



What is Marxism–Leninism?

Unit 1: Introduction

Introduction

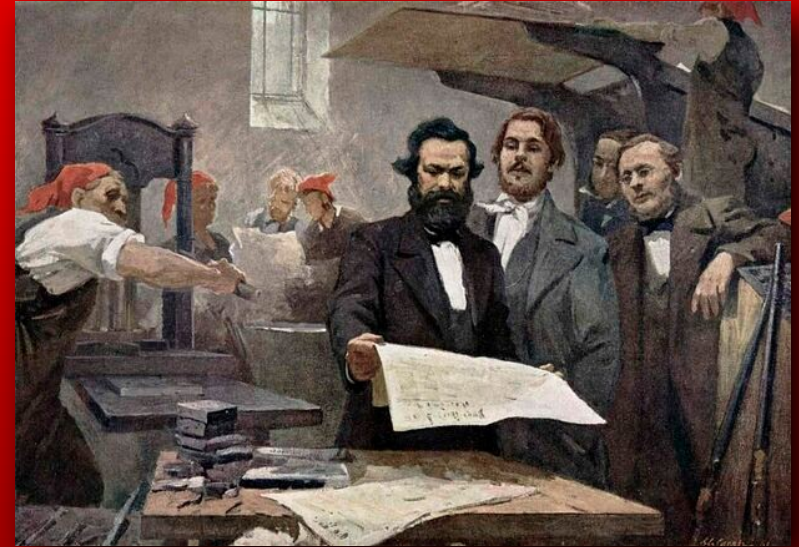
- Marxism–Leninism is a scientific framework for understanding society, history, and reality.
- Marxism–Leninism is the leading revolutionary theory of the working class.
- Marxism–Leninism gives us a concrete understanding of capitalism and revolution.



“Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.” —Vladimir Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*

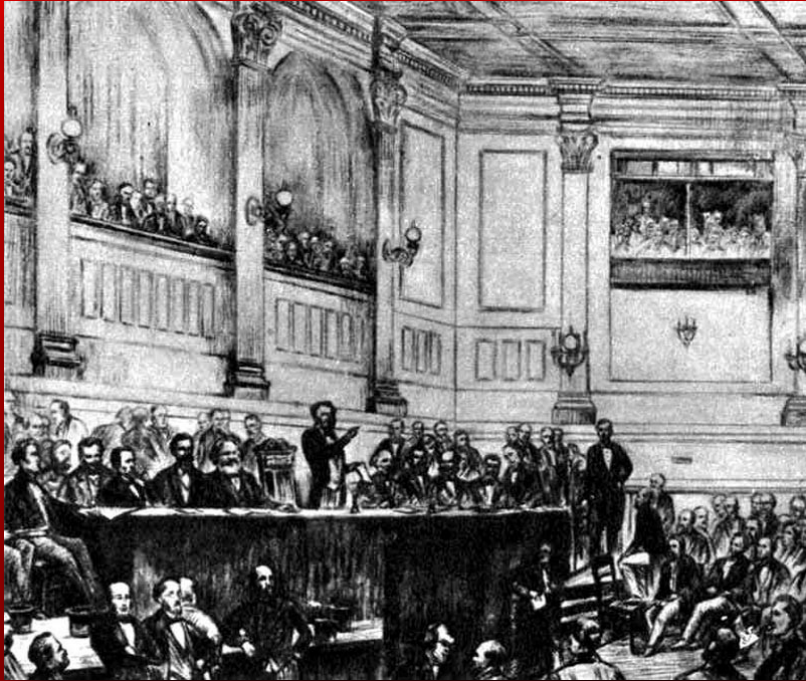
How was Marxism founded?

- Marxism has its origins in the classical Marxism of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.
- Marxism developed from French proto-socialism, English economics, and German philosophy.
- Classical Marxism developed into Marxism–Leninism with the contributions of Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin.
- Marxism–Leninism is a higher stage of Marxism. It augments the existing body of Marxist theory to advance it, without distorting it.



“Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. [...] Marx and Engels pursued their activities in the pre-revolutionary period (we have the proletarian revolution in mind), when developed imperialism did not yet exist, in the period of the proletarians’ preparation for revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet an immediate practical inevitability. But Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the Soviets.” —Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*

What are the components of Marxism–Leninism?



- **Dialectical and historical materialism:** The philosophy of Marxism.
- **Marxist economics:** The economic aspects of Marxism enumerate how a mode of production functions and its laws.
- **Scientific socialism:** Other socialist and communist tendencies existed before, yet Marxism is the first scientific one.

“The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true. It is comprehensive and harmonious, and provides men with an integral world outlook irreconcilable with any form of superstition, reaction, or defence of bourgeois oppression. It is the legitimate successor to the best that man produced in the nineteenth century, as represented by German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism.” —Vladimir Lenin, *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*

What are the theories of Marxism–Leninism?

The theories developed by Lenin and Stalin include:

- The *vanguard party* and *democratic centralism*.
- *Socialism in one country, intensification and forms of class struggle under socialism*.
- An analysis of *imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism*.
- *Anti-revisionism*.



“Theory is the experience of the working-class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect. Of course, theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory. But theory can become a tremendous force in the working-class movement if it is built up in indissoluble connection with revolutionary practice; for theory, and theory alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inner relation of surrounding events; for it, and it alone, can help practice to realise not only how and in which direction classes are moving at the present time, but also how and in which direction they will move in the near future.” —Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*



Concluding question:

How is Marxism–Leninism unique and superior compared to other “socialist” tendencies? (anarchism, Maoism, etc.)