

HISTORY 255-01 HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIALISM  
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Professors Peter Weisensel and Henry West

(Students must be registered for both courses, which will be taught from an integrated syllabus. Each course carries four hours credit for a total of eight.)

Required texts: (Available in Macalester College Textbooks, under Philosophy 255. In the case of Engels and of Berlin, other editions may be used. The earlier edition of Fried & Sanders does not include Chapter XI; otherwise, it may be used.)

Engels, Friedrich. The Condition of the Working Class in England [First published in German in 1845; English translation, 1892] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Fried, Albert, and Sanders, Ronald, editors. Socialist Thought: A Documentary History [1st edition, 1964], 2nd edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.

Berlin, Isaiah. Karl Marx: His Life and Environment [1st edition, 1939], 4th edition. London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, 1996.

Tucker, Robert C., editor. The Marx-Engels Reader [1st edition, 1972], 2nd edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978.

Kelly, Alfred, editor and translator. The German Worker: Working-Class Autobiographies from the Age of Industrialization. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1987.

In addition to assignments in the books listed above, there will be assignments of articles or chapters of books, some available through Electronic Reserve: This will be explained in class before the first assignment of something available there. In addition to those listed below, there will be more assignments from handouts, which will either be distributed in class or made available through Electronic Reserve. Some of these are not yet available; some will be chosen as the course develops. You will see that the last two weeks of class are to be assigned.

Course Outline and (Tentative) Reading Assignments: This is tentative. As the course goes on, assignments will be reduced or expanded; so be alert for announcements in class or for a revised list of reading assignments. This is especially true of the articles and chapters of books to be distributed as handouts or made available on Electronic Reserve. But at least the first three assignments (9/9-9/14) in Engels and in Fried & Sanders won't be changed.

#### I. Preview of the Course:

(9/7) Socialism as a historical movement of ideas, political parties, and revolutionary action: a preview of the syllabus. What is socialism? Is there a difference between "socialism" and "communism"? Socialism as a political-economic-social philosophy: Some salient characteristics and variants.

## II. Some Historical, Philosophical and Intellectual Background:

- (9/9) The early industrial revolution. Assignment: Begin reading Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England. (At least one-fourth is a recommended amount, e.g., "Introduction," and Chapters 1 & 2: "The Industrial Proletariat," and "The Great Towns"—through p. 86.) In reading Engels, you do not need to try to remember details, but consider the following topics for discussion: The role of technology in social change; the proletariat as a new class and comparison to earlier agricultural laborers; the conditions of urban crowding and poverty; the new competition for work; unemployment; the conditions of work in various industries: long hours, monotony, child and female labor, injuries; effects on the working class family. In later chapters, look for the role of governmental regulations and labor movements. Consider the following questions: Can “historical description” and theoretical analysis be separated? Is either of these “value-neutral”? What can be criticized about Engels’s description, analysis, or set of values? On what basis is such criticism possible?
- (9/12) Introduction to major ethical and political theories: Utilitarianism, Social Contract theory, Natural Law theory; Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Bentham. Assignment: Continue reading Engels. (To be half finished is recommended, e.g., to have read through Chapters 3-5: "Competition," "Irish Immigration," and "Results"--through p. 143.)
- (9/14) Visions of ideal societies and the criticism of private property in Plato, More, Morelly, Rousseau, Babeuf. Assignment: Fried & Sanders, “Preface to the Morningside Edition,” Chapters I & II. Student reports on some of the writers listed.
- (9/16) The question of the relation between ideas and social conditions. Assignment: Continue reading Engels. (To be through Chapter 6, “Single Branches of Industry: Factory Hands” is recommended.) Darnton, “The Great Cat Massacre” (handout or ER); Himmelfarb, "Prologue: Before the Revolution" (handout or ER). Student reports.

## III. Social and Economic Conditions in Early 19th Century:

See the topics for discussion on the first assignment on Engels.

- (9/19) Labor in Pre-Industrial Europe. Assignment: Continue Engels. (To have read through Chapter 7, "The Remaining Branches of Industry" is recommended.) Chamberlain, et.al., "The Rural Revolution" (handout or ER); Thompson, et.al., "Formation of a Labor Force" (handout or ER). Student reports.
- (9/21) Industrialization and Its Impact on the Working Class. Assignment: Continue reading Engels. (To have read through Chapters 8-10 is recommended.) Clark, “The Struggle for the Breeches” (handout or ER); Himmelfarb, "The 'Culture of Poverty'" (handout or ER). Student reports.

(9/23) The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1845 and Labor Movements up to mid-century; living standards.

Assignment: Finish Engels, including Prefaces to the American and English editions; Pollard, "Factory Discipline" (handout or ER); E. P. Thompson, "Standards and Experiences" (handout or ER). Review all of Engels, especially "Labour Movements." Student reports.

#### IV. Pre-Marxist Socialism:

(9/26) Saint-Simon & Saint-Simonists, Fourier.

Assignment: Fried & Sanders, Chapter III, through Fourier. Student reports on these.

(9/28) Owen, Chartism, Blanqui, Proudhon, Blanc.

Assignment: Fried & Sanders, Chapter III, "Owen"; Chapter IV. Student reports on these.

#### V. Marx and Engels:

Assignments as follows:

(9/30) Berlin, Chaps. I-V.

(10/3) Tucker, 3-6 ("Marx on the History of His Opinions"); 26-52 ("On the Jewish Question"); 53-65 ("Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction"); 70-81 ("Estranged Labor" from Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844); 143-145 ("Theses on Feuerbach"); and skim 146-200 (The German Ideology, Part I), with attention to pp. 150, 154, 158-162, 165, 169, 172-174, 186-188, 191-194, 197-200.

(10/5) Berlin, Chap. VI-VII; Tucker, 469-500 (Manifesto of the Communist Party).

(10/7) Tucker, 294-343 (Capital, Vol. 1, Parts I & II).

(10/10) Tucker, 344-403 (Capital, Vol. 1, Parts III & IV).

(10/12) Tucker, 403-442 (Capital, Vol. 1, Parts IV, V, VIII & Vol. III, a selection); Berlin, VIII.

(10/14) Tucker, 443-465 ("Crisis Theory"); Berlin, Chaps. IX-XI.

(10/17) Tucker, 520-541 ("Economics and Politics in the Labor Movement"; "Against Personality Cults"; "The Possibility of Non-Violent Revolution"; "Critique of the Gotha Program"); 683-717 (Socialism: Utopian and Scientific). Review for Midterm Exam.

----(10/19) **Midterm Exam**----

#### VI. Organized Protest and Condition of Workers in the 19th Century:

(10/21) Industrialism, the First International, Anarchism and Syndicalism, Guild Socialism: Bakunin, Kropotkin, Sorel, Cole.  
Assignment: Review Berlin, Karl Marx, Chapter 9 "The International"; study Fried & Sanders, Part VII; Tucker, 542-548 ("After the Revolution: Marx Debates Bakunin"); Kelly, "Introduction." Student reports on readings.

(10/24) German Workers in the late 19th Century.  
Assignment: Kelly, "Fischer," "Bergg," "Holek." Student reports on readings.

(10/26) Social and Cultural Conditions.  
Assignment: Kelly, "Popp," "Osterroth," "Krille"; Steinmetz, "Workers and the Welfare State in Imperial Germany" (handout or ER). Student reports.

-----(10/28 is fall break)----

(10/31) Urbanization and Collective Violence.  
Assignment: Kelly, "Baader," "Viersbeck," "A Barmaid"; Walvin, et.al., "Leisure for the Masses" (handout or ER); Maine, "Priest of the Proletarians" (handout or ER). Student reports on readings.

## VII. Fabian Socialism:

(11/2) A Liberal Approach to Socialism: J. S. Mill.  
Assignment: Mill, selections from Principles of Political Economy (handout).

(11/4) The Fabian Society.  
Assignment: Fried & Sanders, Chapter VIII, section on "Fabian Socialism" (pp. 389-403); Fabian documents and selections from Fabian Essays (handout).

## VIII. Revisionism and Radicalism:

(11/7) Bernstein, Kautsky.  
Assignment: Fried & Sanders, remainder of Chapter VIII; Kelly, "Rehbein," "A City Man on a Farm;" Student reports.

(11/9) Luxemburg and German Radicalism.  
Assignment: Luxemburg (handout); Kelly, "Turek," "Lotz," "Hoffmann;" Student reports.

(11/11) Review.  
Assignment: Write up a one-page statement presenting some main ideas of each of the following: Bakunin, Kropotkin, Mill, Fabian Socialism, Bernstein, Kautsky, and Luxemburg (seven pages in all, to be turned in). Prepare to state in class what you have learned about the condition of workers from their autobiographies (to bring notes to class would be helpful).

----- (11/14) **Third Quarter Exam.** -----

**IX. Bolshevism:**

(11/16) Russia's Uniqueness; the Russian Revolution; Bolshevik Philosophy: Plekhanov & Lenin.

Assignment: Fried & Sanders, Chapter IX, 1-3. Additional assignment on handout or ER. Student reports.

(11/18) Trotsky and Critiques of Bolshevism: Kautsky, Luxemburg.

Assignment: Fried & Sanders, Chapter IX, 4 & 5. Additional assignment on handout or ER. Student reports.

(11/21) Stalinism and Development of Russian Communism.

Assignment: Fried & Sanders, Chapter IX, 6; Filtzer, "Labor Discipline..." (handout or ER) Additional assignment on handout or ER. Student reports.

**X. Socialism and Communism around the Globe and Current Issues in Socialist Thought:**

(11/23) Socialism in China; Mao & Maoism.

Assignment: Handout on the Chinese Revolution; Perry, "Labor's Love Lost..." (handout or ER) Student reports.

----- (11/25 is Thanksgiving Break) -----

(11/28) Socialism in East Europe, Latin America and Elsewhere; Socialism and Democracy.

Assignment: Handouts or ER. Student reports.

(11/30) Marxist and Liberal Socialist Thought: Lukacs, Gramsci, the Frankfurt School, and A View from the British Labor Party; Modernization, Mechanization, and the Condition of Labor.

Assignment: Fried & Sanders, Chapter X. Also, handout or ER. Student reports.

(12/2) Women in Urban Society; Feminist Socialism.

Assignment: Fried & Sanders, Chapter XI, 3 (article by Eisenstein (pp. 565-582)); article by Jaggar (handout). Student reports.

**XI. Contemporary developments in Socialist history and philosophy:**

(12/5-12/16) Topics and assignments for this section are yet to be developed. Some topics will be: The Cold War and the Collapse of Socialism in East Europe; Nationalism and Property Rights in Post-Socialist Countries; Democratic and Market Socialism; The Future of Socialism. There will be handouts or ER assignments.

Some topics for thought and discussion in the final weeks:

1. Socialism and Efficiency: Economic appraisal of planned vs. market economies vs. "mixed" economies. Can there be "market socialism"? How much of capitalist

economies are “market” and how much planned and regulated? How much of capitalist economies (including such things as education, defense, the police/judicial system, transportation, the “infrastructure,” recreation, research) are private and how much public?

2. Socialism and Social Justice: Appraisal of class and welfare in capitalist, welfare state, and socialist societies.
3. Socialism and Freedom/Alienation: Appraisal of autonomy under socialism and capitalism--of choice of life style, association, expression, residence and work, political activities and leaders, etc., and the rewards of these choices.
4. Socialism and National States: Can socialism be organized on a national basis? If so, what effect does this have on international relations, world distribution of industry and competition, trade, emigration and immigration, world poverty, etc.? Is international socialism possible and desirable?
5. Socialism and Contemporary Philosophy: What do various philosophical theories and religious traditions (utilitarianism, rights theory, social contract theory, feminist theory, existentialism, Christianity, etc.) have to say about socialism?
6. What is Socialism? (reprise) What are the criteria which make a system of thought or a state or a radical movement "socialist"? Are there "family resemblances" between all those which have been called or called themselves "socialist"?

Note concerning grading: Each instructor will assign a separate grade for each student, Weisensel for History 255; West, for Philosophy 255. West considers attendance in class to be extremely important. The course is not just learning facts—philosophy requires discussion of ideas. One third of West’s grade will be based on attendance. Absences can be made up by writing up a three- or four-page summary of the reading assignment followed by two to three pages of comments on the assignment.