

# Sri Lankan IYSSE public lecture: An Introduction to Historical Materialism

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (Sri Lanka)  
18 October 2023

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Sri Lanka has been invited by the Political Science Student Union of the University of Peradeniya to hold a public lecture series on Marxism. The first lecture, entitled “An Introduction to Historical Materialism,” will be held at the Political Science Department of the University of Peradeniya on Thursday, October 26 at 4 p.m.

Historical Materialism is the scientific theory of social development developed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels through their works from the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) to the three volumes of *Das Kapital*. The basic propositions of this theory were presented succinctly by Karl Marx in the preface to his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859):

“In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. ... At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms—with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution.”

The present advanced social-political-economic global crisis of capitalism can only be analysed comprehensively through this theory. The economic system solely based on profit extraction through extracting surplus value from the working class has created unprecedented social misery in the history of humanity despite its unprecedented technological

achievements and development of the productive forces.

The US and other imperialist powers have responded to the unprecedented economic, political and social crisis of capitalism by driving towards a catastrophic world war. At the same time, governments around the world are waging a class war to impose the burden of the economic crisis onto working people. That is provoking an upsurge in the class struggle.

As Historical Materialism demonstrates, the only social force capable of advancing a progressive solution to this immense crisis is the international working class. That is the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system based on the nation state system and the private ownership of means of production and the construction of socialism globally based on the common ownership by the working class of the means of production.

The IYSSE lecture will elaborate on these basic points of Historical Materialism. We urge workers, students, youth and academics to attend our lecture and participate in this important discussion on revolutionary theory and the tasks of the working class.

**Venue:** Lecture Hall No. 86, Political Science Department, University of Peradeniya.

**Date and time:** October 26 at 4.00 p.m.

The IYSSE takes the COVID-19 pandemic situation seriously and requests all participants at our meeting to wear KN95 masks for the health safety of themselves and others.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**