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Course notes from

'The evolution of property and how it rules the world'

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PART ONE	THE EVOLUTION OF PROPERTY: Explanation of the nature of property as a social relation, and its historical evolution (which is still going on)
Class 01	Engels on beginning again. Course outline. What is property? Property is not a thing. The case of the white rhino. Are female animals also territorial? Behaviour of the titi monkeys. Hypothetical taking of another's item of property. Class to attempt a definition of property.
Class 02	Wittgenstein: noticing what is before our eyes. Western philosophical speculation before modern anthropology: Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke. Summary of current anthropology by Fukuyama. Distribute extracts from <i>The German Ideology</i> by the young Marx and Engels. Bentham on property and law.
Class 03	Groups discuss Bentham on property and law, followed by plenary discussion. Property among the San and Khoi (Penn and Mostert). Malinowski on the Trobriand islanders (the canoe example). E. Adamson Hoebel on the emergence of law, and the distinction between custom and law.
Class 04	Round off discussion from last time: Does property depend on law? On enforcement by a state? What is wealth? (2 meanings - William Petty). Real objects of property (things) can also be abstract (Hegel). Did intellectual property exist before the state? (Lowie) Four questions for next time.
Class 05	Milanovic slide on global inequality. Return to two meanings of 'wealth': objects of utility and socially recognised entitlements thereto. Report-backs on the four questions posed last time. How should 'property' be defined? Hoebel passage: strengths and weaknesses. Outline of the concept of property (text). Theses on 'What is property?'
Class 06	Introduce the extracts from <i>The German Ideology</i> ; begin reading in class. Material conditions and production. Materialist conception of historical development. Some basic concepts: 'productive forces'; technology and the 'division of labour'; 'surplus'; 'exploitation'. Watch Bronowski video 'The Harvest of the Seasons'.
Class 07	Groups discuss paras 10-20 of <i>German Ideology</i> extracts.
Class 08	Passage from <i>The German Ideology</i> on 'history'. Discussion on concepts 'productive forces', 'relations of production', 'division of labour', conflict of 'town and country'. Defects in historical schema sketched by Marx and Engels. Surplus, what it is and why it provides foundation for slavery etc. Discuss the video watched in Class 06 and pages from Saggs, <i>The Babylonians</i> .
Class 09	Begin discussion of pages from Shillington, <i>History of Africa</i> , distributed previously. Groups discuss paras 21-28 of <i>German Ideology</i> extracts.

Class 10	Complete the discussion of Shillington pages. Ancient Ghana. Answer questions distributed by email. Situate the period by reference to a timeline. Land and slavery in ancient Rome. Difference with feudal serfdom. Revisit schema of Marx and Engels. Reeves video on Medieval Society. Hand out chapter on the age of merchant capitalism from Rubin's <i>History of Economic Thought</i> .
Class 11	Presentation and discussion on feudalism, and why we are studying it. Groups discuss paras 29-42 of <i>German Ideology</i> extracts.
Class 12	Presentation and discussion on the age of merchant capitalism in Europe, based on Rubin's chapter on merchant capitalism handed out in Class 10.
Class 13	Why the Islamic empire did not lead to capitalism. Link between Atlantic slave trade and racism. Reading and discussion of paras 43-54 of <i>German Ideology</i> extracts. Vagabondage and 'surplus population'. 'Natural capital' explained.
Class 14	3 groups each discuss and answer to the class a question arising from paras 43-54 of <i>German Ideology</i> extracts. Table of topics to pursue. Simple diagram of production (inputs/output). Change from 'handicraft' to 'manufacture'. Then 'machinofacture' and its implications. And on to 'robofacture'...
Class 15	Contradiction resulting from machines increasing output and reducing labour required (some questions posed for future consideration). Groups read extracts from Adam Smith and Allyn Young on technical aspect of division of labour and its dependence on extent of market. BBC film on automated milk factory.
Class 16	Discussion of Adam Smith and Allyn Young extracts, and milk factory film. 1972 article by Robert M. Young. The beneficial material consequences of technology, and the 'Nordhaus' effect. Marx (1849) and the electric railway engine. Lenin (1913) and technological advances. Return to the two meanings of wealth and the increasing inequality of entitlements. Groups then read and discuss paras 55-61 of <i>German Ideology</i> extracts.
Class 17	Groups read and discuss paras 62-74 of <i>German Ideology</i> extracts. What drove colonisation? Protection and free trade. Continued imperialist rivalry and war. Return to meaning of 'capital'; the two meanings of wealth. Diagram of physical production. Who owns the product? Surplus — who owns it? Diagram of simple and expanded reproduction. What is 'capitalism'?
Class 18	Groups complete reading up to para 74 of <i>German Ideology</i> extracts. Recap, using diagram of simple and expanded reproduction. Indirect claims on surplus. Introduction to interest and 'ground rent' (return to this is a later class).
Class 19	BBC film on Industrial Revolution, followed by critical discussion. Extracts from Engels's <i>Condition of the English Working Class</i> . Some beneficial 'Nordhaus' effects from the development.
Class 20	Recap on Industrial Revolution. Consider paras 71-72 of <i>German Ideology</i> extracts: private property as a 'fetter'. Had it reached end of road with large-scale industry? Schema of Marx and Engels: its defects. Global production for exchange. Decline of industrial working class. Continued evolution of private property. Return to whether we should speak of 'capital' before capitalism. Interest and ground rent in more detail. Money — what is it, and how did it arise? Money as unit of account.
Class 21	Continue on money — what is it, and how did it arise? Mesopotamian clay tokens. Rai stones of Yap. Development of metal money and paper money. Role of the state. Spanish silver and gold. Potosí. The <i>mit'a</i> system of forced labour. Inflation in Europe; failure to develop Spain.
Class 22	(Notes combined with those for Class 23)
Class 23	Companies and shareholding: significance and how it works. Company as separate legal person, its property separate from shareholders. 'Assets' and 'liabilities'. Types of companies. 'Securities' and securities exchanges. Dividends. Holding

	companies and subsidiaries. Illustrations of this. Global spread of transnational corporations, investments and productive operations. Share valuation. Unit trusts. Bank deposits. Flow of surplus into the financial economy.
Class 24	Recap on flow of surplus. Making sense of the financial sector. 'Real rights' and 'personal rights'. Partington's explanation of net assets of society as distinct from net assets of individual. Real and derivative entitlements. Cession and transfer of personal rights. Financial 'paper'. 'Securitisation'. 'Junk' bonds and 'subprime' mortgages. Onset of the 2008 financial crisis. Illustrated by 'The Big Short'.
PART TWO	THE ENGINE OF INEQUALITY: Value theory: how it is that those who have more automatically get more
Class 25(a)	Supply, demand and the price mechanism: the technical aspect. Shifts in supply and demand curves. How (ideally) the market spontaneously organises and rationalises inputs and outputs. 'Equilibrium' – what does it mean and is it real? Is it nevertheless analytically helpful? Competition and market power.
Class 25(b) & Class 26	The 'engine of inequality' – global and local. Where surplus is generated and how it is appropriated. The concept of 'value': distinction between utility (value-in-use) and economic value (value-in-exchange). Why we need value theory. How the material product and surplus are 'valorised'. The non-independence of enterprises. Allocation of the <i>social</i> surplus product to enterprises contributing to it, via the price mechanism. From this initial appropriation, portion distributed to interest and ground-rent, leaving net profit of enterprise (before tax). Theories of value and surplus-value: a short history. The mercantilist theory of profit (buying cheap and selling dear): why it fails. The Physiocrats: their achievements and the basic fallacy of the 'land' theory of value. Adam Smith and the 'labour' theory of value: a flaw at the root.
Class 27	Value theory in Hegel. Introduction to Marx's 'labour' theory of value. Marx's key concepts. How Marx explained surplus value and profit. Marx's concept of exploitation. The formula: $c+v+s$. Two-column diagram illustrating Marx's conception.
Class 28	Critique presented of Marx's 'labour' theory of value. Discussion commenced. Handout of introduction to 'property' conception of value.
Class 29	Continued discussion of 'labour' theory of value, and explanation of 'property' conception of value.
Class 30	Continued discussion of value theory and its implications. Video: <i>The Tax-free Tour</i> .
PART THREE	WHAT CAN BE DONE? Outline of basic elements of program to deal with the problem
Class 31	Brief introduction to crisis theory. Systemic crisis the outcome of systemic inequality. Basic argument of Marx in this regard (not dependent on 'labour' theory of value) borne out. 'Three cardinal facts of capitalist production'. Additional effects of automation. Uninvested cash pile of \$50 trillion. Programmatic schema of Marx and Engels in context of large-scale industry and the power of the industrial working class superseded by subsequent development. Initial success and eventual failure of Russian Revolution; root cause of collapse of Soviet Union and abandonment of central planning. Globalisation, and the current national-state based reaction. Task of achieving social appropriation of the <i>global</i> surplus. Main components of a sustainable program to advance this. How this program deals with the property relation and addresses the 'engine of inequality' while retaining production for exchange and the market mechanism at its base.