Guidelines for Reviewing

*Historical Materialism* (2011-2014)

**TIMELINESS OF THE REVIEWS**
Deadlines for returning reviews are taken seriously at *HM*, because we know that timely feedback is important to our authors.

- **Quick Feedback**: We all know how anxiety-provoking the wait for a decision letter can be. The sooner you return your review, the sooner the authors can hear from us about the fate of their submission, and the more the authors will appreciate *HM*.
- **Late Reviews**: If one reviewer out of three is late, it can impede the ‘on-time’ work of the other reviewers. We hope you will be able to review the paper as requested and return the review within the expected time frame. If, however, you cannot make a review deadline, please let the Action Editor know. We would prefer that you retain manuscripts for which your review will be only slightly delayed (i.e., two weeks or less) because it takes time to find alternative reviewers. If occasionally you feel that you will be seriously late with a review (more than 2 weeks after the due date), please notify the Action Editor immediately, so that a substitute reviewer can be found.

**DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEWS**
It is important that authors learn from and benefit from the reviews. It is never enough just to say that you do or do not like a paper.

- **Be Specific**: It is crucial that you tell the author what the problems are and how these problems can be addressed (where possible). This advice should be in the form of specific comments, reactions, and suggestions. The more specific you can be, the more helpful your review. It is also helpful to the author (and Action Editor) if you number your points or paragraphs to facilitate communication in the Action Editor's letter.
- **Be Constructive**: Even if a paper appears beyond salvation, it is still important that your review be constructive. If the problems cannot be fixed in the current study, try to suggest how the authors could improve their chances in their next research venture.
- **Identify Strengths**: While it is important to identify critical weaknesses, it is equally important to identify major strengths. One of the most important tasks for a reviewer is to distinguish between limitations that can be fixed in a revision and those that definitely cannot.
- **Consider Contribution**: Empirical correctness are obvious criteria for a successful submission, but there is no point in our publishing a technically
correct and coherent article if the contribution it offers is not meaningful, interesting, or important.

- **Non-English Native Authors**: You might be asked to review a submission from authors whose native language is not English. In such cases it will be important for you to distinguish between the quality of the writing and the quality of the ideas that the writing conveys.

- **Uncertain Issues**: If there are issues about which you are not sure in your review, you might temper your criticisms with an expression of your uncertainty.

**FRIENDLY REVIEWS**

It is important that you try to be "author-friendly" in the tone of your reviews. Someone has put a lot of time and effort into every submission we get, so it is important to treat authors and their work with respect, even if you disagree or find fault with what they have written.

- **Personalized Writing Style**: When you write your review, we ask that you try to personalize your writing style, for instance by using "you" rather than "the author," and "your paper" rather than "the author’s paper," in writing your review.

- **Don’t Comment on Authors**: Your comments should always be about the paper, not about the authors. Be tough on the issues, not on the authors.

- **Support**: Always try to find something supportive to say; authors are more likely to appreciate what you think they did wrong if they think you appreciate what they did right. Sandwiching the negative criticism between complimentary comments makes it easier for the author to accept the criticism.

**POINTERS ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE REVIEW**

Below are a few pointers on what to look for in a manuscript.

- **Theory**: Does the paper engage with and extend a body of knowledge or theories in a meaningful way? Does the paper inform or improve our understanding of existing empirical or theoretical knowledge? Are concepts clearly explained?

- **Literature Review**: Does the paper cite appropriate literature and provide proper credit to existing work on the topic? If not, can you offer important references that the author has missed? Is the paper over-referenced or under-referenced?

- **Evidence or Contribution**: Does the paper make a new and meaningful contribution to the Marxist theory, empirical knowledge, or politics? Is the topic important and interesting in terms of advancing a critical tradition of Marxism?

- **Miscellaneous**: Is the length of the paper commensurate with what it actually contributes? If applicable, can you say something about the writing style that could improve the paper? Is there anything else you could think of that can improve the paper in any way?

**THANK YOU**

These are intended as general guidelines for reviewing. If you have specific
questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Action Editor or other editors. Reviewing is a crucial contribution you make to the progress of our field. We, therefore, appreciate your willingness to take time away from your own research, writing and teaching to review and assist the work of others.