

**Prelim Examination in Class Analysis and Historical Change  
January 2001**

**General guidelines for answers**

- 1. Be sure to read the questions carefully. None of the questions are “trick questions”, but students often fail to answer the specific question asked.**
- 2. Be sure to cite specific authors and specific works where relevant for each of the questions and identify what specifically they say on the issues. We are not interested in long lists of vague citations of references, but we do want evidence that you know the relevant literature.**
- 3. Organize your answers clearly. It is often a good idea to first prepare an outline.**
- 4. Don't “beat around the bush” with long introductions and preambles; get to the point and answer the questions in a crisp, systematic manner.**

**MORNING EXAMINATION**

**Answer one question from Part I and one from Part II**

**Part I. Classical Marxism**

**Question 1**

The theory of epochal historical change -- historical materialism -- has long been considered a core element of Marxism. Within this theory, the specific transition from feudalism to capitalism has occupied a particularly important place, since this was the historical transition which provided the greatest amount of empirical evidence. Discuss the debates on the transition from feudalism to capitalism in terms of their bearing on historical materialism. Be sure to discuss the contributions of specific authors.

**Question 2**

The labor theory of value has traditionally been viewed as a cornerstone of Marxism as a social theory. More recently, Marxists have tended to either ignore the labor theory of value or explicitly abandon it as an analytical tool. Give a brief description of the traditional Marxist understanding of the labor theory of value and discuss the contemporary critique of these concepts. What implications, if any, does this have for Marxist class analysis. Discuss the views of specific authors on these matters.

**Part II. Theory of the State**

**Question 3.**

Rumors of social democracy's demise may have been overdrawn, but the modern welfare state is clearly under challenge. After 15-20 years of talking about this, what conclusions can we draw on the future of the welfare state, and the role of the working class within it?

**Question 4**

There has been considerable discussion recently of state autonomy, state strength, and state capacity in studies of economic and social development in non-core economies. What is meant by the concepts of autonomy, strength, and capacity in this context? To what extent are the concepts distinct, and to what extent do they overlap? Discuss with clear reference to empirical materials and cases. You may find it useful to distinguish between dependency or world-system, Marxian, and other approaches