

PHILOSOPHY

CLASS ON DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Reading Material: 1) Dialectical Materialism by V. Adoratsky

- 2) Leninism Vol. 1 by J.V. Stalin, pg. 359-360 (Interview with the First American Labor Delegation in Russia, Ch. 1: Questions Put by the Delegation and Stalin's Replies. Question 1. "What new principles have Lenin and the Communist Party added to Marxism in practice? etc." Read answer to question on Pg. 359-360.
- 3) Sanmugathasan's "Bright Red Banner" by Nelson P. in Proletariat Vol. 2, No. 1.

Questions:

1. What is the relationship between Marxism as a theory and proletariat revolution? How does this apply in the period of building a revolutionary party? Discuss in your answer: What is theory and where does it come from? What is practice--spontaneity--consciousness?
2. Compare the following quotations: 1) "Leninism is a new stage in the development of Marxism." Adoratsky. 2) "Lenin applied the teachings of Marx to the changed conditions of his own time. In doing so he developed Marxism to the higher stage of Leninism." Sanmugathasan quoted in Proletariat, with the following correct formulations: 1) "Leninism is Marxism in the era of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution." Stalin. "It is a creative application of methodology of Marxism that corresponds to a definite stage of the productive forces and the resulting social struggle." Proletariat pg. 10. The question is, have any 'new principles' been added to Marxism? Is it correct to say that Leninism is a new stage in the development of Marxism? Why or why not? Discuss the quote by Stalin: "Lenin did not merely carry out the doctrines of Marx and Engels. He developed this doctrine further." How is it possible for Lenin to develop Marxism and yet add no new principles?
3. Discuss the transformation of quantity and quality in relation to numbers and consciousness in a political organization. Example: Bolsheviks 20,000 Feb. 1917; 200,000 Oct, 1917.
4. Describe historical development of dialectical theory.
5. What is the difference between Hegel's dialectics and Marx's dialectics? Discuss what is meant by the rational kernel within the mystical shell.
6. Do old forms of oppression (feudal relations, slave relations) still exist today? How does this relate to God, racism, slavery in the south? (negation of the negation)
7. What are examples of sophistry?
8. Say why each of these statements are incorrect. A) Metaphysics - "Slavery is bad." B) mechanistic - "No compromise with the bourgeoisie." C) Eclecticism - "Fight racist unemployment." D) Sophistry - "Communists must support all struggles for national liberation." "The source of revisionism in the S.U. was Stalin's errors."
9. What are the dialectics of motion? For example: How is an arrow in motion but at the same time not in motion? How does this relate to the development of the Party?
10. What are the characteristics of idealism?
11. Explain what Lenin meant by saying dialectics is the "unity of opposites." How do we know when we have a unity of opposites? Why is it incorrect when Deborin says "Hegelian logic should serve as the starting point for the development or structure of materialist dialectics."
12. What are the practical results of Deborin's deviation in class struggle, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, in our struggle today?
13. What was Lenin's ideas on scientific truths? Why are theories of physics, chemistry, etc., relative truth? Is dialectical materialism a relative truth?
14. What is the brain? Where does thought come from?
15. How do we refute an incorrect argument? Why is our judgement at times contradictory, confused? How can we avoid a wrong judgment?
16. How do you distinguish the main link? Why is it important to grasp the main link?

17. What is the role of philosophy in politics?
18. How is the dialectical conception of development opposed to peaceful evolution? Discuss how the CPUSA takes the line of "evolution."
19. What is the basis of social development? What causes revolutions? Give examples from history and today. How is the party united? Discuss this in relation to the Party?

CLASS ON RELATIVE AND ABSOLUTE TRUTH

Reading Material: 1) Anti-Dühring by Engels, Chapter IX
 2) Materialism and Emperio-Criticism by Lenin, Chapter II, sec. 4, 5.

Questions:

- 1) Explain the dialectics of absolute and relative truth.
- 2) Engels says, "We can divide the whole realm of knowledge in the traditional way into three great departments." What are these departments, how are they related, and what is the dialectic of truth that operates in all three? Anti-Dühring IX
- 3) How is the theory that "knowledge can be acquired at one stroke" opposed to the dialectic of truth? How does knowledge change as the material conditions change?
- 4) Can there be unity between subjectivity and objectivity? What prevents this unity?
- 5) What is the theory of human nature? Relate it to relative and absolute truth.
- 6) How does class struggle and the fight to change the world affect truth and knowledge? How has the class struggle and the fight to make revolution in the U.S. affected the Negro Nation and our understanding of it?
- 7) We raise the slogan of Regional Autonomy for the Southwest. Is this an ultimate slogan? Can Regional Autonomy be achieved under U.S. Imperialism? What is the relation between an autonomous region and a state? What is the relation between regional autonomy under imperialism and socialism? What does the answer to this question have to do with materialism and truth?

CLASS ON DIALECTICS AND PROTRACTED WAR

Reading Material: 1) Anti-Dühring by Engels, Part I, Chapters 12, 13, and 14.
 2) On Protracted War by Mao Tsetung (in selected works, vol. II)

Suggested readings: 1) On People's War by Mao Tse-tung
 2) Vietnam Peoples War has Defeated U.S. War of Destruction, Vo Nguyen Giap (if available)

Questions:

- 1) How did the general world situation affect the war between China and Japan?
- 2) What mistakes in dialectics did the subjugationists and the "quick victory" people make?
- 3) What are the one-sided and the dialectical views of strength and weakness? Is USNA imperialism strong or weak today?
- 4) Why is a protracted war fought by seeking quick, decisive victories? How do the tactics of protracted war apply to ideological struggle? Give other examples of one thing expressing itself through its opposite.
- 5) Discuss how "jig-saw" war is fought through the transformation of opposites.
- 6) Describe what features of Chairman Mao's analysis make it a dialectical materialist analysis. What factors does he consider?
- 7) What is the relation between war and politics?
- 8) What is the object of war and how is it attained? Show how this is an example of one divides into two.

- 9) What are the dialectics of annihilation and attrition?
- 10) Does negation mean destruction? Does it mean "eating up"? Give examples of negation and of the negation of the negation of the negation.

CLASS ON PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION

Reading Material: Capital by Marx, Chapters 26 - 33

- 2) Anti-Dühring by Engels, Chapter on Negation of the Negation

Questions:

- 1) How is primitive accumulation part of the dialectical process in the development from feudalism to capitalism? What were the two pre-requisites of capitalism?
- 2) What was the role of law and the state in general in this process? What was the role of force?
- 3) How is the "expropriation of the expropriators" an example of the negation of the negation? Is negation the same as destruction? Can you have "position" without having "opposition"? Is there negation in affirmation?
- 4) What was the relation of colonial exploitation and slavery to the development of capitalism?
- 5) Describe quantitative changes under feudalism leading to the leap into capitalism. What was preventing the further development of the "lower" forms of capital?
- 6) How was the transition from feudalism to capitalism both an economic and political change?
- 7) How is capitalist production negated?

CLASS ON LUDWIG FEUERBACH

Reading Material: Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy by Engels

Questions:

- 1) What was the significance and revolutionary character of Hegelian philosophy? What were the two sides of this philosophy? What was the contradiction of the absolute system and the relative method of Hegel? How did dialectical materialism develop from Hegel? (I. - From Hegel to Feuerbach)
- 2) What are the two dialectically opposed answers to the relation of thinking to being. (II)
- 3) What are the origins of religion? What was the relation of the development of science and philosophy? What were the limitations of mechanical materialism? (II)
- 4) How were Hume and Kant refuted? (II)
- 5) Describe Feuerbach's theory of religion and history? How is Feuerbach's morality idealism? How is all morality class morality? (III)
- 6) What is the materialist conception of history? How is it different from the ideas of the "old materialism"? Give examples. Describe the development and growth of religion. What changes has it gone through and why? Why is it against the interests of the proletariat? (IV)

CLASS ON KARL MARX BY LENIN

Reading Material: Karl Marx by V.I. Lenin

Questions:

I. Philosophical Materialism

- 1) In what does the unity of the world lie?
- 2) What is the relationship between freedom and objective law? Give examples from physical science and social science.
- 3) What is the philosophical essence of materialism?

II. Dialectics

1. What does it mean to say that dialectics is the theory of change?
2. How does any process develop?

III. The Materialist Conception of History

1. What does Marx mean when he states the relations of production are indispensable to man's will and also independent of it?
2. What happens when the forces of production become too great for the relations of production?

IV. The Class Struggle

1. How is class struggle the engine of history?

SECOND CLASS

V. Marxist Economic Doctrine

1. How do the two aspects of labour (i.e. concreteness and abstractness) make commodity production and value possible?
2. How does money hide the social character of individual labour?
3. What are the historical limits of the law of value?

(Surplus Value)

- L. How does the formula for commodity circulation CMC differ from the
2. What is the relationship between constant capital and variable capital?
3. What is relative surplus value? How is it increased? What is Absolute surplus value? How is it increased?
4. What is profit? Why does the rate of profit tend to fall?
5. How are the value of a commodity and its price of production different? Is it correct to say that the mass of commodities tend to sell at their values, while individual commodities tend to sell at their price of production? Explain.
6. What are absolute and differential land rent? Can they be eliminated under capitalism?
7. How can the capitalists get away with paying rural proletarians (farm laborers) such low wages?
8. How do you compute the rate of surplus value?
9. What are the historical pre-requisites for capital?
10. What is the distinction between primitive accumulation and the accumulation of capital?
11. Describe the evolution of capitalism in agriculture?

VI. Socialism

1. How does the economic motion of modern society lay the basis for socialism?
2. How will socialism resolve the contradiction between the cities and the countryside?
3. Must the proletariat constitute itself as a nation? Explain.
4. How does the proletariat relate to the question of the state?

VII. Tactics of the class Struggle of the Proletariat

1. How did the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie develop historically?
2. What is the relationship of the economic and the political struggle? How do communists participate in these struggles?
3. What are the limits to the revolutionary nature of the peasantry and the bourgeoisie?

CLASS ON BASIS AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

Reading Material: Basis and Superstructure by Konstantinov

Questions:

- L. What is the basis of society? How does it arise? How does it change?
2. What is the superstructure of society? How does it arise? How does it change?
3. What is the relationship of the superstructure and the basis?
4. What is the role of ideas in society?

SECOND CLASS

1. What is the difference between natural and social sciences?
2. How was it possible for Marx to develop dialectical materialism upon a capitalist basis?
3. What is the relationship of social science to the base and superstructure?
4. Describe the connection between natural science and production. What is the origin and development of science due to?
5. Why can't science and idealism be reconciled? Why does the bourgeoisie try to reconcile them?
6. Does the dictatorship of the proletariat emerge before the establishment of the socialist economic system? What were the peculiar features of the socialist revolution in regards to base and superstructure? What role does the dictatorship of the proletariat have in building the socialist basis?
7. How will socialism "bridge the gap" between science and the productive forces? What is the attitude towards science under capitalism? Under socialism?
8. How does bourgeois art arise? How does proletarian art arise? Why are attitudes towards art part of the superstructure? How or why are there artists who don't represent the ruling class?

CLASS ON PHILOSOPHIC ASPECTS OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

Reading Material: Objective and Subjective Factors in the Revolution (Reprint from Albania Today by the C.L.) by Foto Çami
Anti-Dühring by Engels, Chapter II on Freedom and Necessity

Q Role of the Individual in History by Plekhanov

Questions

1. Discuss the relation between the general principles of freedom and necessity, the transition from utopian to scientific socialism and democratic centralism as the organizing principle of the proletarian revolution.
2. What is the relation of the individual to society, to history, to his class? Do individuals make history? Discuss the relation of the individual and the collective to decision making, action, criticism. How can the individual have the greatest freedom of action? How can a worker be "free" in a capitalist society?
3. How can many become one and still preserve the positive aspects of both the many and the one -- and in fact increase these positive aspects?
4. How does the bourgeois conception of the individual fly in the face of reality? What are the economic origins of this conception and what is its outcome? How is this related to Protestantism?
5. How would you refute the charge that communism restricts individual freedom?
6. What unites the party and makes discipline possible - and action? What is the relation of freedom and necessity in this unity?
7. Describe the relationship of the contradiction of the objective and subjective factors in the revolution and this principle of freedom and necessity in connection with the role of the party and its organizing principle.

CLASS ON MUTUAL PENETRATION OF OF OPPOSITES

Reading Materials: Textbook of Marxist Philosophy, Chapter III, pp. 162-176
Foundations of Leninism by Stalin, Chapter 8, The Party.

In the Chapter on the mutual penetration of opposites from the Textbook of Marxist Philosophy, the following points are raised:

- 1.) That one aspect of a contradiction is connected with its opposite. "Not only does every unity contain within itself polar opposites but these internal opposites are mutually connected with each other; one aspect of a contradiction cannot exist without the other." (p. 162)
- 2.) That the penetration of opposites only occurs under certain conditions. "The mutual penetration of opposites, being the expression of the basic scientific laws underlying the process, becomes possible and is realized only in some particular complex of conditions." (168)
- 3.) That opposites cannot be combined eclectically, or at random. "A combination of opposites that does not issue from a faithful reckoning with objective conditions and facts is an eclectic combination and cannot lead to the victory of the determined trend of development, but instead to its defeat." (p. 170)
- 4.) That internal conditions are the basis of change and external forces the conditions of change. "According to Bukharin there exist forces independent of each other and they act on each other. It is this external collision of differently directed forces that conditions movement. While Lenin requires to know in the first place the internal contradictions of a process, to find the source of self-movement, Bukharin requires the determination of external forces that collide with each other." (p. 172)

APPLY THESE TO A DISCUSSION OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

1. The differences and the connections between the party and the working class.
2. The effects of extreme repression on the links between the party and the working class.

Legal and illegal work.

3. The "dictatorship of the party" vs. the "dictatorship of the class" as an eclectic combination of opposites.
4. The role of external forces, i.e., the effects of other classes on the party and its internal development, the effects of repression and governmental "liberalisation" on party development.

CLASS ON ANTAGONISM AND CONTRADICTION

Reading Materials: Textbook of Marxist Philosophy, Section II, Chaps. III, IV, V, VI.
On Contradiction, Sec. VI, The Place of Antagonism in Contradiction
On the Correct Handling of Contradictions ... Section I, Two different
Types of Contradiction, by Mao Tsetung

Questions:

1. Discuss the difference between antagonism and contradiction. Discuss the different resolution of antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions. What are the results of not understanding these differences? Give concrete examples in your discussion.
2. Discuss the role of environment and external conditions and the change from antagonistic to non-antagonistic, or non-antagonistic to antagonistic contradictions.
3. What were the theories of "identity-difference-opposition-contradiction" and of equilibrium? What incorrect positions do they lead to? How are they refuted?
4. In relation to the points above, discuss briefly the historical development of these contradictions: A) the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. B) the proletariat and the peasantry. C) modern revisionism and Marxism-Leninism, D) Communist mass work in bourgeois controlled working class organisations. E) the labor aristocracy and the industrial proletariat. Discuss the incorrect understanding of the revisionists of the CPUSA and/or the Trotskyites in relation to the antagonistic and non-antagonistic aspects of these contradictions.