

# Study Guide for *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* by Friedrich Engels

First Edition

*Written by Comrade H. Donovan*

This document is in the public domain; however, I would like to emphasize that I disapprove of its usage in any generative, “AI,” for any reason.

## Introduction

*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* is an absolutely integral document of Marxist-Leninist theory, and was written by Friedrich Engels. This book is actually part of a larger work, which we call *Anti-Dühring* today, which heavily criticized a utopian Socialist who tried to create a model of Socialism antithetical to Karl Marx’s dialectical materialism for everything from the atomic theory to global economics, and consequently Engels had to spend a significant amount of time debunking Dühring’s entire material.

This book, as the title would suggest, compares and contrasts utopian ideologies (such as anarchism) with scientific (Wissenschaft; thought-craft) Socialism (i.e. dialectical materialism), demonstrating in detail how flawed utopian Socialism is, and how it’s actively counter-revolutionary. This book will also grate heavily with people with religious (or, “spiritual,” if you may like) beliefs, as it provides a thorough critique of why a god cannot exist, and is the key philosophical document that explains the necessary irreligion of Marxism.

As new terms come up in the document that may be unfamiliar or have experienced lingual drift, they’ll be clarified for their individual sections. Additionally, to encourage reading the document rather than seeking summaries, key takeaways for different sections will be presented as questions for the reader to answer, allowing them to seek the answers themselves and come to a greater understanding of the document.

This is unfortunately due to the fact that—while being somewhat viable as onboarding to reading Socialist theory, assuming someone is actively encouraged to learn and possibly assisted in doing so (as opposed to berated)—summarized Socialist theory significantly waters down the original documents and will only provide a rudimentary understanding.

The headings beyond this point in this document will simply denote the relevant sections of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

# Introduction

## Section 1: Preface to the First German Edition of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*

Important Context:

- The concept of copyright law is actively harmful to information preservation and distribution!

In April 2014, British publishing company *Lawrence & Wishart* had the audacity to strip the rights from the Marxists Internet Archive to display the Preface to the First German Edition of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* on the grounds that, “Without the income derived [from] the copyright in these works, L&W would not exist,” and asserting that it would still, “[maintain] a public presence,” if they restricted it to university libraries—which oftentimes require university accounts, making both an educational and monetary barrier to entry—in a statement which has since *also* been redacted from public viewing.

However, the Marxists Internet Archive has multiple mirrors which aren’t controlled by the official MIA archival team, and you can still find this document publicly available, for free, on the Paris, France Mirror of the Marxists Internet Archive, at the following link:

<https://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/marx/works/1882/09/preface.htm>

This will not be the only time this occurs, even within this book alone.

- The Bob Neufeld LibreVox audiobook recording (which can be found archived on a YouTube channel called *Cube*. (with the period)) skips directly to the 1892 English Edition Introduction [General Introduction and the History of Materialism]. Please consult the Paris, France Marxists Internet Archive Mirror.
- Also see: *Curriculum of the Basic Principles of Marxism-Leninism*. At time of writing, Part 1 (*The Worldview and Philosophical Methodology of Marxism-Leninism*) (i.e. dialectical materialism) and Part 2 (*Historical Materialism*) have been translated by Luna Nguyen and co-translated by Emeric Johnson from Vietnamese to English for the first time in history; there will be more parts in the future.

Note that *dialectical materialism* and *historical materialism* are directly related, but distinct concepts, and aren’t interchangeable.

Versions, at time of writing, can be found as follows:

Part 1, physical copy: <https://www.banyanhouse.org/product/the-worldview-and-philosophical-methodology-of-marxism-leninism-preorder/> (The -preorder wasn’t removed from the link; you can in fact order this)

Part 1, free ebook: <https://www.banyanhouse.org/product/ebook-the-worldview-and-philosophical-methodology-of-marxism-leninism/>

Part 1, ProleWiki archive:

[https://en.prolewiki.org/wiki/Library:Curriculum\\_of\\_the\\_Basic\\_Principles\\_of\\_Marxism-Leninism\\_Part\\_1](https://en.prolewiki.org/wiki/Library:Curriculum_of_the_Basic_Principles_of_Marxism-Leninism_Part_1) (Loads slowly; formatted terribly and graphics/charts are broken)

Part 1, Internet Archive ebook scan: [https://dn721608.ca.archive.org/0/items/intro-basic-princ-marx-lenin-part-1-final/IntroBasicPrincMarxLenin\\_Part\\_1\\_Final.pdf](https://dn721608.ca.archive.org/0/items/intro-basic-princ-marx-lenin-part-1-final/IntroBasicPrincMarxLenin_Part_1_Final.pdf)

Part 2, physical copy: <https://www.banyanhouse.org/product/historical-materialism/>

Part 2, free ebook: <https://www.banyanhouse.org/product/ebook-historical-materialism/>

Key Takeaways:

- (In regards to the footnote added to the Third German Edition) Is the international experience necessary for developing dialectical materialism?
- What is the only possible method of developing historical materialism?

## Section 2: 1892 English Edition Introduction [General Introduction and the History of Materialism]

Important Context:

- Dühring was extremely rude to all other philosophers, especially to Marx and Engels, asserting that everyone else was idiots, often employing poetic language and portmanteaus to that effect. Inversely, you'll immediately pick up on the fact in the larger work of *Anti-Dühring* that Engels frequently refers to Dühring as *Herr (Mister) Dühring*, but generally doesn't employ this title for anyone else—this is civil, but scathing, sarcasm.
- The Neufeld audiobook recording entirely skips the paragraph concerning the appendix after Engels discusses how many translations of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* were published. Additionally, multiple sentences are inexplicably skipped in multiple future portions of this book. Please consult the Marxists Internet Archive.
- *Teutonic* here refers to the German language family, and isn't related to the previous USAmerican nazi or modern neo-nazi groups, though this should be obvious given this was written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, far before Benito Mussolini adapted the social democrat concept of class collaboration to reinforce the state for capitalism.
- The Neufeld audiobook recording doesn't clarify when it switches sections; immediately after Engels asserts that the English middle-class (note: this refers to an economic bracket; the, "middle-class," are still proletariat) weren't as stupid as other people assumed, the new section begins.

Key Takeaways:

- What is the production of commodities?

- How does the capitalist stage of production function?
- How has industrial production changed since the Middle Ages?
- What are the principle forms used to develop science?
- What is Engels' explanation of how we can determine that our senses give us correct representations of the objects we perceive?
- What is Engels' proof that a god cannot exist?
- What is historical materialism?

### **Section 3: 1892 English Edition Introduction (Part 2) [History (the role of Religion) in the English middle-class]**

Important Context:

- This entire chapter provides extremely important context for how the bourgeois/proletarian relations developed out of feudal relations. Also see: *Capital* by Karl Marx.
- Engels describing the middle-class as the bourgeoisie is in fact accurate to feudalism; they were subject to feudal lords, and we owe the development of capitalism to capitalists waging a progressive revolution against feudalism. It's now our turn to wage a progressive Communist revolution against capitalism.
- The Neufeld audiobook recording misreads a line: "To return to our French bourgeois," should read, "To return to our British bourgeois."
- Engels, like Marx, had much hope that Germany would be the first country to successfully achieve a Socialist revolution. In reality, Vladimir Lenin defended and reinforced Marxism so successfully that the Bolsheviks, despite overwhelming odds, successfully began developing Socialism—the First/Lower Stage of Communism—in Russia, and later the USSR as a whole; unfortunately, they never proceeded to develop the Second/Higher Stage of Communism, albeit this, in itself, requires the entirety of humanity to already be in the First/Lower Stage of Communism.
- For more information, and information on how Communists should respond to religion, also see: *On the History of Early Christianity* by Friedrich Engels, and *The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion* and *Classes and Parties in Their Attitude to Religion and the Church* by Vladimir Lenin.

While she later abandoned Marxism and became actively counter-revolutionary, *An Anti-Clerical Policy of Socialism* and *Socialism and the Churches* by Rosa Luxembourge also provide valuable input on this matter.

It basically breaks down to the following phrase (which will make sense after reading these): *Religion is a private matter in relation to the state, but not to the Party.*

Notably, direct suppression of religion is actively harmful (see: smuggling of torahs, bibles, and qurans into the USSR, and the immediate bounce-back of religion as though nothing happened after the illegal dissolution of the USSR), and consequently it would be prudent to instead attempt the dissolution of religion through the following measures:

- Seizure of religious organizations' private property and propaganda outlets (and their churches, camps, etc. must certainly be considered as such) into proletarian state property
- Complete removal of religious figures and religious propaganda (which they fraudulently call, "religious education,") from all institutions, prioritizing their removal from schools, including the complete conversion of religious schools into regular, secular schools
- Complete separation of all religions from the proletarian state, enforcing not only freedom *of* religion, but also, more importantly, freedom *from* religion
- A nationwide robust increase in education, including changing history classes to teach with historical materialism rather than great man theory (to increase historical literacy) and making the education of both sign language and braille mandatory, and possibly a universal language (to facilitate better communication), with direct education of the basics of Marxism-Leninism, especially dialectical materialism and historical materialism, as well as whatever has developed as *Socialism with North American characteristics* (or analogue for non-North-Americans; for example *Socialism with Trinbagonian characteristics*), as mandatory for graduation (to increase socioeconomic and political literacy)
- An additional increase in education by increasing the amount of years of education to an additional (fifth) year of high school education focusing on adult skills including essential skills like cooking, repair, cleaning, basic medicine, performing meta-analyses, autodidactic study (to begin to undo the reliance on bourgeois systems of resource and information control), and communal cooperation such as communal study, mutual aid, political participation, and economic participation (to begin to undo the process of capitalist hyperindividualism), as well as five years of college focusing on trade education (to begin to undo the process of capitalist deskilling), generally applicable skills (to begin the process of general education so that workers can assist anywhere), and education about newly-developing and commonly used technologies (to ensure rapid scientific and industrial development)

Key Takeaways:

- What is the purpose of retaining religion under capitalism?
- Can religion entirely halt the development of Socialism? Why?

## **Section 4: Introduction to the French Edition of Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific***

Important Context:

- The Neufeld audiobook recording doesn't include this section, implying they were using the Marxists Internet Archive copy, as this file was *also* redacted by Lawrence & Wishart; please consult the Paris, France Marxists Internet Archive Mirror link here:

<https://marxists.architecturez.net/archive/marx/works/1880/05/04.htm>

- This section is just historical context about Marx and Engels prior to Engels releasing *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

## Chapter 1: The Development of Utopian Socialism

Important Context:

- You are already approximately one-third complete with *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*; it has a rather long introduction.

Key Takeaways:

- What were the three original principles of idealism (“the kingdom of reason”)?
- What did the, “freedom of property,” (“the free market”) actually result in after the transition from feudalism to capitalism?
- What was Saint-Simon’s misunderstanding of the bourgeois/proletarian (“idlers”/“workers”) relations? What did this do to his utopian theory?
- What did Owen’s attempt at utopian Socialism actually create? How did this change his understanding of the theft of surplus value?
- What happened to Owen when he became explicitly Communist?

## Chapter 2: Dialectics

Important Context:

- This chapter clarifies why Marxism is alternatively referred to as scientific Socialism.

Key Takeaways:

- What is dialectics? (Note: This is easier understood with the following analogy—eating a cup of pudding will help absolve your hunger, but in the process, the pudding itself has changed, has been broken down into its base chemicals for your body’s consumption, and has split apart into part of you and part of your waste; you have changed the pudding, and the pudding has changed you.)
- What did Hegel’s development of dialectics entail? What were its flaws? (Note: Karl Marx inverted the Hegelian dialectic, creating dialectical materialism, where the material world was the base, and human society was the superstructure.)
- What is the basis of society’s superstructure?

- What is the distinction of historical materialism?
- What is the exploitation of surplus value?

## Chapter 3: Historical Materialism

Important Context:

- To elaborate on the *labour reserve army* that Engels briefly mentions, I'll provide a brief explanation, as Marx provided quite a lot of information on proletarian relations in *Capital*. The labour reserve army is the Communist term for the deliberately unemployed.

Specifically, it refers to those who are cast out of industry, but lack any trade skills due to the deliberate deskilling by capitalists.

(For example, one may know how to build an engine, or a tire, or even only manufacture a single screw, but it's generally no longer taught how to construct the entire vehicle by oneself.)

This simultaneously increases production for the capitalists and ensuring that workers only learn the most basic skills, many of which are non-transferrable, which in turn ensures that they're entirely dependent on capitalists for labour, as, even if they autodidactically learn trade skills, they lack the monetary capital to purchase the means of production and the labour power of others to exploit to produce commodities—and in the rare event they do, they're often crushed by the inherent competition of the, “free market,” which inevitably leads to monopolization and imperialism. This is why those, “self-made,” “pulled themselves up by the bootstraps,” (a phrase which, in itself, is meant to describe something impossible to do; to invoke Vladimir Lenin: “A capitalist is no more capable of self-sacrifice than a person is capable of pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps.”) can rather easily be found to have received large loans and/or inherited means of production.

This oftentimes serves to limit workers to a single industry of labour, rather than being able to work anywhere, or lacking advanced skills entirely, in which case they'll only be able to work the simplest of jobs.

(This is in regards to the training and experience required—I feel the need to emphasize that training and experience required isn't synonymous with importance, as was clearly demonstrated by the Harlem Garbage Offensive wherein a Puerto Rican gang called the Young Lords converted into a civil rights organization and attempted to peacefully petition the New York City Department of Sanitation to actually help clean up the trash in East Harlem (which was being entirely neglected, oftentimes requiring bribes just to do their jobs), and even their autonomous cleaning of East Harlem provided no change.

In response, the Young Lords dumped large amounts of trash into white neighborhoods to completely obstruct roads and protested with clear demands until New York City complied.

This provides a clear demonstration of the importance of sanitation workers, even if the work may not require extensive training or experience to learn.)

In either case, this allows the capitalists to fire large portions of workers who want better pay and working conditions, replacing them with workers in the labour reserve army who are desperate for jobs, no matter how horrible the conditions are. In trade union terms, when a strike occurs, these people are referred to as, “scabs;” however, this is a universally applicable capitalist practice regardless of unionization. The problem is capitalism; trade unionism isn’t a solution.

- The periodic collisions Engels mentions describe the inherent boom and bust cycles of capitalism, and simultaneously provides the economic background for the development of the imperialist stage of capitalism.
- For a real-life example of products being wasted and destroyed instead of being provided to the commons, did you know that during the initial wave of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, when politicians still took it seriously and engaged in a global lockdown, and weren’t pretending that it doesn’t exist or isn’t a problem so they can engage in eugenics and expand the labour reserve army and inflate the production of surplus capital, hundreds of tons of potatoes, approximately 10 million pigs for meat (number from NPR, May 2020), millions of chickens for meat, tens of thousands of chickens for eggs, approximately 3.7 million gallons of milk (number from CNBC, May 2020), and large amounts of cows for meat were deliberately destroyed and slaughtered so that they wouldn’t be sold at a loss, despite being in the middle of an artificial food shortage?

#### Key Takeaways:

- What determines humanity’s superstructure (here called, “social structure”)? (Note: This cause is what we call the *base*. The *base* and *superstructure* interact with each other dialectically, and because we’re dialectical materialists, we understand that the base primarily affects the superstructure, and the superstructure can only affect the base through tangible action.)
- What is the root contradiction within the capitalist mode of production?
- What is the distinction Engels makes regarding what’s considered *commodities*?
- How does the proletariat resolve the anarchy of the dialectic between the means of production and the means of exchange? (Note: What does the proletarian revolution need to accomplish?)
- Why does the proletarian state have no other choice than to naturally wither away? How is this distinct from, “abolishing,” the state in one stroke?
- What is the historical evolution of the organization of society on the basis of the means of production?