

# Socialism: Utopian and Scientific Study Guide

Text: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/index.htm>

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## I. Utopian Socialism

- A. Modern socialism is a product of the recognition of class antagonisms and the anarchy in production
  - 1. The groundwork was done by men in France who criticized everything in an attempt to build a society of reason. Their ideas had many problems and were often Utopian:
    - a) They sought to emancipate all of humanity at once
    - b) They did not speak for the proletariat
    - c) They viewed socialism as an expression of absolute truth, reason, and justice - a perfect social order - it simply had to be discovered
- B. Saint-Simon
  - 1. Identified a class distinction in society of idlers and workers
    - a) Idlers: anyone who lived on their incomes without taking part in production or distribution
    - b) Workers: wage-workers, manufacturers, merchants, and bankers
      - (1) Simon's error here is that the worker class included bankers, merchants, and manufacturers that were exploiting the workers
  - 2. Proposed a reconciliation of classes under science and industry united by a new religion, New Christianity
    - a) New Christianity has the bourgeois (bankers, merchants, etc.), who Simon included in the workers class, transform themselves into public officials and social trustees
- C. Fourier
  - 1. Identified that women's emancipation is the measure of the general emancipation
  - 2. Noted that superabundance causes poverty
  - 3. Identified the cycles of capitalism
  - 4. His analysis of societal development is comparable to Marxist Historical analysis
    - a) Savagery -> Barbarism -> Patriarchate -> Civilization
    - b) Noted the birth of new classes during the industrial revolution
- D. Robert Owen

1. Understood the exploitative nature and horrible conditions under capitalism
  - a) Attempted to improve the conditions of people in a colony he led by lowering working hours, paying during crises, and more.
  - b) Led a movement to get the first law passed limiting labor hours for women and children
2. He was banished from bourgeois circles after attacking capitalism, specifically private property, religion and marriage

## Questions

1. What did the French Philosophers want to build society on and why was this wrong?
2. What are some problems with Utopian Socialism? Why are they problems?
3. Explain Saint Simon's alternative to Capitalism and point out any errors or issues.
  - a. What did Saint Simon get right?
4. How did Fourier explain capitalism?
  - a. Were any of his ideas comparable to the dialectics we know today?
5. What was Owen's alternative to Capitalism?
  - a. What were some problems with it?
6. What changes needed to be made to Socialism to transform it from Utopian Socialism to what we know today, a science?



5. Explain how Hegel was an idealist
  
6. How did old Materialism view the history of the world?
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What discoveries led to Socialism finally becoming a science?

### **III. Historical Materialism**

- A. Historical Materialism is the application of dialectical materialism to history
  1. This process allows us to explain the formation of societies, wealth distribution, means of production, modes of production, etc.
    - a) Social change and political revolutions are driven by the changes in the mode of production
    - b) Under Feudalism, Capitalism and Liberal Democracy emerged, bringing the end to Feudalism and the Monarchies
    - c) Capitalism brought about “personal liberty” but this was only for the bourgeoisie.
- B. Centralisation of means of production brought about the division of labor and changes in how commodities were produced.
  1. The contradiction between socialized production and capitalistic appropriation became commonplace
    - a) Rural communities came into the city to work in the new factories
    - b) Individual producers began to disappear and anarchy in production increased
  2. Markets massively expanded
- C. Periodic crises in Capitalism occur about every 10 years.
  1. Production stops, businesses close down, expansion of productive forces expands faster than the expansion of markets
  2. Capital production is centralized under trusts, joint-stock companies or the bourgeois state during these crises
  3. Eventually things go back to “normal” and these crises repeat
- D. The solution to Capitalism and these periodic crises is Socialism
  1. The proletariat seizes political power and transforms the socialized means of production into public property

## Questions

1. What is the basis of all social structures in society?
2. What did the rise of capitalism bring for the bourgeoisie? Are there examples of this today?
3. What is the primary contradiction of Capitalism?
4. What causes the Capitalist crisis? What are examples of these in modern day?
5. How would socialism stop the crises that occur under Capitalism?
6. How did the instruments of production change from Feudalism to Capitalism?
7. What is a commodity?
8. How did commodities arise?