

MARXISM

A SYLLABUS DESIGNED FOR A WOMEN'S COURSE (may also be used by men)

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- * Each unit is meant to be a lesson, though not necessarily to be covered in one session.
 - * The subtopics are major points to be kept in mind for both reading and discussion.
 - * Particular attention should be paid to the situation and/or discussion of women in all readings (especially as this is not always brought out in subtopics).
 - * It is not expected that anyone will be able to do all the readings. The starred reading is the important one; whoever has more time and ambition can try the others.
 - * Page numbers refer to the editions listed in the accompanying bibliography.
 - * The syllabus is not 'complete': anyone who 'finds' important and relevant material should share it by integrating it into the syllabus.

1. WHAT IS MARXISM?

1. history of the development of Marx's philosophy (Greeks, Hegel, Fuerbach; Indian and Chinese philosophies)
2. materialism and idealism (existentialism, pragmatism, positivism)
3. modern scientific socialism (classical German philosophy, British economics and French socialism)
4. religion

Readings

- * Lenin, Karl Marx (in "The Teachings of Karl Marx"), especially pp. 13-20: Marx's Teachings—Philosophical Materialism—Dialectics—The Materialist Conception of History
- Lenin, The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism (pp. 43-48 in "The Teachings of Karl Marx", pp. 37-41 in Selsam & Martel)
- Plekhanov, "The Materialist Conception of History", especially chapters 1, 2, 3, 10, 11 (pp. 10-20, 40-48)
- Engels, "Socialism Utopian and Scientific"

2. DIALECTICS

1. mechanical and dialectical materialism
2. dialectics: the laws of change
3. contradiction: the motive force of change
4. application of dialectical method to political problems

Readings

- *Selsam & Martel, *Dialectics and the Dialectical Method*—selections from Engels, Lenin and Marx (part III in the “Reader”; also pp. 160-162, 174-176)
- Mao, “On Contradiction” (pp. 23-73 in “Four Essays on Philosophy”)
- Engels, “Ludwig Feuerbach”, chapter II

3. CLASSES AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

1. classes and class society: their origin and evolution
2. main classes in capitalist society
3. class struggle: its roots and outcome
4. forms of class struggle: economic, political, ideological
5. ‘middle class’ and intellectuals and the class struggle
6. women as a ‘class’ and their role in the class struggle
7. vanguard role of the working class
8. class consciousness (pour-soi, en-soi)

Readings

- *Marx & Engels, “Communist Manifesto”, especially ch. 1
- *“The Woman Question”, ch. 1 (The Enslavement of Women), ch. 6 (Women in the Struggle for Socialism)
- C. Wright Mills, *Critical Observations* (ch. 6 of “The Marxists”—pp. 105-131)

4. THE FAMILY AS A BASIC ECONOMIC UNIT

1. origins and evolution of the family
2. different kinds of families
3. role of the family in different societies
4. function and position of women in the family

Readings

- *“The Woman Question”, ch. 1 (The Enslavement of Women—pp. 9-25), ch. 3 (The Bourgeois Family —pp. 34-41), ch. 5 (Socialism and the Emancipation of Women —pp. 48-66)
- *Simone de Beauvoir, ch. 4, 5, 6 in “The Second Sex” (The Nomads , Early Tillers of the Soil , From Patriarchal Times —pp. 56-89)
- *Engels, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State”, esp. ch. 1, 2, 3, 4 (pp. 19-97)
- Murdock, *Evolution of Social Organization* (ch. 8 of “Social Structure”—pp. 184-259)
- Bohannon, *Marriage and the Nuclear Family* (ch. 5 of “Social Anthropology”—pp. 72-85)

5. CAPITALISM

1. labor theory of value
2. surplus value
3. historical tendency of capitalism
4. attendant evils of capitalism: poverty and unemployment
5. role of women in a capitalist economy

Readings

- *Marx, “Value, Price and Profit”, ch. 6-10 (pp. 29-45)
- *Marx, “Wage Labor and Capital”, ch. 5-9 (pp. 28-48)
- Or, instead of Marx:
Mandel, “An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory”
- *“The Woman Question”, ch. 2 (The Exploitation of Women —pp. 27-33)
- *Margaret Benston, *The Political Economy of Women’s Liberation* (in *Monthly Review* , September 1969, pp. 13-27—available as a pamphlet for 10¢ from New England Free Press)
- Lenin, *Capitalism and Female Labour* (in “On the Emancipation of Women”—pp. 26-27)

6. IMPERIALISM

1. monopolies and finance capital
2. export of capital and growth of colonialism
3. special imperialist exploitation of women
4. imperialism and war
5. peaceful co-existence

Readings

- *Lenin, "Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism"
- *Magdoff, "The Age of Imperialism: The Economics of U.S. Foreign Policy" (available from N.E.F.P. for \$1.95)

7. REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY UNDER CAPITALISM

1. the state: an instrument of class rule
2. bourgeois democracy
3. Fascism and the United Front against Fascism
4. defense of democracy and building socialism
5. social reforms
6. transitional demands
7. people's war

Readings

- *Lenin, "State and Revolution", ch. 1 (Class Society and the State)
- *Lin Piao, "Long Live the Victory of People's War!", especially sections 2-6 (pp. 12-42)
- *Dimitroff, "United Front Against Fascism", ch. 1 (Fascism and the Working Class –pp. 5-27; Contents and Forms of the United Front –pp. 33-36; Women and the United Front –pp. 66-67)
- Rosa Luxemburg, "Reform or Revolution"
- Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism"

8. THE NATIONAL QUESTION

1. nations as a product of capitalist development
2. national oppression: colonialism
3. national liberation movements
4. nationalism and internationalism
5. relation of women's liberation to national liberation

Readings

- *Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question", ch. 1-3 (pp. 11-46)
- *Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self Determination, ch. 1 and 10
- Rosa Luxemburg, The Nationalities Question (ch. 3 in "The Russian Revolution"—pp. 47-56)
- Fanon, The Pitfalls of National Consciousness (in "Wretched of the Earth"—pp. 148-205)

9. REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

1. revolutionary party versus reformist party
2. Party as a vanguard
3. democratic centralism
4. meaning of party discipline
5. factionalism and opportunism

Readings

- *Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?", especially ch. 1, 4 (a & c), and the conclusion (pp. 1-29, 98-101, 108-124, 175-177)
- *Stalin, The Party (ch. 8 in "Foundations of Leninism"—pp. 101-117)
- *Hinton, "Fan Shen", ch. 16 (Half of China –pp. 157-160), ch. 18 (Founding the Village Communist Party Branch –pp. 168-178)
- *Rosa Luxemburg, "Leninism or Marxism?" (pp. 81-108)
- Lenin, "Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder"
- Mao, On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party (in "Selected Works", V. 1—pp. 105-115)
- film: "Battle of Algiers"

10. NATURE OF SOCIALIST SOCIETY

1. doesn't evolve—must be by revolution
2. dictatorship of the proletariat
3. collectivization
4. material incentives and production
5. transitory period to communism
6. communes as an alternative to the family

Readings

- *“The Woman Question”, ch. 5 (Socialism and the Emancipation of Women —pp. 48-66)
- *Marx, The Nature of a Communist Society —excerpts from his writings in “Marx on Economics”, edited by Robert Freedman (pp. 263-277)
- Lenin, “State and Revolution”, ch. 5 (The Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State)
- Marx and Engels, “Communist Manifesto”, ch. 2
- Stalin, The Dictatorship of the Proletariat (ch. 4 in “Foundations of Leninism”—pp. 40-53)
- Trotsky, “Problems of Life”, especially ch. 1 (Not by Politics Alone does Man Thrive) and ch. 4 (From the Old Family to the New)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: Many of the following, especially the Marxist classics, are available in inexpensive paper editions published by International Publishers (N.Y.), Foreign Languages Press (Peking), Progress Publishers (Moscow), etc. Most should be available in libraries in one of the volumes of “The Collected Works of—” Page numbers in the syllabus refer to the following editions:

- “The Woman Question: Selections from the Writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin”, International Publishers, N.Y., 1951 (50¢)
- Benston, Margaret, The Political Economy of Women's Liberation, Monthly Review, September 1969
- Bohannan, Paul, “Social Anthropology”, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, N.Y., 1963
- de Beauvoir, Simone, “The Second Sex”, Bantam Books, N.Y., 1968 (\$1.25)
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- Freedman, Robert, “Marx on Economics”, Harvest Books, N.Y., 1961 (\$2.25)
- Hinton, William, “Fan-Shen”, Vintage, Random House, N.Y., 1968 (\$2.95)
- Lenin, V.I., “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism”, International, N.Y., 1939 (\$1.00)
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- Lenin, V.I., “On the Emancipation of Women”, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968 (85¢)
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- Lenin, V.I., “State and Revolution”, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965 (50¢)
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- Lenin, V.I., “What Is To Be Done?”, International, N.Y., 1969
- Lin Piao, “Long Live the Victory of People's War!”, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1966
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- Magdoff, Harry, “The Age of Imperialism: The Economics of U.S. Foreign Policy”, Modern Reader Paperbacks, N.Y., 1969 (\$1.95)
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- Marx, Karl, “Wage Labor and Capital”, International, N.Y., 1933 (50¢)
- Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels, “The Communist Manifesto”
- Mills, C. Wright, “The Marxists”, Dell, Laurel ed., 1968 (95¢)
- Murdock, George Peter, “Social Structure”, The Free Press, N.Y., 1965
- Plekhanov, George, “The Materialist Conception of History”, International, N.Y., 1964 (50¢)
- Selsam, Howard and Harry Martel, ed., “Reader in Marxist Philosophy: From the Writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin”, International, N.Y., 1964 (\$2.45)
- Stalin, Joseph V., “The Foundations of Leninism”, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965 (50¢)
- Stalin, Joseph V., “Marxism and the National Question”, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954
- Trotsky, Leon, “The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International. ‘The Transitional Program’”, Pioneer, N.Y.
- Trotsky, Leon, “Problems of Life”, Methuen & Co., London

