

Alternatives to Capitalism in the XIX Century: From Early Socialists to the First International

Course Director: Marcello Musto

Class Time: 16:00 - 19:00

Class Location: Synchronous Online

Office Hours: By appointment (Skype: marcello.musto3)

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Course Syllabus

In the XIX Century, in Europe circulate numerous theories that sought both to respond to demands for social justice unanswered by the French Revolution and to correct the dramatic economic imbalances brought about the Industrial Revolution. Many alternative forms of social organization emerged and several theorists outlined a new and more just social order, over and above the political changes that had come with the end of the *Ancien Regime*.

These theories – labelled in a disparaging way as “utopian” – will be critically reconsidered, with particular attention to the thinkers who: 1) took for granted that the adoption of a new social model based on strict social equality could be the solution for all the problems of society (Babeuf, D ezamy, Weitling); 2) believed that it was sufficient to conceive theoretically reform projects in order to change the world (Saint-Simon, Fourier); 3) focused on promoting small alternative communities in order to spread socialist principles (Owen, Cabet).

After 1848 and until Paris Commune of 1871, new and more economically developed ideas emerged. In the second part of the seminar, students will focus on the different tendencies of the International Working Men’s Association to overthrow of the existing social-economic system, such as Proudhon’s mutualism, British trade unions’ reformism, Marx’s anticapitalism, Lassalle’s state socialism and Bakunin’s anarchism. These ideas will also be analyzed in light of contemporary issues of our times.

Schedule of Classes and Readings

Class 1 – Fri 12 Feb:

Responses to Capitalism

Required Readings:

Carl Landauer, *European Socialism*, University of California, pp. 21-35 (Chap. I: “The Three Anticapitalistic Movement”, sections 1, 2 and 3).

Available through my Academia.edu page [it is necessary to make an account to download]:

<https://yorku.academia.edu/MarcelloMusto/English>

Marcello Musto, "Communism", in Marcello Musto (Ed.), *The Marx Revival: Key Concepts and New Critical Interpretations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 24-50.

Additional Readings:

Gregory Claeys, *Searching for Utopia: The History of an Idea*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011, pp. 113-140 (Chap. 8: "Ideal Cities" and Chap. 9: "Utopia as Community").

Charles Fourier, *Design for Utopia*, pp. 76-81, 120-30, 163-70, 203-4.

Robert Owen, *A New View of Society* (Essay Two: 'The Principles of the Former Essay Continued, and Applied in Part to Practice').

Class 2 – Mon 15 Feb: Saint-Simon and the Birth of Industrialism

Claude de Saint-Simon, Selection of *The Organizer* [1819], *Industrial System* [1821] and *On Social Organization* [1825].

Additional Readings:

George D.H. Cole, *Socialist Thought, Volume I: The Forerunners 1789-1850*, pp. 37-61 (Chap. IV: "Saint-Simon" and Chap. V "The Saint-Simonians").

Henri de Saint-Simon, *Henri Saint-Simon (1760-1825): Selected Writings on Science, Industry, and Social Organization*. Croom Helm. 1975.

Class 3 – Fri 19 Feb: Marx on Exploitation and Class Struggle

Required Readings:

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>

Available through link:

Karl Marx, *Capital* (extract: Chapter, 1, Section 4: "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof")

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf>

Additional Readings:

Available online through the York library:

Marcello Musto, "Revisiting Marx's Concept of Alienation", *Socialism and Democracy*, vol. 24 (2010), no. 3: 79-101.

Class 4 – Mon 22 Feb: The International Working Men's Association and Global Solidarity

Required Readings:

Available through my Academia.edu page [it is necessary to make an account to download]:

<https://yorku.academia.edu/MarcelloMusto/English>

Marcello Musto, "Introduction", in Marcello Musto (ed.), *Workers Unite! The International 150 Years Later* (Editor), London–New York: Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 1-68.

Additional Readings:

Available through link:

<https://marcellomusto.org/images/Workers-Unite-The-International-150-Years-Later-New-York--Bloomsbury-2014-336-pages.pdf>

Marcello Musto (ed.), *Workers Unite! The International 150 Years Later* (Editor), London–New York: Bloomsbury, 2014, documents 1-4, 7, 11-3, 29, 34, 44, 53, 58-63, 65-80.