

Animals at Work Under Capitalism

Marxist Education Project

Spring 2023

A discussion and reading group on the central role of human and nonhuman animal labor in the capitalist economy, both historically and today. The class is a sequel to the MEP's 2022 "Animals and Capitalism" sessions, this time with a specific focus on labor. What are the anthropocentric premises underlying mainstream understandings of labor in Marxist theory? How might we expand our thinking to include the multiple forms of nonhuman labor necessary for capitalism? What kind of labor do nonhuman animals provide in production, and on what cultural, ideological and economic bases is work divided among people, nonhuman animals and machines? What new forms of animal labor are emerging (emotional, reproductive, entertainment...)? How do nonhuman animals rebel against their exploitation, and how might a revolutionary multispecies labor movement take shape?

The class will discuss readings on the work of nonhuman animals in the history of capitalism, Marxism and theories of labor, and related topics. We will explore how exploitation of animal bodies of all species is bound up in the overall development of capitalism. (Participation in the 2022 class is not required.)

Assigned readings are available as PDF's in the group's Dropbox folder.

Contact: Terike Haapoja mail@terikehaapoja.net

Session 1 March 29 – Introductions

Syllabus, practicalities

Session 2 April 5 – A multispecies working class

Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka: *Introduction – Animal Labour and the Quest for Interspecies Justice* (In: Blattner et al, *Animal Labour: New Frontier of Interspecies Justice?*)

Jason C. Hribal: *Animals, Agency and Class: Writing the History of Animals from Below*

Jason C. Hribal: *Animals Are Part of the Working Class*

Session 3 April 12 – Animals in Marxist theory

18 Thesis on Marxism and Animal Liberation

Phillip Drake: *Marxism and the Nonhuman Turn*

David Sztybel: *Marxism and Animal Rights*

Alyssa Battistoni: *Bringing in the Work of Nature: from Natural Capital to Hybrid Labor*

Session 4 April 19 – Beasts of Burden

Jocelyn Porcher: *The Work of Animals: A challenge to the Social Sciences*

Omar Bachour: *Alienation and Animal Labour* (In: *Animal Labour: New Frontier of Interspecies Justice?*)

Guests: Artist Eero Yli-Vakkuri and journalist Pietari Kylmälä discuss their long term work on the labor of horses .

Session 5 April 26– The labor of birthing beings

Gabriel Rosenberg: *How Meat Changed Sex*

Jana Canavan: *Intersectional Oppression Across Species Boundaries – Swedish Dairy Production as Force of Oppressive Ideology and Practice*

Jocelyn Porcher and Tiphaine Schmitt: *Dairy Cows: Workers in the Shadows?*

Blanchette, Alex: *Chapter Four: Stimulation* (from: Porkopolis)

Session 6 May 3– Unions, immigrant work and meat packing

Schollosser, Eric / *The Atlantic: Why It's Immigrants Who Pack Your Meat?*

Jan Dutkiewicz, Astra Taylor and Troy Vetteze: *The Covid-19 Pandemic shows that We Must Transform the Global Food System*

Jocelyne Porcher: *The Relationship Between Workers and Animals in the Pork Industry: A Shared Suffering*

Alasdair Cochrane: *Labor Rights for Animals*

Guest: artist Marina Zurkow talks about *A Manifesto For A Multispecies Union*, a collaborative project by her and researcher John Hultgren.

Session 7 May 10 – What is good work?

Alasdair Cochrane: *Good Work for Animals*

TBD

Session 8 May 17 – Conclusions

Troy Vetteze: *A Marxist Theory of Extinction*

Astra Taylor, Sunaura Taylor: *Our Animals, Ourselves*

Supplementary Readings and Materials

Articles (PDF's in dropbox)

Donaldson, Sue and Kymlicka, Will: *Animal Labour in a Post-Work Society* (In: Blattner, Charlotte et al., eds., *Animal Labour: A New Frontier of Interspecies Justice?*)

Heinrich, Michael, *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital*

Hribal, Jason C. *Animals Are Part of the Working Class Reviewed*

La Berge, Leigh Claire: *Marx for Cats (introduction chapter)*

Marx, *Capital-Voll1-ch15_Machinery*

Maurizi, Marco, *Beyond Nature*

Schleiber, Laura and Fischer, Dan: *Animal Liberation is Climate Justice*

Weil, Kari, *A Report on the Animal Turn*

Weisberg, Zipporah, *Animal Repression – Speciesism as Pathology*

Other resources:

Abrell, Elan, *Saving Animals: Multispecies Ecologies of Rescue and Care*

Anderson, J.L. , *Capitalist Pigs: Pigs, Pork, and Power in America*

Atkins, Peter, ed., *Animal Cities: Beastly Urban Histories*

Blanchette, Alex: *Porkopolis – American Animality, Standardized Life, and the Factory Farm*

Blattner, Charlotte et al., eds., *Animal Labour: A New Frontier of Interspecies Justice?*

Cochrane, Alasdair, *An Introduction to Animals and Political Theory*

Collin, Sarat, *Animal Resistance in the Global Capitalist Era (The Animal Turn)*

Cronon, William, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*

Despret, Vinciane, *Do Animals Work? Creating Pragmatic Narratives*

Harrison, Ruth, *Animal Machines. The New Factory Farming Industry (1964)*

La Berge, Leigh Claire, *Marx for Cats (forthcoming, 2022)*

Moore, Jason, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*

Nibert, David, *Animal Oppression and Capitalism (2 volumes)*

Porcher, Jocelyne, *The Ethics of Animal Labor - A Collaborative Utopia*

Puar, Jasbir K. and Livingstone, Julie, *Interspecies*

Saraiva, Tiago, *Fascist Pigs - Technoscientific Organisms and the History of Fascism*

Shukin, Nicole, *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*

Robichaud, Andrew A., *Animal City: The Domestication of America*

Scott, James C., *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States*

Warren, Wilson, *Tied to the Great Packing Machine: The Midwest and Meatpacking*

White, Sam, *"From Globalized Pig Breeds to Capitalist Pigs: A Study in Animal Cultures and Evolutionary History"*