realising what it is doing. Man destroys it in order to sow field crops on the soil thus released, or to plant trees or vines which he knows will yield many times the

amount planted. He transfers useful plants and domestic animals from one country to another and thus changes the flora and fauna of whole continents. More than this. Through artificial breeding both plants and animals are so changed by the hand of man that they become unrecognisable. The wild plants from which our grain varieties originated are still being sought in vain. There is still some dispute about the wild animals from which our very different breeds of dogs or our equally numerous breeds of horses are descended.

It goes without saying that it would not occur to us to dispute the ability of animals to act in a planned, premeditated fashion. On the contrary, a planned mode of action exists in embryo wherever protoplasm, living albumen, exists and reacts, that is, carries out definite, even if extremely simple, movements as a result of definite external stimuli. Such reaction takes place even where there is yet no cell at all, far less a nerve cell. There is something of the planned action in the way insect-eating plants capture their prey, although they do it quite unconsciously. In animals the capacity for conscious, planned action is proportional to the development of the nervous system, and among mammals it attains a fairly high level. While fox hunting in England one can daily observe how unerringly the fox makes use of its excellent knowledge of the locality in order to elude its pursuers, and how well it knows and turns to account all favourable features of the ground that cause the scent to be lost. Among our domestic animals, more highly developed thanks to association with man, one can constantly observe acts of cunning on exactly the same level as those of children. For, just as the developmental history of the human embryo in the mother's womb is only an abbreviated repetition of the history, extending over millions of years, of the bodily evolution of our animal ancestors, starting from the worm, so the mental development of the human child is only a still more abbreviated repetition of the intellectual development of these same ancestors, at least of the later ones. But all the planned action of all animals has never succeeded in impressing the stamp of their will upon the earth. That was left for man.

In short, the animal merely *uses* its environment, and brings about changes in it simply by his presence; man by his changes makes it serve his ends, *masters* it. This is the final, essential distinction between man and other animals, and once again it is labour that brings about this distinction.

Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first. The people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor and elsewhere, destroyed the



forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that by removing along with the forests the collecting centres and reservoirs of moisture they were laying the basis for the present forlorn state of those countries. When the Italians of the Alps used up the pine forests on the southern slopes, so carefully cherished on the northern slopes, they had no inkling that by doing so they were cutting at the roots of the dairy industry in their region; they had still less inkling that they were thereby depriving their mountain springs of water for the greater part of the year, and making it possible for them to pour still more furious torrents on the plains during the rainy seasons. Those who spread the potato in Europe were not aware that with these farinaceous tubers they were at the same time spreading scrofula. Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature — but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly.

And, in fact, with every day that passes we are acquiring a better understanding of these laws and getting to perceive both the more immediate and the more remote consequences of our interference with the traditional course of nature. In particular, after the mighty advances made by the natural sciences in the present century, we are more than ever in a position to realise and hence to control even the more remote natural consequences of at least our day-to-day production activities. But the more this progresses the more will men not only feel but also know their oneness with nature, and the more impossible will become the senseless and unnatural idea of a contrast between mind and matter, man and nature, soul and body, such as arose after the decline of classical antiquity in Europe and obtained its highest elaboration in Christianity.

It required the labour of thousands of years for us to learn a little of how to calculate the more remote *natural* effects of our actions in the field of production, but it has been still more difficult in regard to the more remote *social* effects of these actions. We mentioned the potato and the resulting spread of scrofula. But what is scrofula compared to the effect which the reduction of the workers to a potato diet had on the living conditions of the masses of the people in whole countries, or compared to the famine the potato blight brought to Ireland in 1847, which consigned to the grave a million Irishmen, nourished solely or almost exclusively on potatoes, and forced the emigration overseas of two million more? When the Arabs learned to distil spirits, it never entered their heads that by so doing they were creating one of the chief weapons for the annihilation of the aborigines of the then still undiscovered American

continent. And when afterwards Columbus discovered this America, he did not know that by doing so he was laying the basis for the Negro slave trade and giving a new lease of life to slavery, which in Europe had long ago been done away with. The men who in the 17th and 18th centuries laboured to create the steam engine had no idea that they were preparing the instrument which more than any other was to revolutionise social relations throughout the world. Especially in Europe, by concentrating wealth in the hands of a minority and dispossessing the huge majority, this instrument was destined at first to give social and political domination to the bourgeoisie, but later, to give rise to a class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat which can end only in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the abolition of all class antagonisms. But in this sphere, too, by long and often cruel experience and by collecting and analysing historical material, we are gradually learning to get a clear view of the indirect, more remote, social effects of our production activity, and so are afforded an opportunity to control and regulate these effects as well.

This regulation, however, requires something more than mere knowledge. It requires a complete revolution in our hitherto existing mode of production, and simultaneously a revolution in our whole contemporary social order.

All hitherto existing modes of production have aimed merely at achieving the most immediately and directly useful effect of labour. The further consequences, which appear only later and become effective through gradual repetition and accumulation, were totally neglected. The original common ownership of land corresponded, on the one hand, to a level of development of human beings in which their horizon was restricted in general to what lay immediately available, and presupposed, on the other hand, a certain superfluity of land that would allow some latitude for correcting the possible bad results of this primeval type of economy. When this surplus land was exhausted, common ownership also declined. All higher forms of production, however, led to the division of the population into different classes and thereby to the antagonism of ruling and oppressed classes. Thus the interests of the ruling class became the driving factor of production, since production was no longer restricted to providing the barest means of subsistence for the oppressed people. This has been put into effect most completely in the capitalist mode of production prevailing today in Western Europe. The individual capitalists, who dominate production and exchange, are able to concern themselves only with the most immediate useful effect of their actions. Indeed, even this useful effect — inasmuch as it is a question of the usefulness of the article that is produced or exchanged — retreats far into the background, and the sole incentive becomes the profit to be made on selling.

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Classical political economy, the social science of the bourgeoisie, examines mainly only social effects of human actions in the fields of production and exchange that are actually intended. This fully corresponds to the social organisation of which it is the theoretical expression. As individual capitalists are engaged in production and exchange for the sake of the immediate profit, only the nearest, most immediate, results must first be taken into account. As long as the individual manufacturer or merchant sells a manufactured or purchased commodity with the usual coveted profit, he is satisfied and does not concern himself with what afterwards becomes of the commodity and its purchasers. The same thing applies to the natural effects of the same actions. What cared the Spanish planters in Cuba, who burned down forests on the slopes of the mountains and obtained from the ashes sufficient fertiliser for *one* generation of very highly profitable coffee trees— what cared they that the heavy tropical rainfall afterwards washed away the unprotected upper stratum leaving behind only bare rock! In relation to nature, as to society the present mode of production is predominantly concerned only about the immediate, the most tangible result; and then surprise is expressed that the more remote effects of actions directed to this end turn out to be quite different, are mostly quite the opposite in character; that the harmony of supply and demand is transformed into the very reverse opposite, as shown by the course of each 10 years' industrial cycle — even Germany has had a little preliminary experience of it in the “crash”; that private ownership based on one's own labour must of necessity develop into the expropriation of the workers, while all wealth becomes more and more concentrated in the hands of non-workers; that [...]\* ■

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\* Here the manuscript breaks off. — *Ed.*

## Appendix 3

# Historical Materialism

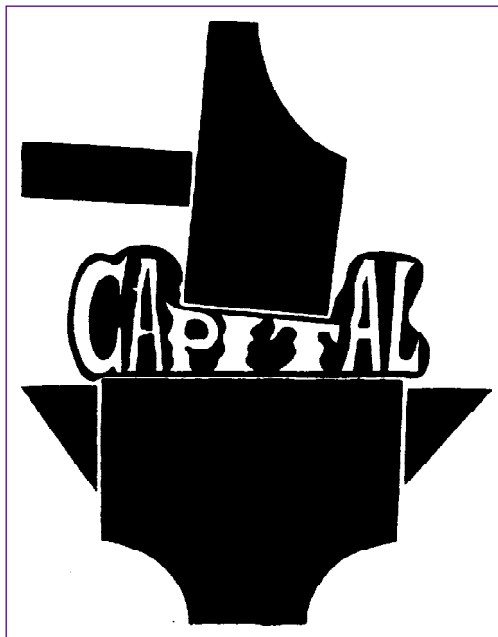
*By Karl Marx*

The general result at which I arrived and which, once won, served as a guiding thread for my studies, can be briefly formulated as follows: In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or — what is but a legal expression for the same thing — with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic — in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive

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Marx, “Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1969), pp. 503-504.

forces and the relations of production. No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation. In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production — antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from the social conditions of life of the individuals; at the same time the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation brings, therefore, the prehistory of human society to a close. ■



# List of Books & Pamphlets Referred to in Classes

- Brewer, *The Dispossession of Women* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 2000)
- Camejo, *How to Make a Revolution* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1999)
- DSP, *Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Perspective* (2008)
- *Feminism and Socialism* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1997)
- *Program of the Democratic Socialist Party* (New Course Publications: Chippendale, 1994)
- *Socialism and the Struggle for the Rights of Lesbians and Gay Men* (New Course Publications: Chippendale, 1997)
- Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*
- Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1999)
- *'Left-Wing' Communism — An Infantile Disorder* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1999)
- *The State and Revolution* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1999)
- Lorimer, *The Collapse of 'Communism' in the Soviet Union* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1997)
- Mandel & Novack, *Can the Working Class Make a Socialist Revolution?* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 2002)
- Mandel, *Introduction to Marxism*
- *The Marxist Theory of Alienation*
- Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto & Its Relevance for Today* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1998)
- Mohideen et al, *Organisational Principles and Methods of the Democratic Socialist Party* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1998)
- Myers ed., *Marxist Economics* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1998)
- Novack, *The Labour Theory of Human Origins*
- Resistance, *Constitution of Resistance*

— *What Resistance Stands For* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 2006)

Trotsky, *The Transitional Program and the Struggle for Socialism* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1999) ■



*Resistance books*