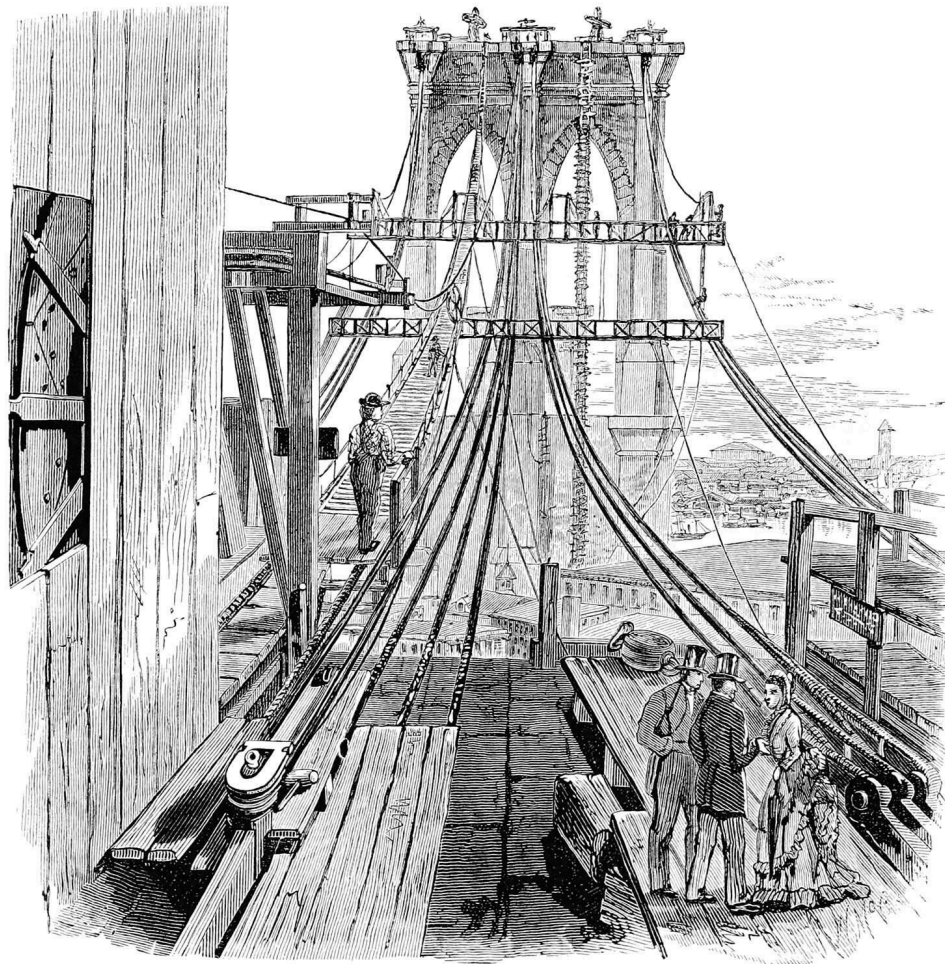


MASS Educational Program

Theories, Concepts, and Key Vocabulary



Week 1: Capitalism, Scientific Socialism, & Mutual Aid

01/18/25

Capitalism - Kurt

Content coming soon

Scientific Socialism - Violet

What Makes the Socialism, Scientific?

It's because we focus on analyzing real-world economic conditions and historical trends rather than idealistic visions of a perfect society. By analyzing history and the economy to understand how society works, we can see that problems come from unfair systems where a small group of people own most things, and the rest work for them. Material change historically happens through worker's struggle movements, in an effort to create a fairer system where all resources (and means) are shared equally

How It Started

Socialism existed before Marx and Lenin, but it was idealistic, and none of the theory was backed up with any kind of tangible examples or any systematic analysis of historical processes. The two philosophers wanted a more applicable way to apply socialism, using real world examples (giving way to distinction of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie). Basically Marx and Lenin wanted to differentiate their ideology from utopian socialists of the time, as the two of them had very literal and historical examples and applications of their ideas

Ok So What Does That Actually Look Like?

The double S in M.A.S.S. stands for Scientific Socialism, which leads many people to ask: what does this mean? To summarize: Socialism becomes scientific when we focus on analyzing real-world economic and material conditions, rather than idealistic visions of a perfect society. This approach studies how societies develop over time, and allows us to see that problems usually come from unfair systems where a small group of people own most things, and the rest work for them. Through material analysis, we know that progress happens through workers' struggle against exploitation to create systems based on collective ownership and shared resources.

1. Analyze Society: The Science-y Part

To be truly helpful you need to know where you are needed and in what capacity. Stepping into communities that are struggling means you sit and listen and ask questions and hear all sides, you don't go in guns blazing assuming you know all their problems and have all the solutions. Observe the world around you, the issues you face, your neighbor's faces, the deli man, the guy asking for change on the corner. These seemingly unconnected personal struggles are parts of larger patterns of struggle.

Study the distribution of things like work, money, and power to uncover larger systematic inequities to understand the root causes of these issues. The Marxist method of analysis is referred to as Dialectical Materialism. Not only do we study and act on the material conditions, but we also study and strategize around the contradictions. Where are the workers strong? Where is the Capitalist class weak? What are the opposing, contradictory needs of each class and how can we exploit them to push humanity forward?

2. Identify The Problems: Figure Out Why?

After observing people's issues (material conditions), think deeply about why. Why is there a guy sleeping on the train? How would you act in public if you hadn't eaten for 2 days? Why isn't there a safety network with resources to prevent people from finding themselves in emotional and vulnerable states because of a lack of basic necessities? These questions point to systemic issues that are rooted in the exploitative nature of capitalism. The connections between these individual struggles and bigger societal failures will guide us toward revolution.

3. Organize The People: Building Collective Power

Build and unite unions, universities, protest groups, and activists. Mobilize collective action to grow support and numbers. Educate yourselves and your neighbors about the interconnectedness of all of our struggles, and the reasons for them (systems of domination and exploitation). Create information documents, and organize rallies, teach-ins, and spaces of community and camaraderie to increase support and reach more people. Educate, agitate, and organize!

4. Change The System: Abolish And Rebuild

Create support networks that operate outside of the current system to build power and raise collective consciousness pending revolution; reliable and intentional mutual aid, community fridges/pantries/toolkits, neighborhood coalitions, etc. Set up community-run health clinics, disease screening, childcare programs that fit the needs of the community, and comprehensive education initiatives. Organize revolutionary workers unions, tenant unions, and student unions to consolidate the power of the proletariat. These programs should eventually be centralized to support a vanguard party. According to Lenin, the purpose of the vanguard party is to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat; a rule of the working class. The change of the ruling class, from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, makes possible the full development of society.

Historical Examples

Paris Commune - French Revolutionary Government

- Radical socialist government that ruled Paris for 2 months in 1871
- Formed by workers, artisans, and other revolutionaries
- Believed in direct democracy, communal land ownership, workers' control over production, separation of church and state
- Had free education program, had workers managing businesses, addressed material conditions of workers by abolishing private property

Issues: No prepared defense, the French Army was able to overtake them, it only lasted 2 months, Ideological splits, infighting

USSR/ Soviet Union - Communist Totalitarian Empire

- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, founded in 1922
- Directly applied Marxist-Leninism to the nationalization of industry & collectivization of agriculture, to abolish private property
- Central planning streamlined all economic activity for the needs of the people, and full state control

Issues: AUTHORITARIAN ALERT, Highly bureaucratic and centralized system, Resorted to extreme repression, state violence, censorship, Lack of innovation, waste + shortages in production

Black Panther Application

The Black Panther Party utilized scientific socialism in their analysis of, and the direct actions done for their community. They saw black children going to school hungry so they created a program where community resources and labor could be used to feed any child. They combined revolutionary ideals with grassroots organizing and came to meet their neighbors where they were having their issues. They believed in both immediate reform and revolutionary change.

Main Tenets

Historical materialism (economic conditions drive social change),

Class struggle (conflict between the working class and the capitalist class)

Dialectical materialism (a philosophy that sees society evolving through contradictions)

A shared belief that capitalism will inevitably be replaced by a socialist society through a revolutionary process led by the proletariat

“a movement based on scientific principles and material conditions rather than abstract ideals”

Mutual Aid - Nathaniel

The term was coined by the anarchist philosopher Peter Kropotkin, in his essay collection Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, which argued that *cooperation* not *competition* drove evolution. Social movements that have built power and won change have all included mutual aid. Two tasks: **meet people's needs** and **mobilize for resistance**.

Mutual Aid is meeting each other's needs because the system won't. People have worked together to survive for all of human history.

1. Meet survival needs and build an understanding of why people don't have what they need
2. Mutual Aid mobilizes people, & builds solidarity, and supports movements. Solidarity is what builds and connects larger-scale movements.

Mutual Aid offers political analysis and breaks stigma, shame, and isolation. Those on the front line of a crisis have the best wisdom to solve problems. Solidarity across issues and populations is what makes movements big and powerful. The idea of having a charitable cause that is disconnected from other aspects of life keeps us in our place. Mutual Aid is participatory solving problems through collective action rather than waiting for saviors.