

# **The Communist Manifesto & Its Relevance Today**

**Karl Marx &  
Frederick Engels**

The prefaces to the Communist Manifesto have been taken from Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1969) with the exception of the Preface to the English edition of 1888 which is from Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1990).

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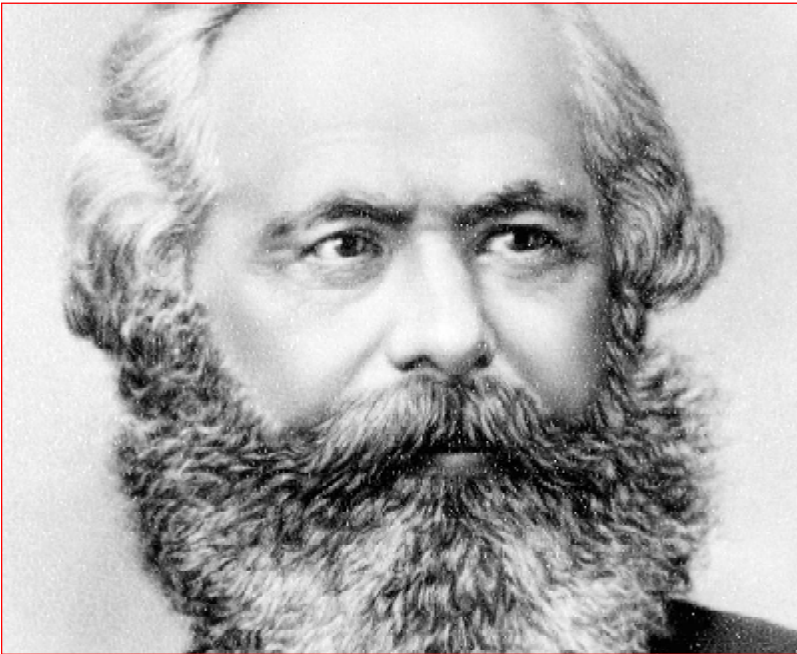
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Karl Marx (1818-83)

# Introduction

*By Doug Lorimer*

The Communist Manifesto is the most famous of all documents produced by the socialist movement. It appeared in February 1848, on the eve of an explosion of popular revolutionary struggles in France and Germany — revolutionary mass movements that the Manifesto had foreseen. The authors of the document, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, had started their political lives as radical democrats, fighters for constitutional rights in Germany, and especially for freedom of the press, popular representation and abolition of feudal privileges. In the mid-1840s these two German intellectuals had evolved into militant socialists, or communists as they called themselves — advocates of a classless society based on common ownership of productive wealth to be achieved through the revolutionary overthrow of the existing capitalist political and economic order. The Communist Manifesto was a concise summary of their views.

## The central idea in Marx's theory

The Manifesto's authors were not the first to develop and advance a vision of a classless society. As they themselves later noted, earlier thinkers had developed “in the 16th and 17th centuries, Utopian pictures of ideal social conditions; in the 18th, actual communistic theories ... [in which] it was not simply class privileges that were to be abolished, but class distinctions themselves”.<sup>1</sup> The great achievement of Marx and Engels was to discern the real historical process by which socialism could become a material reality. That is, they created a *scientific* socialism. “To make a science of socialism”, Engels pointed out in his 1880 pamphlet *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*

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Doug Lorimer (1953-2013) was a longtime leader of the Democratic Socialist Party. An account of his political life can be found at [www.greenleft.org.au/content/vale-doug-lorimer-veteran-socialist-1953-2013](http://www.greenleft.org.au/content/vale-doug-lorimer-veteran-socialist-1953-2013). This introduction was written for the 1998 first Resistance Books edition of the Communist Manifesto.

“it had first to be placed on a real basis”.<sup>2</sup>

This “real basis” was the materialist conception of history, which demonstrated that socialism would not be brought about through the moral persuasion of all humanity to a vision of a classless society, but through the conquest of political power by a definite class, the proletariat. This was the central conclusion of the first work in which Marx and Engels elaborated the principles of the science of historical materialism — *The German Ideology*.

Written between November 1845 and April 1846, *The German Ideology*, which was never published in Marx and Engels’ lifetimes, pointed out that it is the contradiction between the development of humanity’s productive forces and outdated forms of ownership of the productive forces that is the material basis of the change from one social system to another. It pointed out that this objective contradiction was the root cause of the class struggle between the wage-earning proletariat and their capitalist exploiters, a struggle that could only be resolved by a proletarian, communist revolution.

Earlier in his 1845 *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx had formulated the idea that through revolutionary practice human beings change not only their material circumstances but themselves. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels stressed that a qualitatively new social order can only be brought into being through a social revolution. The revolution is necessary, they wrote, “not only because the *ruling* class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew”.<sup>3</sup>

The first step in the communist social revolution, *The German Ideology* explained, was the conquest of political power by the proletariat. It formulated this idea thus: “Every class which is aiming at domination, even when its domination, as is the case with the proletariat, leads to the abolition of the old form of society in its entirety and of domination in general, must first conquer political power.”<sup>4</sup>

It is often assumed that the central contribution that Marx made to socialist thinking was the idea that history is the product of the struggle between social classes. However, Marx himself disputed this view. In a letter written on March 5, 1852, Marx explained exactly what was distinctively new in the doctrine that has subsequently borne his name:

As to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering either the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to demonstrate: (1) that the *existence of classes* is merely linked to *particular historical phases in the*

*development of production*, (2) that class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*.<sup>5</sup>

Lenin, who quoted this statement in his brilliant August 1917 commentary on Marx's theory of proletarian revolution, *The State and Revolution*, remarked that "in these words, Marx succeeded in expressing with striking clarity, firstly, the chief and radical difference between his theory and that of the foremost and most profound thinkers of the bourgeoisie; and secondly, the essence of his theory of the state".<sup>6</sup>

Lenin went on to explain that it is not correct to say that the main point in Marx's theory is the class struggle. This had been taught before Marx by the ideologists of the rising capitalist class and was, generally speaking, acceptable to the bourgeoisie. What Marx taught that was new, and unacceptable to bourgeois thinkers, was the recognition that the class struggle in modern, i.e., capitalist, society can be ended only through the conquest of state power by the exploited class of wage-workers. This, Lenin wrote, constituted the central idea in Marx's political doctrine.

While not formulated as such in *The German Ideology*, this theoretical conclusion defined the real task of socialists which, as Lenin put it in 1899, was "not to draw up plans for refashioning society, not to preach to the capitalists and their hangers-on about improving the lot of the workers, not to hatch conspiracies, *but to organise the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organisation of a socialist society*".<sup>7</sup>

In a letter written to a Danish socialist in 1889, Engels pointed out that "the proletariat cannot conquer political power, the only door to the new society, without violent revolution. For the proletariat to be strong enough to win on the decisive day it must — and Marx and I have advocated this ever since 1847 — form a separate party distinct from all others and opposed to them, a conscious class party".<sup>8</sup>

## **Making contact with radical workers**

Having found themselves in 1844-45 in agreement on some basic principles of scientific socialism and having elaborated these in more detail through their joint work in 1845-46 in drafting *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels set out in early 1846 to attempt, as Engels later put it, "to win over the European and in the first place the German proletariat".<sup>9</sup>

In early 1846, they set up the Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee, the aim of which was to establish literary contact with radical working-class and socialist leaders throughout Western Europe and to facilitate the dissemination of scientific socialist ideas among them. The committee's membership was made up of a small

number of emigre Germans, included the former Breslau teacher Wilhelm Wolff and the former Prussian artillery officer Joseph Weydemeyer.

Marx and Engels sought to set up similar committees elsewhere, particularly in Germany. Through Wolff they established contact with communist-inclined intellectuals in Silesia, while Weydemeyer made efforts to establish communist correspondence committees in Westphalia and the Rhine province.

In charting a tactical line to be followed by the communists in Germany, Marx and Engels advised them to support the bourgeois demands for a democratic constitution, freedom of the press, assembly, etc., for if these demands were achieved “a new era will dawn for communist propaganda”.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the communists had to take an active part in mass action against the feudal absolutist regimes in Germany and help the victory of bourgeois-democratic revolutions there so as to create more favourable conditions for the proletariat’s struggle against the bourgeoisie. This was the tactical line that Marx and Engels and their associates later sought to implement during the 1848 revolutions in Germany.

Among those who received the lithographed circulars and pamphlets issued from Brussels were the leaders of the League of the Just — a secret society of emigré German artisans, mainly tailors, that had been formed in 1836.

Several years earlier both Marx and Engels had met leaders of the league in Paris and London respectively, and had been invited by them to join the organisation. However at that time the league was heavily influenced by romantic and objectively reactionary petty-bourgeois views of instantaneously achieving a classless society through the introduction by a revolutionary government of an egalitarian distribution of consumer goods. This revolutionary government was not to come into existence through the taking of political power by a mass revolutionary movement of the workers, but- following the ideas of the French utopian communist August Blanqui — through a *coup d’etat* by a tight-knit, secret society of revolutionary conspirators. Rejecting both the aim and means then advocated by the League of the Just as contrary to proletarian socialism, Marx and Engels refused to join it.

## Joining the League of the Just

Towards the end of 1846 there was a change in the ideological outlook of leading members of the League of the Just. They had become dissatisfied with the various utopian socialist schemes because they failed to provide answers to the practical problems of the working-class movement that they faced. At the same time, they began to see that the ideas of scientific socialism being propagandised from Brussels by Marx and Engels could set the working-class movement on the right course.



In November 1846, the executive committee of the league — among whose members were the shoemaker Heinrich Bauer, the watchmaker Joseph Moll and the typesetter Karl Schapper — issued a call for an international congress of communists to be held in London in May 1847. In January 1847, Moll was sent with official instructions to see Marx in Brussels and Engels in Paris and to arrange the terms on which the two men could join the League and participate in preparing the documents for the congress. They were promised full freedom of expression. Under such circumstances, Marx and Engels, who had been looking for a larger and more cohesive organisation to work in, decided to join. “After all, the fellows are a couple of hundred men strong”, Engels had written to Marx in December 1846.<sup>11</sup>

In February 1847, the executive committee of the league sent out a second call, which reflected the impact upon the league’s leaders of Moll’s discussions with Marx and Engels. It held up the Chartist movement in Britain as an example to communists who, it noted, “we are sorry to say, do not yet form a party”.<sup>12</sup> It postponed the congress from May to June to give more time for preparation. The agenda for the congress included a complete reorganisation of the league, the drawing up of new rules, consideration of a program, and a printed periodical.

The congress was held from June 2-7, 1847. Marx was unable to attend because of lack of money. Engels, now a member of the organisation, came as a representative from the Paris branches, while Wolff came as a representative of its Brussels branches.

## The Communist League

For all intents and purposes, the congress was a constituent one and inaugurated a totally new organisation, with new ideological principles and structure and a new name, the *Bund der Kommunisten*, or League of Communists. It adopted as the basis of the League’s program, which was to be finalised at its next congress, Engels’ outline in the form of a revolutionary catechism, a form then popular among workers’ societies and decided to circulate it for discussion among its local branches.

New rules were drafted with the direct participation of Engels and Wolff and these were also to be circulated for discussion by the local branches before being adopted by the next congress. In accordance with the agreement reached between Marx and Moll, the Communist League discarded all practices of a conspiratorial society, namely, the semi-mystical rituals of swearing in new members, the oath of allegiance, the petty regulation of duties, and the excessive concentration of all decision-making powers in the hands of unelected leadership bodies.

Under the new rules the highest decision-making body of the Communist League was the congress, made up of delegates elected by local organisations. A clause in the

draft rules giving the local organisations the right to accept or reject congress decisions was subsequently deleted upon Marx's insistence. Between congresses, the executive organ of the organisation was the Central Authority, a committee of at least five members elected by the "circle" or district where the congress was seated. The members of the Central Authority were to be seated at the congress without a deciding vote.

The basic unit of the organisation was called the "community" and was to consist of at least three and at most 20 members. Each community was to elect two officers — a chairperson who presided over its meetings and a deputy chairperson who was responsible for the community's funds. Two or more communities would be grouped together as a "circle", the executive organ of which would consist of the elected officers of the communities comprising it and would be headed by an elected president. The various circles in a country or province were subordinated to a "leading circle", elected by the congress and responsible to the Central Authority.

The communities, circle authorities and the Central Authority were to meet at least once every fortnight. The members of the circle authorities and the Central Authority were to be elected for one year, and could be re-elected and recalled by their electors at any time. The Central Authority was empowered to issue calls for discussions among the entire League membership.

Prospective members who had acquainted themselves with the rules were to be admitted to the league with the consent of their local community. Regulations were also provided for expulsion of members who violated the conditions of membership, with expelled members only being readmitted upon the approval of the Central Authority on the proposal of the circle.

Members of the league were required to recognise the principles of the league, conduct a "way of life and activity which corresponds"<sup>13</sup> to the league's aim, subordinate their activity to the decisions of the league, observe public secrecy concerning internal League affairs, and not participate in anti-communist political associations and to inform the immediately superior authority of the league of their participation in any other political association. The latter requirement was written into the rules sometime later, once again on Marx's initiative, instead of the draft rules' initial sectarian ban on league members joining any other political association.

Marx later observed that: "This democratic constitution, utterly unfit for conspiratorial secret societies, was at any rate not incompatible with the tasks of a propaganda society."<sup>14</sup>

The first congress of the Communist League also decided to drop the old, petty-bourgeois democratic motto "All people are brethren!" and replace it with the new rallying cry put forward by Engels: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!"

Nevertheless, despite all the ideological advances registered at the first congress, there continued to be hangovers of the League of the Just's petty-bourgeois outlook. Thus the draft rules declared that the league's aim was "the destruction of people's enslavement by the dissemination of the theory of the community of goods and its practical introduction as soon as possible."<sup>15</sup>

### Striving for open political activity

Considering the existing conditions in Germany and the obstacles encountered by emigrants in their political activity in countries with "liberal" regimes such as Belgium and France, the Communist League had to remain a secret organisation, but Marx fought to ensure that it did not inherit the isolation and lack of contact with the masses of workers of its predecessor organisation. He believed that the league's secret organisation of vanguard workers should be surrounded and work within a network of open workers' societies, like the German Workers' Educational Society in London. The Communist League was either to establish contact with existing educational societies or set up new ones.

This idea was soon put into practice, with a German Workers' Educational Society being set up by the Communist League in Brussels at the end of August 1847. Its initial membership of 37 rose within a few months to almost 100. The society organised libraries, lectures for workers on various subjects and social events. Marx later observed: "The league which stood behind the open workers' societies and directed them found in them its immediate field of activity for open propaganda while also replenishing and enlarging itself with their most capable members."<sup>16</sup>

As for the first congress's plans for a regular league periodical, only one issue appeared, in September 1847. Named *Kommunistische Zeitschrift*, its articles, most of which were written by Schapper, criticised utopian socialist ideas and elaborated the communists' views on the tactical issues facing the workers' movement in Germany. Lack of funds prevented the publication of a second issue. By the end of 1847, however, the leaders of the Communist League in Brussels had managed to takeover editorial control of an already existing twice-weekly emigrant newspaper, the *Deutsche-Brusseler Zeitung*. From then until the final issue appeared on February 27, 1848 this paper was the unofficial organ of the Communist League.

### The Communist Manifesto

A further step in the ideological and organisational consolidation of the Communist League was its second congress, held in London from November 28 to December 8, 1847. This time both Marx and Engels were present. The program was the main point

on the agenda, Marx and Engels had to use all their powers of persuasion over the course of the 10-day congress to convince the majority of the correctness of their views. But they won out.

This was reflected in a change of Article 1 of the league's rules. The old aim of an idyllic "community of goods" was replaced by a new formulation. The new aim of the league was "The overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the domination of the proletariat, the abolition of bourgeois society based on class antagonisms and the establishment of a new society without classes and without private property."<sup>17</sup>

As a result of the debates, the congress gave Marx and Engels the responsibility of drafting a "detailed theoretical and practical party program".<sup>18</sup> They accepted, and thus came to write the Communist Manifesto.

The Manifesto is divided into four sections. The first, opening with the classical statement, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles", outlines the rise of the capitalist class out of the decay and decline of feudalism. It argues that the powerful productive forces created by the bourgeoisie — mechanised production and socialised labour — are no longer compatible with the existing production relations based on private ownership of productive resources. The proletariat, the class of propertyless wage earners that the bourgeoisie itself has created, is the new revolutionary class which embodies socially cooperative labour and which alone can take control of the socially cooperative productive forces for the further advance of human welfare. But whereas the victory of the bourgeoisie over the feudal classes involved the replacement of the social rule of one exploiting minority by another, the victory of the proletariat in the class struggle will bring to power an exploited majority whose conditions of social liberation require the abolition of all class exploitation and oppression.

The second section explains the role of the communists in the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The third section takes issue with other existing schools of political thought that present themselves as socialist: the feudal aristocratic critics of capitalism, the anti-capitalist representatives of the ruined rural and urban petty-proprietors, the bourgeois social-reformists, and the idealist utopian socialist sects.

The fourth section is a brief exposition of the position of the communists in regard to other radical democratic movements and the immediate tasks of the communists in relation to the impending bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany.

## Building a mass communist party

Despite the fact that the program of the Communist League was called the Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marx and Engels recognised that the league was only the germ or nucleus of the party they aspired to build.

The Manifesto set out only the most general terms Marx and Engels' conception of a working-class party. In the first section of the Manifesto, they referred to the proletarian party as the "organisation of the proletarians into a class", which "compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself".

The immediately following reference to the legislative passage of the 10-hour workday bill in England, makes it clear that Marx and Engels were simply describing the actual historical development of the first and, up to that time, only mass working-class political movement — the National Charter Association in England. The Chartist movement was a loose united front of pure trade unionists, fighters for the 10-hour work day, radical democrats and bourgeois philanthropists, which reached the zenith of its activity in 1842 and collapsed in 1848.

In his 1847 book polemicising against the French anarchist Pierre Proudhon, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx had described how in their struggle, first in trade unions, and then also by constituting "a large political party under the name of Chartists", the English workers had developed from an amorphous, fragmented "class *in* itself" into a nationally cohesive, combative "class *for* itself".<sup>19</sup>

Such a concept flowed from Marx's view that "every struggle of class against class is a political struggle".<sup>20</sup> By this Marx did not mean that every struggle by small groups of workers against their employers was a political struggle. Rather, as he explained later in a letter written on November 23, 1871, only when the workers organise to fight for their general interests against the collective power, the political power, of the capitalist class does their struggle become a real *class* struggle. The task of the communists was to train the working class "to undertake a decisive campaign against the collective power, i.e., the political power, of the ruling classes" though "continual agitation against this power and by a hostile attitude toward the policies of the ruling classes". Wherever the working class lacks this revolutionary training, Marx added, "it remains a plaything" in the hands of the political representatives of the bourgeoisie.<sup>21</sup>

The second section of the Manifesto was devoted to answering the question "In what relations do the communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?" It gave the following answer: "The communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties". This was because they "have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole". They thus shared the same "immediate aim"

as “that of the other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat”.

What distinguished the communists from other working-class political currents, the Manifesto explained, was that “1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality” and “2. In the various stages of the development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.”

Consequently, the Manifesto states, the communists in practice “are the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others”. This is because the communists “have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.”

This last point was a restatement of the view Marx had articulated a year earlier in his polemic against Pierre Proudhon, where Marx had described the socialists and communists as “the theoreticians of the proletarian class”.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, in the Manifesto statements about the relationship between the communists and the working class as a whole (i.e., that the communists have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole and that they are the theoretical vanguard of the working class are combined with statements about how the Communist League, as a tiny organisation of revolutionary cadres with a few hundred members spread throughout Western Europe, should relate to existing, far larger working-class political formations such as the 40,000-member Chartist organisation in England. The cadres of the Communist League, while retaining their own organisation, should join any existing, larger working-class organisations and seek to win their members to the communists’ theoretical views.

It was though pursuing such a tactical orientation that Marx and Engels believed the tiny Communist League could be transformed into a mass communist party.

## **The end of the Communist League**

The Communist League itself collapsed in 1852 under the impact of the wave of reaction and repression that swept Europe in the aftermath of the failed bourgeois-democratic revolutions of 1848-49.

In the years preceding its collapse the Communist League was wracked by a sharp factional struggle between Marx and Engels and their supporters, on the one hand, and Schapper and August Willich and their supporters on the other.

The factional struggle broke out in late 1850, when Marx and Engels came to the conclusion that the economic concessions granted by the absolutist monarchies in Germany had cleared the way for a prolonged expansion of capitalist production. Up until the middle of 1850 Marx and Engels believed that a new economic crisis like that of 1847 would come soon and that the new crisis would spark a new outbreak of revolutionary struggle in Europe. However, as they deepened their study of economics, they came to the conclusion that this forecast was unjustified.

Max and Engels also abandoned their earlier expectations that a proletarian revolution was imminent in France, and that under its impact a bourgeois revolution in Germany could be rapidly and easily transformed into a socialist one. This premature forecast had been based on an overestimation of the maturity of capitalism in Europe and of the development of the material conditions for a revolutionary transition to socialism. In a preface to Marx's 1850 work *The Class Struggles in France*, Engels wrote in 1895: "History has proved us, and all who thought like us, wrong. It has made it clear that the state of economic development on the Continent at the time was not, by a long way, ripe for the elimination of capitalist production."<sup>23</sup>

Flowing from their new assessment of the objective situation, Marx and Engels concluded that the main tasks of the Communist League for some time to come would be to preserve and gradually accumulate proletarian cadres, to give them a firm theoretical grounding, to strengthen their ties with any existing broader working-class organisations, and to take every opportunity to propagate the ideas of scientific socialism.

The majority of the London members of the Communist League disagreed with this perspective. They denied the need for any material prerequisites for a proletarian, communist revolution, and argued that such a revolution could be accomplished in Germany alone through an effort of will by a handful of revolutionary militants.

The counterposed views were summed up as follows by Marx in a speech made at an extraordinary meeting of the League's Central Committee on September 15, 1850: "A German national point of view was substituted for the universal outlook of the Manifesto and the national feelings of the German artisans were pandered to. The materialist standpoint of the Manifesto has given way to idealism. The revolution is not seen as the product of realities of the situation but as the result of an effort of *will*. Whereas we say to the workers: You have 15, 20, 50 years of [veiled] civil war to go through in order to alter the situation and to train yourselves for the exercise of power, it is said: We must take power *at once*, or else we may as well take to our beds."<sup>24</sup>

At the meeting it was agreed the League's Cologne District, where Marx and Engels' views enjoyed an overwhelming majority, should constitute the Central

Committee. However the Schapper-Willich faction in the London district refused to abide by the Cologne Central Committee's decisions. When the London district adopted a decision to expel Marx and Engels and their supporters from the League and set up a rival Central Committee, the Cologne Central Committee expelled all the supporters of the Schapper-Willich faction from the League. This faction subsequently dwindled in numbers and disintegrated.

The split in the Communist League came on the eve of a wave of arrests across Germany, in which the police particularly targeted the followers of Marx and Engels. In a secret report written in April 1852, Berlin's chief of police wrote: "It can now rightly be said of the Marx-Engels party that it stands far above all the emigrants, agitators and central committees, because it is unquestionably the strongest in knowledge and ability. Marx himself is well-known personally, and everyone realises that he has more intellectual power in the tip of his finger than the rest of the crowd have in their heads."<sup>25</sup>

The arrests and subsequent conviction of the Communist League members in Germany destroyed the league as an organisation on the Continent. In London, its membership had been reduced to a mere handful as a result of the split there. At a meeting of the League's London district on November 17, 1852, a motion by Marx to dissolve the local organisation was adopted.

## **Manifesto remains relevant today**

The Communist Manifesto is, as Marx and Engels noted in their preface to its second German edition published in 1872, a historic document and which therefore has to be understood against the political background of the period in which it was written. Marx and Engels, in 1872, were convinced that the general principles laid down in the Manifesto were on the whole correct then as when they were written in 1848. These general principles are summarised by the introductory essay that follows, written by Russian Marxist revolutionary Leon Trotsky and first published in February 1938.

In the 150 years since the Manifesto was written there have been tremendous changes in the world, but none of them refute the basic ideas contained in the Manifesto. Indeed, the "really existing" capitalist world today is much closer to the "abstract" model of capitalism that is portrayed in the first section of the Manifesto than the actually existing world of 1848. At that time, the capitalist system of production was truly dominant only in Britain. Outside of Britain, the modern proletariat, the class of wage-workers employed in large mechanised industrial and commercial enterprises, constituted only a tiny fraction of the population in the rest of the world. Most of the world's peoples were peasant farmers exploited by pre-capitalist landowners headed



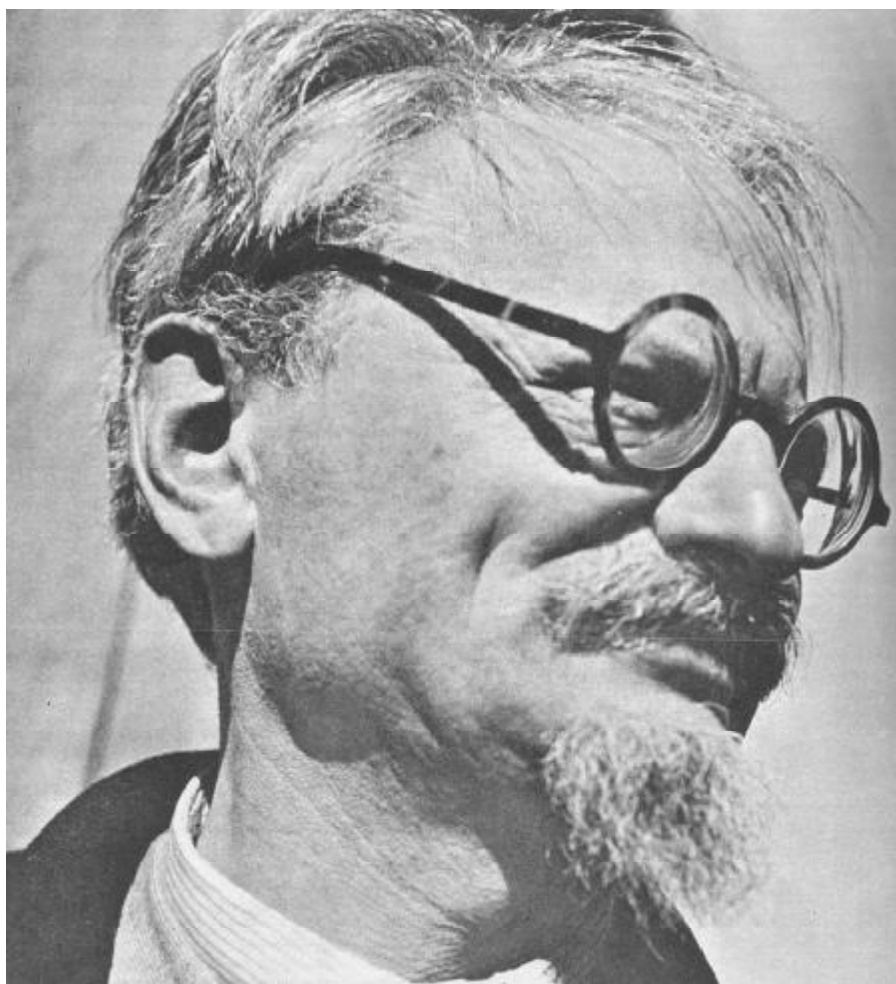
by despotic, hereditary monarchs.

Today dependent wage and salary earners, compelled to sell their labour power, amount to over 80% of the economically active population in the developed capitalist countries of Europe, North America, Japan and Australasia. On a world scale, urban and rural wage earners and their dependents now constitute a majority of the world's population. Not only do a few hundred super-rich capitalist families dominate the economic life of the developed capitalist countries, through the giant transnational industrial and finance corporations which they own, they also concentrate in their hands the majority of the wealth of the capitalist world economy. The productivity of labour has increased to such an extent that socially cooperative production subordinated to the private greed and enrichment of these families has become absurd beyond anything Marx and Engels could have foreseen in the middle of the 19th century.

The catastrophic economic and social crises that this contradiction repeatedly generates cries out for the replacement of the anarchistic, private-profit-driven “market economy” with a planned management of productive resources to satisfy humanity's needs on the basis of consciously and democratically chosen priorities. As long as this contradiction continues to exist, working men and women will be impelled to struggle against the capitalist exploiters and the Communist Manifesto — as the first document to provide a scientific explanation of the cause of these recurrent crises and to outline the strategic line of march required to bring them to an end — will continue to provide inspiration and guidance to the workers of the world. ■

**‘The bourgeoisie, historically,  
has played a most  
revolutionary part.’**

**— The Communist Manifesto**



Leon Trotsky (1940)

# Ninety Years of the Communist Manifesto

*By Leon Trotsky*

It is hard to believe that the centennial of the Manifesto of the Communist Party is only 10 years away! This pamphlet, displaying greater genius than any other in world literature, astounds us even today by its freshness. Its most important sections appear to have been written yesterday. Assuredly, the young authors (Marx was 29, Engels 27) were able to look further into the future than anyone before them, and perhaps than anyone since them.

Already in their joint preface to the edition of 1872, Marx and Engels declared that despite the fact that certain secondary passages in the Manifesto were antiquated, they felt that they no longer had any right to alter the original text inasmuch as the Manifesto had already become a historical document, during the intervening period of 25 years. Sixty-five additional years have elapsed since that time. Isolated passages in the Manifesto have receded still further into the past. We shall try to establish succinctly in this preface both those ideas in the Manifesto which retain their full force today and those which require important alteration or amplification.

1. The materialist conception of history, discovered by Marx only a short while before and applied with consummate skill in the Manifesto, has completely withstood the test of events and the blows of hostile criticism. It constitutes today one of the most precious instruments of human thought. All other interpretations of the historical process have lost all scientific meaning. We can state with certainty that it is impossible in our time not only to be a revolutionary militant but even a literate observer in

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Written by Trotsky in October 1937 as an introduction to the first Afrikaans-language edition of the *Communist Manifesto*. Trotsky was at the time living in exile in Mexico; it was first published in the February 1938 issue of *New Internationalist*, then the theoretical magazine of the US Socialist Workers Party.

politics without assimilating the materialist interpretation of history.

2. The first chapter of the Manifesto opens with the following words: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” This postulate, the most important conclusion drawn from the materialist interpretation of history, immediately became an issue in the class struggle. Especially venomous attacks were directed by reactionary hypocrites, liberal doctrinaires, and idealistic democrats against the theory which replaced “common welfare”, “national unity”, and “eternal moral truths” as the driving force by the struggle of material interests. They were later joined by recruits from the ranks of the labour movement itself, by the so-called revisionists, *i.e.*, the proponents of reviewing (“revising”) Marxism in the spirit of class collaboration and class conciliation. Finally, in our own time, the same path has been followed in practice by the contemptible epigones of the Communist International (the “Stalinists”): the policy of the so-called “People’s Front” flows wholly from the denial of the laws of the class struggle. Meanwhile, it is precisely the epoch of imperialism, bringing all social contradictions to the point of highest tension, which gives to the Communist Manifesto its supreme *theoretical* triumph.

3. The anatomy of capitalism, as a specific stage in the economic development of society, was given by Marx in its finished form in *Capital* (1867). But already in the Communist Manifesto the main lines of the future analysis are firmly sketched: the payment for labour power as equivalent to the cost of its reproduction; the appropriation of surplus value by the capitalists; competition as the basic law of social relations; the ruination of intermediate classes, *i.e.*, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry; the concentration of wealth in the hands of an ever diminishing number of property owners at the one pole, and the numerical growth of the proletariat, at the other; the preparation of the material and political preconditions for the socialist regime.

4. The proposition in the Manifesto concerning the tendency of capitalism to lower the living standards of the workers, and even to transform them into paupers had been subjected to a heavy barrage. Parsons, professors, ministers, journalists, social-democratic theoreticians, and trade union leaders came to the front against the so-called “theory of impoverishment”. They invariably discovered signs of growing prosperity among the toilers, palming off the labour aristocracy as the proletariat, or taking a fleeting tendency as permanent. Meanwhile, even the development of the mightiest capitalism in the world, namely, US capitalism, has transformed millions of workers into paupers who are maintained at the expense of federal, municipal or private charity.

5. As against the Manifesto, which depicted commercial and industrial crises as a series of ever more extensive catastrophes, the revisionists vowed that the national

and international development of trusts would assure control over the market, and lead gradually to the abolition of crises. The close of the last century and the beginning of the present one were in reality marked by a development of capitalism so tempestuous as to make crises seem only “accidental” stoppages. But this epoch has gone beyond return. In the last analysis, truth proved to be on Marx’s side in this question as well.

6. “The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” This succinct formula, which the leaders of the social-democracy looked upon as a journalistic paradox, contains in fact the only scientific theory of the state. The democracy fashioned by the bourgeoisie is not, as both Bernstein and Kautsky thought, an empty sack which one can undisturbedly fill with any kind of class content. Bourgeois democracy can serve only the bourgeoisie. A government of the “People’s Front”, whether headed by Blum or Chautemps, Caballero or Negrín, is only “a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie”. Whenever this “committee” manages affairs poorly, the bourgeoisie dismisses it with a boot.

7. “Every class struggle is a political struggle.” “The organisation of the proletariat as a class (is) consequently its organisation into a political party.” Trade unionists, on the one hand, and anarcho-syndicalists on the other, have long shied away — and even now try to shy away — from the understanding of these historical laws. “Pure” trade unionism has now been dealt a crushing blow in its chief refuge: the United States. Anarcho-syndicalism has suffered an irreparable defeat in its last stronghold — Spain. Here too the Manifesto proved correct.

8. The proletariat cannot conquer power within the legal framework established by the bourgeoisie. “Communists openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.” Reformism sought to explain this postulate of the Manifesto on the grounds of the immaturity of the movement at that time, and the inadequate development of democracy. The fate of Italian, German, and a great number of other “democracies” proves that “immaturity” is the distinguishing trait of the ideas of the reformists themselves.

9. For the socialist transformation of society, the working class must concentrate in its hands such power as can smash each and every political obstacle barring the road to the new system. “The proletariat organised as the ruling class” — this is the dictatorship. At the same time it is the only true proletarian democracy. Its scope and depth depend upon concrete historical conditions. The greater the number of states that take the path of the socialist revolution, the freer and more flexible forms will the dictatorship assume, the broader and more deep-going will be workers’ democracy.

10. The international development of capitalism has predetermined the international character of the proletarian revolution. “United action, of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.” The subsequent development of capitalism has so closely knit all sections of our planet, both “civilised” and “uncivilised”, that the problem of the socialist revolution has completely and decisively assumed a world character. The Soviet bureaucracy attempted to liquidate the Manifesto with respect to this fundamental question. The Bonapartist degeneration of the Soviet state is an overwhelming illustration of the falseness of the theory of socialism in one country.

11. “When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character.” In other words: the state withers away. Society remains, freed from the straitjacket. This is nothing else but socialism. The converse theorem: the monstrous growth of state coercion in the USSR is eloquent testimony that society is moving away from socialism.

12. “The workingmen have no fatherland.” These words of the Manifesto have more than once been evaluated by philistines as an agitational quip. As a matter of fact they provided the proletariat with the sole conceivable directive in the question of the capitalist “fatherland”. The violation of this directive by the Second International brought about not only four years of devastation in Europe, but the present stagnation of world culture. In view of the impending new war, for which the betrayal of the Third International has paved the way, the Manifesto remains even now the most reliable counsellor on the question of the capitalist “fatherland”.

Thus, we see that the joint and rather brief production of two young authors continues to give irreplaceable directives upon the most important and burning questions of the struggle for emancipation. What other book could even distantly be compared with the Communist Manifesto? But this does not imply that, after 90 years of unprecedented development of productive forces and vast social struggles, the Manifesto needs neither corrections nor additions. Revolutionary thought has nothing in common with idol-worship. Programs and prognoses are tested and corrected in the light of experience, which is the supreme criterion of human reason. The Manifesto, too, requires corrections and additions. However, as is evidenced by historical experience itself, these corrections and additions can be successfully made only by proceeding in accord with the method lodged in the foundation of the Manifesto itself. We shall try to indicate this in several most important instances.

1. Marx taught that no social system departs from the arena of history before exhausting its creative potentialities. The Manifesto excoriates capitalism for retarding

the development of the productive forces. During that period, however, as well as in the following decades, this retardation was only *relative* in nature. Had it been possible in the second half of the 19th century to organise economy on socialist beginnings, its tempo of growth would have been immeasurably greater. But this theoretically irrefutable postulate does not invalidate the fact that the productive forces kept expanding on a world scale right up to the world war. Only in the last twenty years, despite the most modern conquests of science and technology, has the epoch of out-and-out stagnation and even decline of world economy begun. Mankind is beginning to expend its accumulated capital, while the next war threatens to destroy the very foundations of civilisation for many years to come. The authors of the Manifesto thought that capitalism would be scrapped long prior to the time when from a relatively reactionary regime it would turn into an absolutely reactionary regime. This transformation took final shape only before the eyes of the present generation, and changed our epoch into the epoch of wars, revolutions, and fascism.

2. The error of Marx and Engels in regard to the historical dates flowed, on the one hand, from an underestimation of future possibilities latent in capitalism, and, on the other, an overestimation of the revolutionary maturity of the proletariat. The revolution of 1848 did not turn into a socialist revolution as the Manifesto had calculated, but opened up to Germany the possibility of a vast future capitalist ascension. The Paris Commune proved that the proletariat, without having a tempered revolutionary party at its head, cannot wrest power from the bourgeoisie. Meanwhile, the prolonged period of capitalist prosperity that ensued brought about not the education of the revolutionary vanguard, but rather the bourgeois degeneration the labour aristocracy, which became in turn the chief brake on the proletarian revolution. In the nature of things, the authors of the Manifesto could not possibly have foreseen this “dialectic”.

3. For the Manifesto, capitalism was the kingdom of free competition. While referring to the growing concentration of capital, the Manifesto did not draw the necessary conclusion in regard to monopoly, which has become the dominant capitalist form in our epoch and the most important precondition for socialist economy. Only afterwards, in *Capital*, did Marx establish the tendency toward the transformation of free competition into monopoly. It was Lenin who gave a scientific characterisation of monopoly capitalism in his *Imperialism*.

4. Basing themselves primarily on the example of “industrial revolution” in England, the authors of the Manifesto pictured far too unilaterally the process of liquidation of the intermediate classes, as a wholesale proletarianisation of crafts, petty trades, and peasantry. In point of fact, the elemental forces of competition have far from completed this simultaneously progressive and barbarous work. Capitalism has ruined the petty

bourgeoisie at a much faster rate than it has proletarianised it. Furthermore, the bourgeois state has long directed its conscious policy toward the artificial maintenance of petty-bourgeois strata. At the opposite pole, the growth of technology and the rationalisation of large-scale industry engenders chronic unemployment and obstructs the proletarianisation of the petty bourgeoisie. Concurrently, the development of capitalism has accelerated in the extreme the growth of legions of technicians, administrators, commercial employees, in short, the so-called “new middle class”. In consequence, the intermediate classes, to whose disappearance the Manifesto so categorically refers, comprise even in a country as highly industrialised as Germany, about half of the population. However, the artificial preservation of antiquated petty-bourgeois strata in no way mitigates the social contradictions, but, on the contrary, invests them with a special malignancy, and together with the permanent army of the unemployed constitutes the most malevolent expression of the *decay* of capitalism.

5. Calculated for a revolutionary epoch the Manifesto contains (end of Chapter II) 10 demands, corresponding to the period of direct transition from capitalism to socialism. In their preface [to the German edition] of 1872, Marx and Engels declared these demands to be in part antiquated, and, in any case, only of secondary importance. The reformists seized upon this evaluation to interpret it in the sense that transitional revolutionary demands had forever ceded their place to the social democratic “minimum program”, which, as is well known, does not transcend the limits of bourgeois democracy. As a matter of fact, the authors of the Manifesto indicated quite precisely the main correction of their transitional program, namely, “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes”. In other words, the correction was directed against the fetishism of bourgeois democracy. Marx later counterposed to the capitalist state, the state of the type of the Commune. This “type” subsequently assumed the much more graphic shape of Soviets. There cannot be a revolutionary program today without *soviets* and without *workers’ control*. As for the rest, the ten demands of the Manifesto, which appeared “archaic” in an epoch of peaceful parliamentary activity, have today regained completely their true significance. The social-democratic “minimum program”, on the other hand, has become hopelessly antiquated.

6. Basing its expectation that “the German bourgeois revolution ... will be but a prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution”, the Manifesto cites the much more advanced conditions of European civilisation as compared with what existed in England in the 17th century and in France in the 18th century, and the far greater development of the proletariat. The error in this prognosis was not only in the date. The revolution of 1848 revealed within a few months that precisely under more



advanced conditions, none of the bourgeois classes is capable of bringing the revolution to its termination: the big and middle bourgeoisie is far too closely linked with the landowners, and fettered by the fear of the masses; the petty bourgeoisie is far too divided and in its top leadership far too dependent on the big bourgeoisie. As evidenced by the entire subsequent course of development in Europe and Asia, the bourgeois revolution, taken by itself, can no more in general be consummated. A complete purge of feudal rubbish from society is conceivable only on the condition that the proletariat, freed from the influence of bourgeois parties, can take its stand at the head of the peasantry and establish its revolutionary dictatorship. By this token, the bourgeois revolution becomes interlaced with the first stage of the socialist revolution, subsequently to dissolve in the latter. The national revolution therewith becomes a link of the world revolution. The transformation of the economic foundation and of all social relations assumes a permanent (uninterrupted) character.

For revolutionary parties in backward countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, a clear understanding of the organic connection between the democratic revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat — and thereby, the international socialist revolution — is a life-and-death question.

7. While depicting how capitalism draws into its vortex backward and barbarous countries, the Manifesto contains no reference to the struggle of colonial and semicolonial countries for independence. To the extent that Marx and Engels considered the social revolution “in the leading civilised countries at least”, to be a matter of the next few years, the colonial question was resolved automatically for them, not in consequence of an independent movement of oppressed nationalities but in consequence of the victory of the proletariat in the metropolitan centres of capitalism. The questions of revolutionary strategy in colonial and semicolonial countries are therefore not touched upon at all by the Manifesto. Yet these questions demand an independent solution. For example, it is quite self-evident that while the “national fatherland” has become the most baneful historical brake in advanced capitalist countries, it still remains a relatively progressive factor in backward countries compelled to struggle for an independent existence.

“The communists”, declares the Manifesto, “everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.” The movement of the coloured races against their imperialist oppressors is one of the most important and powerful movements against the existing order and therefore calls for the complete, unconditional, and unlimited support on the part of the proletariat of the white race. The credit for developing revolutionary strategy for oppressed nationalities belongs primarily to Lenin.

8. The most antiquated section of the Manifesto — with respect not to method but to material — is the criticism of “socialist” literature for the first part of the 19th century (Chapter III) and the definition of the position of the communists in relation to various opposition parties (Chapter IV). The movements and parties listed in the Manifesto were so drastically swept away either by the revolution of 1848 or by the ensuing counterrevolution that one must look up even their names in a historical dictionary. However, in this section, too, the Manifesto is perhaps closer to us now than it was to the previous generation. In the epoch of the flowering of the Second International, when Marxism seemed to exert an undivided sway, the ideas of pre-Marxist socialism could have been considered as having receded decisively into the past. Things are otherwise today. The decomposition of the social-democracy and the Communist International at every step engenders monstrous ideological relapses. Senile thought seems to have become infantile. In search of all-saving formulas the prophets in the epoch of decline discover anew doctrines long since buried by scientific socialism.

As touches the question of opposition parties, it is in this domain that the elapsed decades have introduced the most deep-going changes, not only in the sense that the old parties have long been brushed aside by new ones, but also in the sense that the very character of parties and their mutual relations have radically changed in the conditions of the imperialist epoch. The Manifesto must therefore be amplified with the most important documents of the first four congresses of the Communist International, the essential literature of Bolshevism, and the decisions of the conferences of the Fourth International.

We have already remarked above that according to Marx no social order departs from the scene without first exhausting the potentialities latent in it. However, even an antiquated social order does not cede its place to a new order without resistance. A change in social regimes presupposes the harshest form of the class struggle, *i.e.*, revolution. If the proletariat, for one reason or another, proves incapable of overthrowing with an audacious blow the outlived bourgeois order, then finance capital in the struggle to maintain its unstable rule can do nothing but turn the petty bourgeoisie ruined and demoralised by it into the pogrom army of fascism. The bourgeois degeneration of the social-democracy and the fascist degeneration of the petty bourgeoisie are interlinked as cause and effect.

At the present time, the Third International far more wantonly than the second performs in all countries the work of deceiving and demoralising the toilers. By massacring the vanguard of the Spanish proletariat, the unbridled hirelings of Moscow not only pave the way for fascism but execute a goodly share of its labours. The

protracted crisis of the international revolution, which is turning more and more into a crisis of human culture, is reducible in its essentials to the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

As the heir to the great tradition, of which the Manifesto of the Communist Party forms the most precious link, the Fourth International is educating new cadres for the solution of old tasks. Theory is generalised reality. In an honest attitude to revolutionary theory is expressed the impassioned urge to reconstruct the social reality. That in the southern part of the Dark Continent our cothinkers were the first to translate the Manifesto into the Afrikaans language is another graphic illustration of the fact that Marxist thought lives today only under the banner of the Fourth International. To it belongs the future. When the centennial of the Communist Manifesto is celebrated, the Fourth International will have become a decisive revolutionary force on our planet. ■

**‘The executive of the  
modern state is but a  
committee for  
managing the common  
affairs of the whole  
bourgeoisie.’**

**— The Communist Manifesto**

# Prefaces to the Communist Manifesto

## 1. Preface to the German edition of 1872

The Communist League, an international association of workers, which could of course be only a secret one, under the conditions obtaining at the time, commissioned the undersigned, at the congress held in London in November 1847, to draw up for publication a detailed theoretical and practical program of the Party. Such was the origin of the following Manifesto, the manuscript of which travelled to London, to be printed, a few weeks before the February Revolution. First published in German, it has been republished in that language in at least 12 different editions in Germany, England and America. It was published in English for the first time in 1850 in the *Red Republican*, London, translated by Miss Helen Macfarlane, and in 1871 in at least three different translations in America. A French version first appeared in Paris shortly before the June insurrection of 1848 and recently in *Le Socialiste* of New York. A new translation is in the course of preparation. A Polish version appeared in London shortly after it was first published in German. A Russian translation was published in Geneva in the '60s. Into Danish, too, it was translated shortly after its appearance.

However much the state of things may have altered during the last 25 years, the general principles laid down in this Manifesto are, on the whole, as correct today as ever. Here and there, some detail might be improved. The practical application of the principles will depend, as the Manifesto itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II. That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded today. In view of the gigantic strides of modern industry in the last 25 years, and of the accompanying improved and extended party organisation of the working class, in view of the practical experience gained, first in the February Revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole

months, this program has in some details become antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, *viz.*, that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes”. (See *The Civil War in France. Address of the General Council of the International Working Men’s Association*, London, Truelove, 1871, p. 15, where this point is further developed.) Further, it is self-evident that the criticism of socialist literature is deficient in relation to the present time, because it comes down only to 1847; also, that the remarks on the relation of the communists to the various opposition parties (Section IV), although, in principle still correct, yet in practice are antiquated, because the political situation has been entirely changed, and the progress of history has swept from off the earth the greater portion of the political parties there enumerated.

But, then, the Manifesto has become a historical document which we have no longer any right to alter. A subsequent edition may perhaps appear with an introduction bridging the gap from 1847 to the present day; this reprint was too unexpected to leave us time for that.

*Karl Marx*

*Frederick Engels*

London, June 24, 1872

## 2. Preface to the Russian edition of 1882

The first Russian edition of the Manifesto of the Communist Party, translated by Bakunin, was published early in the '60s by the printing office of the *Kolokol*. Then the West could see in it (the *Russian* edition of the Manifesto) only a literary curiosity. Such a view would be impossible today.

What a limited field the proletarian movement still occupied at that time (December 1847) is most clearly shown by the last section of the Manifesto: the position of the communists in relation to the various opposition parties in the various countries. Precisely Russia and the United States are missing here. It was the time when Russia constituted the last great reserve of all European reaction, when the United States absorbed the surplus proletarian forces of Europe through immigration. Both countries provided Europe with raw materials and were at the same time markets for the sale of its industrial products. At that time both were, therefore, in one way or another, pillars of the existing European order.

How very different today! Precisely European immigration fitted North American for a gigantic agricultural production, whose competition is shaking the very foundations

of European landed property — large and small. In addition, it enabled the United States to exploit its tremendous industrial resources with an energy and on a scale that must shortly break the industrial monopoly of Western Europe, and especially of England, existing up to now. Both circumstances react in revolutionary manner upon America itself. Step by step, the small and middle landownership of the farmers, the basis of the whole political constitution, is succumbing to the competition of giant farms; simultaneously, a mass proletariat and a fabulous concentration of capitals are developing for the first time in the industrial regions.

And now Russia! During the revolution of 1848-49, not only the European princes, but the European bourgeois as well, found their only salvation from the proletariat, just beginning to awaken, in Russian intervention. The tsar was proclaimed the chief of European reaction. Today, he is a prisoner of war of the revolution, in Gatchina, and Russia forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe.

The Communist Manifesto had as its object the proclamation of the inevitably impending dissolution of modern bourgeois property. But in Russia we find, face to face with the rapidly developing capitalist swindle and bourgeois landed property, just beginning to develop, more than half the land owned in common by the peasants. Now the question is: can the Russian *obshchina*, though greatly undermined, yet a form of primeval common ownership of land, pass directly to the higher form of communist common ownership? Or, on the contrary, must it first pass through the same process of dissolution as constitutes the historical evolution of the West?

The only answer to that possible today is this: If the Russian revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting-point for a communist development.

*Karl Marx*

*Frederick Engels*

London, January 21, 1882

### 3. Preface to the German edition of 1883

The preface to the present edition I must, alas, sign alone. Marx, the man to whom the whole working class of Europe and America owes more than to anyone else — rests at Highgate Cemetery and over his grave the first grass is already growing. Since his death [on March 13, 1883], there can be even less thought of revising or supplementing the Manifesto. All the more do I consider it necessary again to state here the following expressly:

The basic thought running through the Manifesto — that economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently (ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development; that this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles — this basic thought belongs solely and exclusively to Marx.†

I have already stated this many times; but precisely now is it necessary that it also stand in front of the Manifesto itself.

*F. Engels*

London, June 28, 1883

#### 4. Preface to the English edition of 1888

The Manifesto was published as the platform of the Communist League, a workingmen's association, first exclusively German, later on international, and, under the political conditions of the Continent before 1848, unavoidably a secret society. At a congress of the league, held in London in November, 1847, Marx and Engels were commissioned to prepare for publication a complete theoretical and practical party program. Drawn up in German, in January, 1848, the manuscript was sent to the printer in London a few weeks before the French Revolution of February 24. A French translation was brought out in Paris, shortly before the insurrection of June, 1848. The first English translation, by Miss Helen Macfarlane, appeared in George Julian Harney's *Red Republican*, London, 1850. A Danish and a Polish edition had also been published.

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† “This proposition”, I wrote in the preface to the English translation, “which, in my opinion, is destined to do for history what Darwin's theory has done for biology, we, both of us, had been gradually approaching for some years before 1845. How far I had independently progressed towards it, is best shown by my *Condition of the Working Class in England*. But when I again met Marx at Brussels, in spring, 1845, he had it already worked out and put it before me, in terms almost as clear as those in which I have stated it here.” [*Note by Engels to the German edition of 1890.*]

The defeat of the Parisian insurrection of June, 1848 — the first great battle between proletariat and bourgeoisie — drove again into the background, for a time, the social and political aspirations of the European working-class. Thenceforth, the struggle for supremacy was again, as it had been before the revolution of February, solely between different sections of the propertied class; the working class was reduced to a fight for political elbow-room, and to the position of extreme wing of the middle-class radicals. Wherever independent proletarian movements continued to show signs of life, they were ruthlessly hunted down. Thus the Prussian police hunted out the Central Board of the Communist League, then located in Cologne. The members were arrested, and, after eighteen months' imprisonment, they were tried in October, 1852. This celebrated "Cologne communist trial" lasted from October 4 till November 12; seven of the prisoners were sentenced to terms of imprisonment in a fortress, varying from three to six years. Immediately after the sentence, the league was formally dissolved by the remaining members. As to the *Manifesto*, it seemed thenceforth to be doomed to oblivion.

When the European working-class had recovered sufficient strength for another attack on the ruling classes, the International Working Men's Association sprang up. But this association, formed with the express aim of welding into one body the whole militant proletariat of Europe and America, could not at once proclaim the principles laid down in the *Manifesto*. The International was bound to have a program broad enough to be acceptable to the English trades unions, to the followers of Proudhon in France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain, and to the Lassalleans<sup>†</sup> in Germany. Marx, who drew up this program to the satisfaction of all parties, entirely trusted to the intellectual development of the working-class, which was sure to result from combined action and mutual discussion. The very events and vicissitudes of the struggle against capital, the defeats even more than the victories, could not help bringing home to men's minds the insufficiency of their various favourite nostrums, and preparing the way for a more complete insight into the true conditions for working-class emancipation. And Marx was right. The international, on its breaking up in 1874, left the workers quite different men from what it had found them in 1864. Proudhonism in France, Lassalleanism in Germany were dying out, and even the conservative English trades unions, though most of them had long since severed their connection with the International, were gradually advancing towards that point at which, last year at

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<sup>†</sup> Lassalle personally, to us, always acknowledged himself to be a disciple of Marx, and, as such, stood on the ground of the Manifesto. But in his public agitation, 1862-64, he did not go beyond demanding cooperative workshops supported by state credit. [*Note by Engels.*]



Swansea, their president could say in their name: “Continental socialism has lost its terrors for us.” In fact: the principles of the *Manifesto* had made considerable headway among the working men of all countries.

The *Manifesto* itself thus came to the front again. The German text had been, since 1850, reprinted several times in Switzerland, England and America. In 1872, it was translated into English in New York, where the translation was published in *Woodhull and Claflin’s Weekly*. From this English version, a French one was made in *Le Socialiste* of New York. Since then at least two more English translations, more or less mutilated, have been brought out in America, and one of them has been reprinted in England. The first Russian translation, made by Bakunin, was published at Herzen’s *Kolokol* office in Geneva, about 1863; a second one, by the heroic Vera Zasulich,<sup>†</sup> also in Geneva, in 1882. A new Danish edition is to be found in *Socialdemokratisk Bibliothek*, Copenhagen, 1885; a fresh French translation in *Le Socialiste*, Paris, 1886. From this latter, a Spanish version was prepared and published in Madrid, 1886. The German reprints are not to be counted, there have been twelve altogether at the least. An Armenian translation, which was to be published in Constantinople some months ago, did not see the light, I am told, because the publisher was afraid of bringing out a book with the name of Marx on it, while the translator declined to call it his own production. Of further translations into other languages I have heard but have not seen. Thus the history of the *Manifesto* reflects, to a great extent, the history of the modern working-class movement; at present it is undoubtedly the most wide-spread, the most international production of all socialist literature, the common platform acknowledged by millions of working men from Siberia to California.

Yet, when it was written, we could not have called it a *socialist* manifesto. By socialists, in 1847, were understood, on the one hand, the adherents of the various utopian systems: Owenites in England, Fourierists in France, both of them already reduced to the position of mere sects, and gradually dying out; on the other hand, the most multifarious social quacks, who, by all manner of tinkering, professed to redress, without any danger to capital and profit, all sorts of social grievances, in both cases men outside the working-class movement, and looking rather to the “educated” classes for support. Whatever portion of the working class had become convinced of the insufficiency of mere political revolutions, and had proclaimed the necessity of a total social change, that portion, then, called itself communist. It was a crude, rough-hewn, purely instinctive sort of communism; still, it touched the cardinal point and was

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<sup>†</sup> Engels is mistaken here; the translation of this edition was actually made by Georgi Plekhanov (1856-1918), the founder of the first Russian Marxist group.

powerful enough amongst the working class to produce the utopian communism in France, of Cabet, and in Germany, of Weitling. Thus, socialism was, in 1847, a middle-class movement, communism a working-class movement. Socialism was, on the Continent at least, “respectable”; communism was the very opposite. And as our notion, from the very beginning, was that “the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself”, there could be no doubt as to which of the two names we must take. Moreover, we have, ever since, been far from repudiating it.

The *Manifesto* being our joint production, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition which forms its nucleus belongs to Marx. That proposition is: that in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles form a series of evolution in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class — the proletariat — cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class — the bourgeoisie — without, at the same time, and once and for all emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class-distinction, and class-struggles.

This proposition, which, in my opinion, is destined to do for history what Darwin’s theory has done for biology, we, both of us, had been gradually approaching for some years before 1845. How far I had independently progressed towards it, is best shown by my *Condition of the Working Class in England*. But when I again met Marx at Brussels, in spring, 1845, he had it already worked out, and put it before me in terms almost as clear as those in which I have stated it here.

From our joint preface to the German edition of 1872, I quote the following: However much the state of things may have altered during the last 25 years, the general principles laid down in this *Manifesto* are, on the whole, as correct today as ever. Here and there, some detail might be improved. The practical application of the principles will depend, as the *Manifesto* itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II. That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded today. In view of the gigantic strides of modern industry since 1848, and of the accompanying improved and extended organisation of the working class, in view of the practical experience gained, first in the

February revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, this program has in some details become antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that “the working-class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.” (See *The Civil War in France; Address of the General Council of the International Working-Men’s Association*, London, Truelove, 1871 p. 15, where this point is further developed.) Further, it is self-evident, that the criticism of socialist literature is deficient in relation to the present time, because it comes down only to 1847; also, that the remarks on the relation of the communists to the various opposition parties (Section IV.), although, in principle still correct, yet in practice are antiquated, because the political situation has been entirely changed, and the progress of history has swept from off the earth the greater portion of the political parties there enumerated.

But then, the *Manifesto* has become a historical document which we have no longer any right to alter.

The present translation is by Mr. Samuel Moore, the translator of the greater portion of Marx’s *Capital*. We have revised it in common, and I have added a few notes explanatory of historical allusions.

*Frederick Engels*

London, January 30, 1888

#### **4. From Preface to the German edition of 1890**

The Manifesto has had a history of its own. Greeted with enthusiasm, at the time of its appearance, by the then still not at all numerous vanguard of scientific socialism (as is proved by the translations mentioned in the first preface), it was soon forced into the background by the reaction that began with the defeat of the Paris workers in June 1848, and was finally excommunicated “according to law” by the conviction of the Cologne communists in November 1852. With the disappearance from the public scene of the workers’ movement that had begun with the February Revolution, the Manifesto too passed into the background.

When the working class of Europe had again gathered sufficient strength for a new onslaught upon the power of the ruling classes, the International Working Men’s Association came into being. Its aim was to weld together into *one* huge army the whole militant working class of Europe and America. Therefore it could not *set out* from the principles laid down in the Manifesto. It was bound to have a program which

would not shut the door on the English trade unions, the French, Belgian, Italian and Spanish Proudhonists and the German Lassalleans. This program — the preamble to the Rules of the International — was drawn up by Marx with a master hand acknowledged even by the Bakunin and the anarchists. For the ultimate final triumph of the ideas set forth in the Manifesto Marx relied solely and exclusively upon the intellectual development of the working class, as it necessarily has to ensue from united action and discussion. The events and vicissitudes in the struggle against capital, the defeats even more than the successes, could not but demonstrate to the fighters the inadequacy hitherto of their universal panaceas and make their minds more receptive to a thorough understanding of the true conditions for the emancipation of the workers. And Marx was right. The working class of 1874, at the dissolution of the international, was altogether different from that of 1864, at its foundation. Proudhonism in the Latin countries and the specific Lassalleanism in Germany were dying out and even the then arch-conservative English trade unions were gradually approaching the point where in 1887 the chairman of their Swansea Congress could say in their name: “Continental socialism has lost its terror for us.” Yet by 1887 Continental socialism was almost exclusively the theory heralded in the Manifesto. Thus, to a certain extent, the history of the Manifesto reflects the history of the modern working-class movement since 1848. At present it is doubtless the most widely circulated, the most international product of all socialist literature, the common program of many millions of workers of all countries, from Siberia to California.

Nevertheless, when it appeared we could not have called it a *socialist* manifesto. In 1847 two kinds of people were considered socialists. On the one hand were the adherents of the various utopian systems, notably the Owenites in England and the Fourierists in France, both of whom at that date had already dwindled to mere sects gradually dying out. On the other, the manifold types of social quacks who wanted to eliminate social abuses through their various universal panaceas and all kinds of patchwork, without hurting capital and profit in the least. In both cases, people who stood outside the labour movement and who looked for support rather to the “educated” classes. The section of the working class, however, which demanded a radical reconstruction of society, convinced that mere political revolutions were not enough, then called itself *communist*. It was still a rough-hewn, only instinctive, and frequently somewhat crude communism. Yet it was powerful enough to bring into being two systems of utopian communism — in France the “Icarian” communism of Cabet, and in Germany that of Weitling. Socialism in 1847 signified a bourgeois movement, communism a working-class movement. Socialism was, on the Continent at least, quite respectable, whereas communism was the very opposite. And since we were very decidedly of the opinion as early as then that “the emancipation

of the workers must be the act of the working class itself,” we could have no hesitation as to which of the two names we should choose. Nor has it ever occurred to us since to repudiate it.

“Working men of all countries, unite!” But few voices responded when we proclaimed these words to the world 42 years ago, on the eve of the first Paris revolution in which the proletariat came out with the demands of its own. On September 28, 1864, however, the proletarians of most of the Western European countries united to form the International Working Men’s Association of glorious memory. True, the international itself lived only nine years. But that the eternal union of the proletarians of all countries created by it is still alive and lives stronger than ever, there is no better witness than this day. Because today, as I write these lines, the European and American proletariat is reviewing its fighting forces, mobilised for the first time, mobilised as *one* army, under *one* flag, for *one* immediate aim: the standard eight-hour working day, to be established by legal enactment, as proclaimed by the Geneva Congress of the International in 1866, and again by the Paris Workers’ Congress in 1889. And today’s spectacle will open the eyes of the capitalists and landlords of all countries to the fact that today the working men of all countries are united indeed.

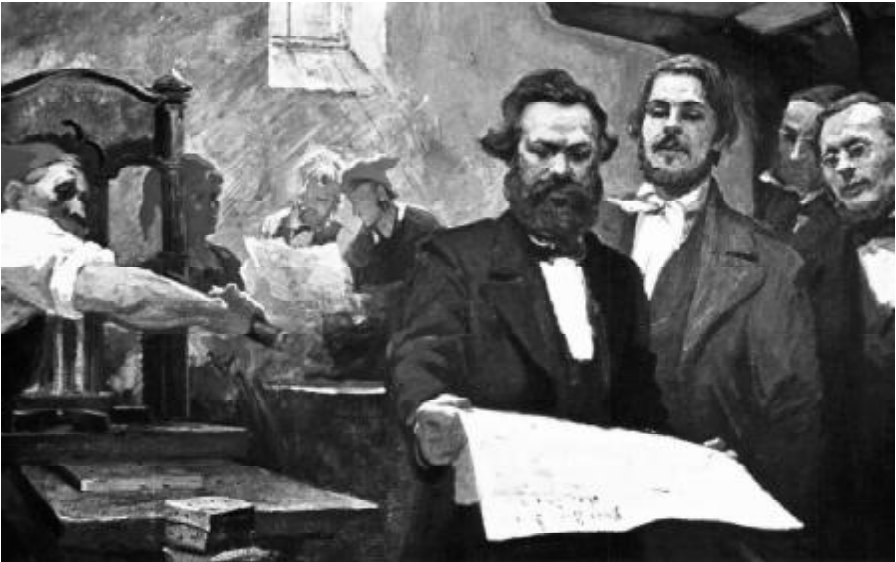
If only Marx were still by my side to see this with his own eyes!

*F. Engels*

London, May 1, 1890

**‘The ruling ideas of each age  
have ever been the ideas of its  
ruling class.’**

**— The Communist Manifesto**



Karl Marx & Frederick Engels during production of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Cologne, 1848-49 (painting by E. Chapiro).

# Manifesto of the Communist Party

*By Karl Marx & Frederick Engels*

A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: pope and tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police spies.

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as communistic by its opponents in power? Where the opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of communism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries?

Two things result from this fact.

I. Communism is already acknowledged by all European powers to be itself a power.

II. It is high time that communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the spectre of communism with a manifesto of the party itself.

To this end, communists of various nationalities have assembled in London, and sketched the following manifesto, to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages.

## **I. Bourgeois and proletarians<sup>†</sup>**

The history of all hitherto existing society<sup>‡</sup> is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster\* and

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<sup>†</sup> By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour. By proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live. [*Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.*]

<sup>‡</sup> That is, all *written* history. In 1847, the pre-history of society, the social organisation

journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, under which industrial production was monopolised by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets.

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existing previous to recorded history, was all but unknown. Since then, Haxthausen discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Maurer proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and by and by village communities were found to be, or to have been the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. The inner organization of this primitive communistic society was laid bare, in its typical form, by Morgan's crowning discovery of the true nature of the *gens* and its relation to the *tribe*. With the dissolution of the primeval communities society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes. I have attempted to retrace this process of dissolution in *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats* [The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State] 2nd edition, Stuttgart, 1886. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

\* Guild-master, that is, a full member of a guild, a master within, not a head of a guild. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]



The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labour between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labour in each single workshop.

Meantime, the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, modern industry, the place of the industrial middle class, by industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

Modern industry has established the world-market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune;<sup>†</sup> here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable “third estate” of the monarchy (as in France), afterward, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semifeudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of modern industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative state, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

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<sup>†</sup> “Commune” was the name taken, in France, by the nascent towns even before they had conquered from their feudal lords and masters local self-government and political rights as the “third estate”. Generally speaking, for the economical development of the bourgeoisie, England is here taken as the typical country; for its political development, France. [*Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.*]

This was the name given their urban communities by the townsmen of Italy and France, after they had purchased or wrested their initial rights of self-government from their feudal lords. [*Note by Engels to the German edition of 1890.*]

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors”, and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment”. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation into a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which reactionists so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man’s activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real condition of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market, given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the

great chagrin of reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down the Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, *i.e.*, to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralised the means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier and one customs-tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations

together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground — what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economical and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeois and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of overproduction. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise

the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? One the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons — the modern working class — the proletarians.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed — a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour,<sup>1</sup> is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of machinery, *etc.*

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois state; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, in the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labour, in other

words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner is the exploitation of the labourer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portion of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, *etc.*

The lower strata of the middle class — the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants — all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which modern industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first, the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the work people of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois condition of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeoisie. Thus the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie.

But with the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing

competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (trade unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there, the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletariat, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus the 10-hours' bill in England was carried.

Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all times with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of

dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance, they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.

The “dangerous class”, the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution, its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

In the condition of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family-relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the



lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of the feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern labourer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential conditions for the existence, and for the sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of modern industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

## **II. Proletarians & communists**

In what relation do the communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?

The communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class

parties.

They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.

They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.

The communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

The immediate aim of the communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.

The theoretical conclusions of the communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer.

They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. The abolition of existing property relations is not at all a distinctive feature of communism.

All property relations in the past have continually been subject to historical change consequent upon the change in historical conditions.

The French Revolution, for example, abolished feudal property in favour of bourgeois property.

The distinguishing feature of communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.

We communists have been reproached with the desire of abolishing the right of personally acquiring property as the fruit of a man's own labour, which property is

alleged to be the groundwork of all personal freedom, activity and independence.

Hard-won, self-acquired, self-earned property! Do you mean the property of the petty artisan and of the small peasant, a form of property that preceded the bourgeois form? There is no need to abolish that; the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it, and is still destroying it daily.

Or do you mean the modern bourgeois private property?

But does wage labour create any property for the labourer? Not a bit. It creates capital, *i.e.*, that kind of property which exploits wage labour, and which cannot increase except upon conditions of begetting a new supply of wage labour for fresh exploitation. Property, in its present form, is based on the antagonism of capital and wage labour. Let us examine both sides of this antagonism.

To be a capitalist, is to have not only a purely personal, but a social *status* in production. Capital is a collective product, and only by the united action of many members, nay, in the last resort, only by the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion.

Capital is, therefore, not a personal, it is a social power.

When, therefore, capital is converted into common property, into the property of all members of society, personal property is not thereby transformed into social property. It is only the social character of the property that is changed. It loses its class character.

Let us now take wage-labour.

The average price of wage-labour is the minimum wage, *i.e.*, that quantum of the means of subsistence, which is absolutely requisite to keep the labourer in bare existence as a labourer. What, therefore, the wage labourer appropriates by means of his labour, merely suffices to prolong and reproduce a bare existence. We by no means intend to abolish this personal appropriation of the products of labour, an appropriation that is made for the maintenance and reproduction of human life, and that leaves no surplus wherewith to command the labour of others. All that we want to do away with is the miserable character of this appropriation, under which the labourer lives merely to increase capital, and is allowed to live only in so far as the interest of the ruling class requires it.

In bourgeois society, living labour is but a means to increase accumulated labour. In communist society, accumulated labour is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the labourer.

In bourgeois society, therefore, the past dominates the present; in Communist society, the present dominates the past. In bourgeois society, capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality.

And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois, abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at.

By freedom is meant, under the present bourgeois conditions of production, free trade, free selling and buying.

But if selling and buying disappears, free selling and buying disappears also. This talk about free selling and buying, and all the other “brave words” of our bourgeois about freedom in general, have a meaning, if any, only in contrast with restricted selling and buying, with the fettered traders of the Middle Ages, but have no meaning when opposed to the communistic abolition of buying and selling, or the bourgeois conditions of production, and of the bourgeoisie itself.

You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its nonexistence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is the nonexistence of any property for the immense majority of society.

In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend.

From the moment when labour can no longer be converted into capital, money, or rent, into a social power capable of being monopolised, *i.e.*, from the moment when individual property can no longer be transformed into bourgeois property, into capital, from that moment, you say, individuality vanishes.

You must, therefore, confess that by “individual” you mean no other person than the bourgeois, than the middle-class owner of property. This person must, indeed, be swept out of the way, and made impossible.

Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriations.

It has been objected that upon the abolition of private property all work will cease, and universal laziness will overtake us.

According to this, bourgeois society ought long ago to have gone to the dogs through sheer idleness; for those of its members who work, acquire nothing, and those who acquire anything, do not work. The whole of this objection is but another expression of the tautology: that there can no longer be any wage labour when there is no longer any capital.

All objections urged against the communistic mode of producing and appropriating

material products, have, in the same way, been urged against the communistic mode of producing and appropriating intellectual products. Just as, to the bourgeois, the disappearance of class property is the disappearance of production itself, so the disappearance of class culture is to him identical with the disappearance of all culture.

That culture, the loss of which he laments, is, for the enormous majority, a mere training to act as a machine.

But don't wrangle with us so long as you apply, to our intended abolition of bourgeois property, the standard of your bourgeois notions of freedom, culture, law, *etc.* Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class.

The selfish misconception that induces you to transform into eternal laws of nature and of reason, the social forms springing from your present mode of production and form of property — historical relations that rise and disappear in the progress of production — this misconception you share with every ruling class that has preceded you. What you see clearly in the case of ancient property, what you admit in the case of feudal property, you are of course forbidden to admit in the case of your own bourgeois form of property.

Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the communists.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.

Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty.

But, you will say, we destroy the most hallowed of relations, when we replace home education by social.

And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, of society, by means of schools, *etc.*? The communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class.

The bourgeois claptrap about the family and education, about the hallowed

correlation of parents and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of modern industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.

But you communists would introduce community of women, screams the whole bourgeoisie in chorus.

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.

For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women which, they pretend, is to be openly and officially established by the communists. The communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost from time immemorial.

Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives.

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalised system of women. For the rest, it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of community of women springing from that system, *i.e.*, of prostitution both public and private.

The communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality.

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself *the* nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.

National differences and antagonism between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world-market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the

emancipation of the proletariat.

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.

The charges against communism made from a religious, a philosophical, and, generally, from an ideological standpoint, are not deserving of serious examination.

Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conception, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.

When people speak of ideas that revolutionise society, they do but express the fact, that within the old society, the elements of a new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence.

When the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the 18th century to rationalist ideas, feudal society fought its death battle with the then revolutionary bourgeoisie. The ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience merely gave expression to the sway of free competition within the domain of knowledge.

"Undoubtedly," it will be said, "religious, moral, philosophical and juridical ideas have been modified in the course of historical development. But religion, morality, philosophy, political science, and law, constantly survived this change."

"There are, besides, eternal truths, such as freedom, justice, *etc.*, that are common to all states of society. But communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."

What does this accusation reduce itself to? The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms, antagonisms that assumed different forms at different epochs.

But whatever form they may have taken, one fact is common to all past ages, *viz.*, the exploitation of one part of society by the other. No wonder, then, that the social consciousness of past ages, despite all the multiplicity and variety it displays, moves within certain common forms, or general ideas, which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms.

The communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involved the most radical rupture with traditional ideas.

But let us have done with the bourgeois objections to communism.

We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, *i.e.*, of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production.

These measures will of course be different in different countries.

Nevertheless, in the most advanced countries, the following will be pretty generally applicable.

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all rights of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with state capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the state.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the state; the bringing into cultivation of wastelands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
8. Equal liability of all to labour. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of all the distinction between town and country,<sup>†</sup> by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.
10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory



labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc., etc.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

### III. Socialist & communist literature

#### 1. Reactionary socialism

##### a. Feudal socialism

Owing to their historical position, it became the vocation of the aristocracies of France and England to write pamphlets against modern bourgeois society. In the French revolution of July 1830, and in the English reform agitation, these aristocracies again succumbed to the hateful upstart. Thenceforth, a serious political contest was altogether out of question. A literary battle alone remained possible. But even in the domain of literature the old cries of the restoration period had become impossible.<sup>†</sup>

In order to arouse sympathy, the aristocracy were obliged to lose sight, apparently, of their own interests, and to formulate their indictment against the bourgeoisie in the interest of the exploited working class alone. Thus the aristocracy took their revenge by singing lampoons on their new master, and whispering in his ears sinister prophecies

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<sup>†</sup> The 1848 edition has “antithesis between town and country”. In the 1872 edition and those German editions that followed it the word “antithesis” was replaced by the word “distinction”. — *Ed.*

<sup>‡</sup> Not the English Restoration 1660 to 1689, but the French Restoration 1814 to 1830. [*Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.*]

of coming catastrophe.

In this way arose Feudal Socialism: half lamentation, half lampoon; half echo of the past, half menace of the future; at times, by its bitter, witty and incisive criticism, striking the bourgeoisie to the very heart's core; but always ludicrous in its effect, through total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history.

The aristocracy, in order to rally the people to them, waved the proletarian alms-bag in front for a banner. But the people, so often as it joined them, saw on their hindquarters the old feudal coats of arms, and deserted with loud and irreverent laughter.

One section of the French Legitimists and "Young England" exhibited this spectacle.

In pointing out that their mode of exploitation was different to that of the bourgeoisie, the feudalists forget that they exploited under circumstances and conditions that were quite different, and that are now antiquated. In showing that, under their rule, the modern proletariat never existed, they forget that the modern bourgeoisie is the necessary offspring of their own form of society.

For the rest, so little do they conceal the reactionary character of their criticism that their chief accusation against the bourgeoisie amounts to this, that under the bourgeois *régime* a class is being developed, which is destined to cut up root and branch the old order of society.

What they upbraid the bourgeoisie with is not so much that it creates a proletariat, as that it creates a *revolutionary* proletariat.

In political practice, therefore, they join in all coercive measures against the working class; and in ordinary life, despite their highfalutin phrases, they stoop to pick up the golden apples dropped from the tree of industry, and to barter truth, love, and honour, for traffic in wool, beetroot-sugar, and potato spirits.<sup>†</sup>

As the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord, so has clerical socialism with Feudal Socialism.

Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the state? Has it not preached in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian socialism is but the holy

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<sup>†</sup> This applies chiefly to Germany, where the landed aristocracy and squirearchy have large portions of their estates cultivated for their own account by stewards, and are, moreover, extensive beetroot-sugar manufacturers and distillers of potato spirits. The wealthier British aristocracy are, as yet, rather above that; but they, too, know how to make up for declining rents by lending their names to floaters or more or less shady joint-stock companies. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

water with which the priest consecrates the heartburnings of the aristocrat.

### **b. Petty-bourgeois socialism**

The feudal aristocracy was not the only class that was ruined by the bourgeoisie, not the only class whose conditions of existence pined and perished in the atmosphere of modern bourgeois society. The medieval burghesses and the small peasant proprietors were the precursors of the modern bourgeoisie. In those countries which are but little developed, industrially and commercially, these two classes still vegetate side by side with the rising bourgeoisie.

In countries where modern civilisation has become fully developed, a new class of petty bourgeois has been formed, fluctuating between proletariat and bourgeoisie and ever renewing itself as a supplementary part of bourgeois society. The individual members of this class, however, are being constantly hurled down into the proletariat by the action of competition, and, as modern industry develops, they even see the moment approaching when they will completely disappear as an independent section of modern society, to be replaced, in manufactures, agriculture and commerce, by overlookers, bailiffs and shopmen.

In countries like France, where the peasants constitute far more than half of the population, it was natural that writers who sided with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, should use, in their criticism of the bourgeois *régime*, the standard of the peasant and petty bourgeois, and from the standpoint of these intermediate classes, should take up the cudgels for the working class. Thus arose petty-bourgeois socialism. Sismondi was the head of this school, not only in France but also in England.

This school of socialism dissected with great acuteness the contradictions in the conditions of modern production. It laid bare the hypocritical apologies of economists. It proved, incontrovertibly, the disastrous effects of machinery and division of labour; the concentration of capital and land in a few hands; overproduction and crises; it pointed out the inevitable ruin of the petty bourgeois and peasant, the misery of the proletariat, the anarchy in production, the crying inequalities in the distribution of wealth, the industrial war of extermination between nations, the dissolution of old moral bonds, of the old family relations, of the old nationalities.

In its positive aims, however, this form of socialism aspires either to restoring the old means of production and of exchange, and with them the old property relations, and the old society, or to cramping the modern means of production and of exchange, within the framework of the old property relations that have been, and were bound to be, exploded by those means. In either case, it is both reactionary and utopian.

Its last words are: corporate guilds for manufacture, patriarchal relations in

agriculture.

Ultimately, when stubborn historical facts had dispersed all intoxicating effects of self-deception, this form of socialism ended in a miserable fit of the blues.

### c. German or 'true' socialism

The socialist and communist literature of France, a literature that originated under the pressure of a bourgeoisie in power, and that was the expression of the struggle against this power, was introduced into Germany at a time when the bourgeoisie, in that country, had just begun its contest with feudal absolutism.

German philosophers, would-be philosophers, and *beaux esprits*, eagerly seized on this literature, only forgetting, that when these writings immigrated from France into Germany, French social conditions had not immigrated along with them. In contact with German social conditions, this French literature lost all its immediate practical significance, and assumed a purely literary aspect. Thus, to the German philosophers of the 18th century, the demands of the first French Revolution were nothing more than the demands of "practical reason" in general, and the utterance of the will of the revolutionary French bourgeoisie signified in their eyes the laws of pure will, of will as it was bound to be, of true human will generally.

The work of the German *literati* consisted solely in bringing the new French ideas into harmony with their ancient philosophical conscience, or rather, in annexing the French ideas without deserting their own philosophic point of view.

This annexation took place in the same way in which a foreign language is appropriated, namely, by translation.

It is well known how the monks wrote silly lives of Catholic saints *over* the manuscripts on which the classical works of ancient heathendom had been written. The German *literati* reversed this process with the profane French literature. They wrote their philosophical nonsense beneath the French original. For instance, beneath the French criticism of the economic functions of money, they wrote "alienation of humanity", and beneath the French criticism of the bourgeois state they wrote "dethronement of the category of the general", and so forth.

The introduction of these philosophical phrases at the back of the French historical criticisms, they dubbed "philosophy of action", "true socialism", "German science of socialism", "philosophical foundation of socialism", and so on.

The French socialist and communist literature was thus completely emasculated. And, since it ceased in the hands of the German to express the struggle of one class with the other, he felt conscious of having overcome "French one-sidedness" and of representing, not true requirements, but the requirements of truth; not the interests

of the proletariat, but the interests of human nature, of man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philosophical fantasy.

This German socialism, which took its schoolboy task so seriously and solemnly, and extolled its poor stock-in-trade in such a mountebank fashion, meanwhile gradually lost its pedantic innocence.

The fight of the Germans, and, especially, of the Prussian bourgeoisie, against feudal aristocracy and absolute monarchy, in other words, the liberal movement, became more earnest.

By this, the long-wished for opportunity was offered to “true” socialism of confronting the political movement with the socialist demands, of hurling the traditional anathemas against liberalism, against representative government, against bourgeois competition, bourgeois freedom of the press, bourgeois legislation, bourgeois liberty and equality, and of preaching to the masses that they had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by this bourgeois movement. German socialism forgot, in the nick of time, that the French criticism, whose silly echo it was, presupposed the existence of modern bourgeois society, with its corresponding economic conditions of existence, and the political constitution adapted thereto, the very things whose attainment was the object of the pending struggle in Germany.

To the absolute governments, with their following of parsons, professors, country squires and officials, it served as a welcome scarecrow against the threatening bourgeoisie.

It was a sweet finish after the bitter pills of floggings and bullets, with which these same governments, just at that time, dosed the German working-class risings.

While this “true” socialism thus served the governments as a weapon for fighting the German bourgeoisie, it, at the same time, directly represented a reactionary interest, the interest of the German Philistines. In Germany, the *petty-bourgeois* class, a relic of the 16th century, and since then constantly cropping up again under various forms, is the real social basis of the existing state of things.

To preserve this class is to preserve the existing state of things in Germany. The industrial and political supremacy of the bourgeoisie threatens it with certain destruction; on the one hand, from the concentration of capital; on the other, from the rise of a revolutionary proletariat. “True” socialism appeared to kill these two birds with one stone. It spread like an epidemic.

The robe of speculative cobwebs, embroidered with flowers of rhetoric, steeped in the dew of sickly sentiment, this transcendental robe in which the German socialists wrapped their sorry “eternal truths,” all skin and bone, served to wonderfully increase the sale of their goods amongst such a public.

And on its part, German socialism recognised, more and more, its own calling as

the bombastic representative of the petty-bourgeois Philistine.

It proclaimed the German nation to be the model nation, and the German petty Philistine to be the typical man. To every villainous meanness of this model man it gave a hidden, higher, socialistic interpretation, the exact contrary of its real character. It went to the extreme length of directly opposing the “brutally destructive” tendency of communism, and of proclaiming its supreme and impartial contempt of all class struggles. With very few exceptions, all the so-called socialist and communist publications that now (1847) circulate in Germany belong to the domain of this foul and enervating literature.†

## 2. Conservative, or bourgeois, socialism

A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society.

To this section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organisers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind. This form of socialism has, moreover, been worked out into complete systems.

We may cite Proudhon’s *Philosophie de la Misère* as an example of this form.

The socialistic bourgeois want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting therefrom. They desire the existing state of society minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. They wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat. The bourgeoisie naturally conceives the world in which it is supreme to be the best; and bourgeois socialism develops this comfortable conception into various more or less complete systems. In requiring the proletariat to carry out such a system, and thereby to march straightway into the social New Jerusalem, it but requires in reality, that the proletariat should remain within the bounds of existing society, but should cast away all its hateful ideas concerning the bourgeoisie.

A second and more practical, but less systematic, form of this socialism sought to depreciate every revolutionary movement in the eyes of the working class, by showing that no mere political reform, but only a change in the material conditions of existence, in economical relations, could be of any advantage to them. By changes in the material

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† The revolutionary storm of 1848 swept away this whole shabby tendency and cured its protagonists of the desire to dabble further in socialism. The chief representative and classical type of this tendency is Herr Karl Grün. [Note by Engels to the German edition of 1890.]

conditions of existence, this form of socialism, however, by no means understands abolition of the bourgeois relations of production, an abolition that can be affected only by a revolution, but administrative reforms, based on the continued existence of these relations; reforms, therefore, that in no respect affect the relations between capital and labour, but, at the best, lessen the cost, and simplify the administrative work, of bourgeois government.

Bourgeois socialism attains adequate expression, when, and only when, it becomes a mere figure of speech.

Free trade: for the benefit of the working class. Protective duties: for the benefit of the working class. Prison reform: for the benefit of the working class. This is the last word and the only seriously meant word of bourgeois Socialism.

It is summed up in the phrase: the bourgeois is a bourgeois — for the benefit of the working class.

### **3. Critical-utopian socialism & communism**

We do not here refer to that literature which, in every great modern revolution, has always given voice to the demands of the proletariat, such as the writings of Babeuf and others.

The first direct attempts of the proletariat to attain its own ends, made in times of universal excitement, when feudal society was being overthrown, these attempts necessarily failed, owing to the then undeveloped state of the proletariat, as well as to the absence of the economic conditions for its emancipation, conditions that had yet to be produced, and could be produced by the impending bourgeois epoch alone. The revolutionary literature that accompanied these first movements of the proletariat had necessarily a reactionary character. It inculcated universal asceticism and social levelling in its crudest form.

The socialist and communist systems properly so called, those of Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen and others, spring into existence in the early undeveloped period, described above, of the struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie (see Section I. Bourgeoisie and Proletariat).

The founders of these systems see, indeed, the class antagonisms, as well as the action of the decomposing elements, in the prevailing form of society. But the proletariat, as yet in its infancy, offers to them the spectacle of a class without any historical initiative or any independent political movement.

Since the development of class antagonism keeps even pace with the development of industry, the economic situation, as they find it, does not as yet offer to them the material conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat. They therefore search

after a new social science, after new social laws, that are to create these conditions.

Historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action, historically created conditions of emancipation to fantastic ones, and the gradual, spontaneous class-organisation of the proletariat to an organisation of society especially contrived by these inventors. Future history resolves itself, in their eyes, into the propaganda and the practical carrying out of their social plans.

In the formation of their plans they are conscious of caring chiefly for the interests of the working class, as being the most suffering class. Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them.

The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, causes socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. They want to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favoured. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without distinction of class; nay, by preference, to the ruling class. For how can people, when once they understand their system, fail to see in it the best possible plan of the best possible state of society?

Hence, they reject all political, and especially all revolutionary action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavour by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social gospel.

Such fantastic pictures of future society, painted at a time when the proletariat is still in a very undeveloped state and has but a fantastic conception of its own position, correspond with the first instinctive yearnings of that class for a general reconstruction of society.

But these socialist and communist publications contain also a critical element. They attack every principle of existing society. Hence they are full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class. The practical measures proposed in them — such as the abolition of the distinction between town and country, of the family, of the carrying on of industries for the account of private individuals, and of the wage system, the proclamation of social harmony, the conversion of the functions of the state into a mere superintendence of production, all these proposals point solely to the disappearance of class antagonisms which were, at that time, only just cropping up, and which, in these publications, are recognised in their earliest, indistinct and undefined forms only. These proposals, therefore, are of a purely Utopian character.

The significance of critical-utopian socialism and communism bears an inverse relation to historical development. In proportion as the modern class struggle develops and takes definite shape, this fantastic standing apart from the contest, these fantastic attacks on it, lose all practical value and all theoretical justification. Therefore, although the originators of these systems were, in many respects, revolutionary, their disciples



have, in every case, formed mere reactionary sects. They hold fast by the original views of their masters, in opposition to the progressive historical development of the proletariat. They, therefore, endeavour, and that consistently, to deaden the class struggle and to reconcile the class antagonisms. They still dream of experimental realisation of their social utopias, of founding isolated “*phalanstères*”, of establishing “Home Colonies,” of setting up a “Little Icaria”<sup>†</sup> — *duodecimo* editions of the New Jerusalem — and to realise all these castles in the air, they are compelled to appeal to the feelings and purses of the bourgeois. By degrees they sink into the category of the reactionary conservative socialists depicted above, differing from these only by more systematic pedantry, and by their fanatical and superstitious belief in the miraculous effects of their social science.

They, therefore, violently oppose all political action on the part of the working class; such action, according to them, can only result from blind unbelief in the new gospel.

The Owenites in England, and the Fourierists in France, respectively, oppose the Chartists and the *Réformistes*.

#### **IV. Position of the communists in relation to the various existing opposition parties**

Section II has made clear the relations of the communists to the existing working-class parties, such as the Chartists in England and the Agrarian Reformers in America.

The communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement. In France the communists ally themselves with the Social-Democrats<sup>‡</sup> against the conservative and radical bourgeoisie, reserving, however, the right to take up a critical position in regard to phases and illusions traditionally handed down from the great revolution.

In Switzerland they support the Radicals, without losing sight of the fact that this party consists of antagonistic elements, partly of democratic socialists, in the French

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<sup>†</sup> *Phalanstères* were socialist colonies on the plan of Charles Fourier; *Icaria* was the name given by Cabet to his utopia and, later on, to his American communist colony. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

“Home colonies” were what Owen called his communist model societies. *Phalanstères* was the name of the public palaces planned by Fourier. *Icaria* was the name given to the utopian land of fancy, whose communist institutions Cabet portrayed. [Note by Engels to the German edition of 1890.]

<sup>‡</sup> The party then represented in Parliament by Ledru-Rollin, in literature by Louis Blanc,

sense, partly of radical bourgeois.

In Poland they support the party that insists on an agrarian revolution as the prime condition for national emancipation, that party which fomented the insurrection of Cracow in 1846.

In Germany they fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie.

But they never cease, for a single instant, to instill into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in order that the German workers may straightway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary classes in Germany, the fight against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin.

The communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation and with a much more developed proletariat, than that of England was in the 17th, and of France in the 18th century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.

In short, the communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.

In all these movements they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time.

Finally, they labour everywhere for the union and agreement of the democratic parties of all countries.

The communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

*Working men of all countries, unite!* ■

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in the daily press by the *Réforme*. The name of Social-Democracy signified, with these its inventors, a section of the democratic or republican party more or less tinged with socialism. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

The party in France which at that time called itself Socialist-Democratic was represented in political life by Ledru-Rollin and in literature by Louis Blanc; thus it differed immeasurably from present-day German social-democracy. [Note by Engels to the German edition of 1890.]

## Appendix 1

# Principles of Communism

*By Frederick Engels*

**Question 1:** *What is communism?*

*Answer:* Communism is the doctrine of the conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

**Question 2:** *What is the proletariat?*

*Answer:* The proletariat is that class of society which procures its means of livelihood entirely and solely from the sale of its labour and not from the profit derived from some capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose whole existence depend on the demand for labour, hence, on the alternations of times of good business and times of bad business, on the fluctuations resulting from unbridled competition. The proletariat, or class of proletarians, is, in a word, the working class of the 19th century.

**Question 3:** *Thus, have there not always been proletarians?*

*Answer:* No. Poor folk and working classes have always existed, and the working classes have for the most part been poor. But such poor, such workers who lived under the just mentioned conditions, that is, proletarians, have not always existed, any more than competition has always been free and unbridled.

**Question 4:** *How did the proletariat arise?*

*Answer:* The proletariat arose as a result of the industrial revolution which unfolded in England in the latter half of the last century and which has repeated itself since then in all the civilised countries of the world. This industrial revolution was brought about by

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Written by Engels at the end of October-November 1847.

the invention of the steam engine, of various spinning machines, of the power-loom, and of a great number of other mechanical devices. These machines which were very expensive and, consequently, could only be purchased by big capitalists altered the entire hitherto existing mode of production and ousted the hitherto existing workers because machines produced cheaper and better commodities than could the workers with their imperfect spinning wheels and hand-loom. Thus, these machines handed over industry entirely to the big capitalists and rendered the workers' scanty property (tools, hand-loom, *etc.*) worthless, so that the capitalists soon owned everything and nothing was left to the workers. In this way the factory system was introduced in the realm of textile production. The impetus to the introduction of machinery and the factory system once having been given, the latter rapidly invaded all the other branches of industry, notably the textile- and book-printing trades, pottery, and hardware industry. More and more did labour come to be divided among many workers, so that the worker who formerly had made the entire article, now merely produced a part of the article. This division of labour made it possible to supply products more speedily and therefore cheaper. It reduced the labour of each worker to a very simple, constantly repeating mechanical operation, which could be performed by the machine not only equally well, but even a good deal better. In this way, all these branches of industry one after another fell under the dominion of steam power, machinery, and the factory system, just like the spinning and weaving industries. But thereby all of them fell into the hands of the big capitalists, and here too the workers were deprived of the last shred of independence. Gradually, in addition to actual manufacture, the handicrafts likewise fell increasingly under the dominion of the factory system, because here too big capitalists pushed small masters more and more aside by erecting large workshops, in which much expense was spared and the labour could also be conveniently divided among the workers. In this way it has come about that in all civilised countries almost all branches of labour are carried on under the factory system, that in almost all these branches handicraft and manufacture have been ousted by large-scale industry. As a result, the former middle classes, especially the smaller master handicraftsmen, have been increasingly driven to ruin, the former position of the workers has completely changed, and two new classes which are gradually absorbing all other classes have come into being, namely:

1. The class of big capitalists who, in all civilised countries, already now almost exclusively own all the means of subsistence and the raw materials and instruments (machinery, factories, *etc.*), needed for the production of these means of subsistence. This class is the bourgeois class or bourgeoisie.
2. The class of those who own absolutely nothing, who are compelled therefore to

sell their labour to the bourgeois in order to obtain the necessary means of subsistence in exchange. This class is called the proletarian class or proletariat.

**Question 5:** *Under what conditions does this sale of the labour of proletarians to the bourgeois take place?*

*Answer:* Labour is a commodity like any other and its price is determined by the same laws as that of any other commodity. The price of a commodity under the dominion of large-scale industry or of free competition, which, as we shall see, means the same thing, is on the average always equal to the cost of production of that commodity. The price of labour is, therefore, likewise equal to the cost of production of labour. The latter cost consists precisely of that sum of the means of subsistence which is needed to make the worker fit to perform the labour and to prevent the working class from dying out. Thus, the worker will not receive more for his labour than is necessary for that purpose; the price of labour, or wages, will be the lowest, the minimum required to maintain a livelihood. Since business is now worse, now better, the worker receives now more, now less, just as the factory owner receives now more, now less for his commodity. But just as the factory owner receives on the average, be the times good or be they bad, neither more nor less for his commodity than the cost of its production, so will the worker, on the average, receive neither more nor less than that minimum. This economic law of wages will come to be more stringently applied the more all branches of labour are taken over by large-scale industry.

**Question 6:** *What working classes existed before the industrial revolution?*

*Answer:* Depending on the different stages of the development of society, the working classes lived in different conditions and stood in different relations to the possessing and ruling classes. In ancient times the working people were the *slaves* of their owners, just as they still are in many backward countries and even in the southern part of the United States. In the Middle Ages they were *serfs* belonging to the land owning nobility, just as they still are in Hungary, Poland, and Russia. In the Middle Ages and up to the industrial revolution there were in the towns also handicraftsmen in the service of petty-bourgeois masters, and with the development of manufacture there gradually emerged manufactory workers, now employed by the more or less big capitalists.

**Question 7:** *In what way does the proletarian differ from the slave?*

*Answer:* The slave is sold outright, the proletarian has to sell himself by the day and by the hour. Each individual slave, the property of a *single* master, is guaranteed a subsistence even if only by the interests of his master, however wretched it may be;

each individual proletarian, the property, as it were, of the whole bourgeois *class*, whose labour is bought only when it is needed by someone, has no guaranteed subsistence. This subsistence is merely guaranteed to the proletarian *class* as a whole. The slave stands outside of competition, the proletarian stands in it and feels all its fluctuations. The slave is counted a thing and not a member of civil society; the proletarian is looked upon as a person, as a member of civil society. Thus, the slave may lead a better life than the proletarian, but the proletarian belongs to a higher stage of development of society and himself stands at a higher stage than the slave. The slave frees himself by rupturing of all private property relations only the relation of slavery, and thereby becomes himself a proletarian; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in general.

**Question 8:** *In what way does the proletarian differ from the serf?*

*Answer:* The serf has the possession and use of an instrument of production, a strip of land, in return for which he hands over a portion of the yield or performs work. The proletarian works with instruments of production belonging to another for this other in return for a portion of the yield. The serf gives, the proletarian is given. The serf has a guaranteed subsistence, the proletarian has not. The serf stands outside of competition, the proletarian stands in it. The serf frees himself either by running away to the town and there becoming a handicraftsman or by giving his landlord money instead of labour and products, thereby becoming a free leaseholder; or by driving his feudal lord away and himself becoming a proprietor, in short, by entering in one way or another the ranks of the possessing class and competition. The proletarian frees himself by abolishing competition, private property and all class distinctions.

**Question 9:** *In what way does the proletarian differ from the handicraftsman.*<sup>†</sup>

**Question 10:** *In what way does the proletarian differ from the manufactory worker?*

*Answer:* The manufactory worker of the 16th to the 18th centuries almost everywhere still had the ownership of his instrument of production, his loom, the family spinning wheels, and a little plot of land which he cultivated in his leisure hours. The proletarian has none of these things. The manufactory worker lives almost exclusively in the country under more or less patriarchal relations with his landlord or his employer; the proletarian dwells mostly in large towns, and his relation to his employer is purely a

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<sup>†</sup> Further the manuscript has a blank space left by Engels for the answer. — *Ed.*

money relation. The manufactory worker, wrested by large-scale industry from his patriarchal conditions, loses the property he still owns and thereby himself becomes a proletarian.

**Question 11:** *What were the immediate results of the industrial revolution and the division of society into bourgeois and proletarians?*

*Answer:* In the first place, since owing to machine labour the prices of industrial products constantly decreased, the old system of manufacture or industry founded upon manual labour was completely destroyed in all countries of the world. All semibarbarian countries, which had hitherto been more or less cut off from historical development and whose industry had until now been based on manufacture, were thus forcibly dragged out of their isolation. They bought the cheaper commodities of the English and allowed their own manufactory workers to perish. Thus it was that countries which had stagnated for millennia, India for example, were revolutionised from top to base and even China is now marching towards a revolution. Thus, it has come about that a machine invented in England today, within a year robs millions of workers in China of their daily bread. In this way large-scale industry has brought all the peoples of the earth into relationships one with another, has lumped all the small local markets into one world market, has everywhere paved the way for civilisation and progress, and things have reached a point when everything that happens in the civilised countries has its repercussions in all other countries. Thus, if the workers of England or France free themselves now, this must induce revolutions in all other countries, which sooner or later will lead to the emancipation of the workers there too.

*Secondly*, wherever large-scale industry replaced manufacture, the industrial revolution developed the bourgeoisie, its wealth and its power to the highest degree and made it the first class in the country. The result was that wherever this happened, the bourgeoisie took political power in its hands and ousted the hitherto ruling classes, the aristocracy, the guild burghers and the absolute monarchy representing the two. The bourgeoisie annihilated the power of the aristocracy, the nobility, by abolishing entails or the prohibition of the sale of landed property, and the privileges of the nobility. The bourgeoisie destroyed the power of the guild burghers by abolishing all guilds and craft privileges. It replaced the two by free competition, that is, by a system of society in which each has the right to engage in any branch of industry, and where nothing can hinder him in this but lack of the necessary capital. The introduction of free competition, therefore, constitutes a public declaration that henceforward members of society are only unequal in so far as their capital is unequal, that capital is the decisive power, and that, hence, the capitalists, the bourgeois, have become the

first class in society. But free competition is necessary in the beginning of large-scale industry for it is the only state of society in which large-scale industry can grow. As soon as the bourgeoisie had thus annihilated the social power of the nobility and the guild burghers, it annihilated their political power as well. Having become the first class in society, the bourgeoisie proclaimed itself the first class also in the political field. It did this by establishing the representative system which rests upon bourgeois equality before the law and the legal recognition of free competition, and which in European countries was introduced in the form of constitutional monarchy. Under these constitutional monarchies those only are electors who possess a certain amount of capital, that is to say, the bourgeois; these bourgeois electors elect the deputies, and these bourgeois deputies, by way of the right to refuse supplies, elect a bourgeois government.

*Thirdly*, the industrial revolution built up the proletariat in the same measure in which it built up the bourgeoisie. In the same relation in which the bourgeois gained wealth, the proletarians gained in numbers. Since proletarians can only be employed by capital and since capital can only increase when it employs labour, the growth of the proletariat keeps exact pace with the growth of capital. Simultaneously, it assembles the bourgeois and the proletarians in large cities, in which industry can be carried on most profitably, and by this herding together of great masses in *one* spot makes the proletarians conscious of their power. Furthermore, the more it develops, the more machines are invented, which oust manual labour, the more large-scale industry depresses, as we already said, wages to the minimum, and thereby makes the proletariat's conditions more and more unbearable. Thus, by the growing discontent of the proletariat, on the one hand, and its growing power, on the other, the industrial revolution prepares the way for a social revolution by the proletariat.

**Question 12:** *What were the further results of the industrial revolution?*

*Answer:* In the steam engine and other machines large-scale industry created the means making it possible in a short period of time and at slight expense to increase industrial production to an unlimited extent. Free competition, the essential result of large-scale industry, soon assumed thanks to the facility of production an extremely intense nature; a great number of capitalists applied themselves to industry, and very soon more was produced than could be utilised. The result was that manufactured goods could not be sold, and a so-called trade crisis ensued. Factories had to stand idle, factory owners went bankrupt, and the workers lost their bread. Abject misery set in. After a while the surplus products were sold, the factories were again set a-going, wages went up, and gradually business was more brisk than ever. But before



long again too many commodities were produced, another crisis ensued, and ran the same course as the previous one. Thus since the beginning of this century the state of industry has constantly fluctuated between periods of prosperity and periods of crisis, and a similar crisis has recurred at almost regular intervals of five to seven years, bringing in its train ever more intolerable wretchedness for the workers, a general revolutionary ferment, and the greatest danger to the entire existing system.

**Question 13:** *What conclusions can be drawn from these regularly recurring trade crises?*

*Answer:* First, that although in the initial stages of its development large-scale industry itself created free competition, it now has outgrown free competition; that competition and in general the carrying on of industrial production by individuals have become a fetter upon large-scale industry, which it must and will break; that large-scale industry, so long as it is conducted on its present basis, can only survive through a general confusion repeating every seven years, which every time threatens all of civilisation, not merely casting the proletarians into a well of misery but likewise causing the ruin of a great number of bourgeois; that, hence, either large-scale industry must be given up, which is quite impossible, or that it makes absolutely necessary a totally new organisation of society, in which no longer individual factory owners, competing one, against the other, but the whole of society runs industrial production according to a fixed plan and according to the needs of all.

*Secondly*, that large-scale industry and the unlimited expansion of production made possible by it can bring into being a social order wherein so much of all necessities of life is produced that every member of society will be able to develop and to apply all his powers and abilities in the fullest freedom. Thus, precisely that quality of large-scale industry which in present-day society produces all misery and all trade crises is exactly the one which under a different social organisation will destroy that very misery and these disastrous fluctuations.

Thus it is clearly proved:

1. That from now on all these ills can be attributed exclusively to the social order which no longer corresponds to the existing conditions.
2. That the means are ready to hand for fully abolishing these ills through the establishment of a new social order.

**Question 14:** *What kind of a new social order will this have to be?*

*Answer:* First of all, the new social order will generally take the running of industry and all branches of production out of the hands of disjointed individuals competing among themselves and will instead run all these branches of production on behalf of society

as a whole, *i.e.*, according to a social plan and with the participation of all members of society. Thus it will do away with competition and replace it by association. Since the running of industry by individuals inevitably leads to private ownership and since competition is nothing but the manner in which industry is run by individual private owners, private ownership cannot be separated from the individual running of industry and competition. Hence, private ownership will also have to be abolished, and in its stead there will be common use of all the instruments of production and the distribution of all products by common agreement, or a so-called community of goods. The abolition of private ownership is even the most succinct and most characteristic summary expression of the transformation of the entire social system inevitably following from the development of industry, and it is therefore right that this is the main demand put forward by the communists.

**Question 15:** *Consequently, the abolition of private property was impossible earlier?*

**Answer:** Right. Every change in the social order, every revolution in property relations is the essential result of the creation of new productive forces which no longer correspond to the old property relations. Private property itself arose in this way. For private property has not always existed, but when towards the end of the Middle Ages a new mode of production was introduced in the form of manufacture, which was incompatible with the then existing feudal and guild property, manufacture, which had outgrown the old property relations, created a new form of ownership — private ownership. No other property form than that of private ownership was possible during the period of manufacture and in the first stage of the development of large-scale industry, no other order of society than that founded upon private ownership. So long as there cannot be produced enough not only to supply all, but also to provide a surplus of products for the increase of social capital and for the further development of the productive forces, so long there must always be a dominant class, ruling over the productive forces of society, and a poor, oppressed class. The way in which these classes are constituted will depend upon the stage of the development of production. In the Middle Ages, which were dependent upon agriculture, we find the lord and the serf; the towns of the later Middle Ages provide us with the master guildsman and his apprentices and day labourers; the 17th century has manufacturers and manufactory workers; the 19th century — the big factory owner and the proletarian. It is obvious that hitherto the productive forces had not yet been developed widely enough to produce sufficiency for all, and to make private property a fetter, a barrier, to these productive forces. Now, however, when the development of large-scale industry has, *firstly*, created capital and productive forces on a scale hitherto unheard of and the

means exist for multiplying these productive forces in a short span of time unendingly; when, *secondly*, these productive forces are concentrated in the hands of a few bourgeois whilst the great mass of the people are falling ever more into the ranks of the proletariat, and their condition is becoming more wretched and unendurable in the same measure in which the wealth of the bourgeois multiplies; when, *thirdly*, these mighty and easily multiplied productive forces have so greatly outgrown private property and the bourgeois that they constantly cause violent disturbances in the social order only now has the abolition of private property become not only possible but even strictly essential.

**Question 16:** *Will it be possible to bring about the abolition of private property by peaceful methods?*

*Answer:* It is to be desired that this could happen, and communists certainly would be the last to resist it. The communists know only too well that all conspiracies are not only futile but even harmful. They know only too well that revolutions are not made deliberately and arbitrarily, but that everywhere and at all times they were the essential outcome of circumstances quite independent of the will and the leadership of particular parties and entire classes. But they likewise perceive that the development of the proletariat is in nearly every civilised country forcibly suppressed, and that thereby the opponents of the communists are tending in every way to promote revolution. Should the oppressed proletariat in the end be goaded into a revolution, we communists will then defend the cause of the proletarians by deed just as well as we do now by word.

**Question 17:** *Will it be possible to abolish private property at one blow?*

*Answer:* No, such a thing would be just as impossible as at one blow to multiply the existing productive forces to the degree necessary for the creation of the community. Hence, the proletarian revolution, which in all likelihood is approaching, will only be able gradually to transform existing society, and will abolish private ownership only when the necessary quantity of means of production has been created.

**Question 18:** *What will be the course of this revolution?*

*Answer:* In the first place it will inaugurate a *democratic constitution* and thereby directly or indirectly the political rule of the proletariat. Directly in England, where the proletariat already constitutes the majority of the people. Indirectly in France and in Germany, where the majority of the people consists, in addition to proletarians, of petty peasants and bourgeois, who are now being proletarianised and in their political interests are becoming more and more dependent on the proletariat and therefore soon will have to submit to the demands of the proletariat. Perhaps this will involve a

second fight, one that can end only in the victory of the proletariat.

Democracy would be quite useless to the proletariat if it were not immediately utilised as a means of accomplishing further measures directly attacking private ownership and securing the existence of the proletariat. Principal among these measures, already now consequent upon the existing relations, are the following:

1. Restriction of private ownership by means of progressive income taxes, high inheritance taxes, abolition of inheritance by collateral lines (brothers, nephews, *etc.*), compulsory loans, and so forth.

2. Gradual expropriation of landed proprietors, factory owners, railway and shipping magnates, partly through competition on the part of state industry and partly directly through the payment of compensation in currency notes.

3. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels against the majority of the people.

4. Organisation of the labour or occupation of the proletarians on national estates, in national factories and workshops, thereby putting an end to competition among the workers themselves and compelling the factory owners, as long as they still exist, to pay the same high wages as those paid by the state.

5. Equal liability to work for all members of society until the abolition of private ownership is completed. Formation of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

6. Centralisation of the credit and banking systems in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with state capital and the suppression of all private banks and bankers.

7. Increase of national factories, workshops, railways, and ships, cultivation of all uncultivated land and improvement of the already cultivated land in the same proportion in which the capital and workers at the disposal of the nation are increasing.

8. Education of all children, as soon as they are old enough to dispense with maternal care, in national institutions and at the charge of the nation. Education combined with production.

9. The erection of large palaces on national estates as common dwellings for communities of citizens carrying on industry as well as agriculture, and combining the advantages of urban and rural life without the citizens having to suffer from the oneness and the disadvantages of either.

10. The demolition of all insanitary and badly built houses and blocks of flats.

11. Equal right of inheritance to be enjoyed by illegitimate and legitimate children.

12. Concentration of all means of transport in the hands of the nation.

Of course, all these measures cannot be introduced at once. But one will always lead to the other. Once the first radical onslaught upon private ownership has been

made, the proletariat will be compelled to go further, and more and more to concentrate in the hands of the state all capital, all agriculture, all industry, all transport, and all means of exchange. All these measures work towards such results; and they will become realisable and their centralising consequences will develop in the same proportion in which the productive forces of the country will multiply through the labour of the proletariat. Finally, when all capital, all production, and all exchange are concentrated in the hands of the nation, private ownership will automatically have ceased to exist, money will have become superfluous, and production will have so increased and men will have so changed that the last forms of the old social relations will also be able to fall away.

**Question 19:** *Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?*

*Answer:* No. Large-scale industry, already by creating the world market, has so linked up all the peoples of the Earth, and especially the civilised peoples, that each people is dependent on what happens to another. Further, large-scale industry has levelled the social development of all civilised countries so much that in all these countries the bourgeoisie and proletariat have become the decisive two classes of society, and the struggle between them has become the main struggle of the day. The communist revolution, therefore, will be not only a national one; it will take place in all civilised countries, that is, at least simultaneously in England, America, France and Germany. In each of these countries it will take a longer or a shorter time to develop depending on which has a more developed industry, more wealth and a greater mass of the productive forces. It will therefore assume the slowest pace and be most difficult to achieve in Germany; it will be quickest and easiest to carry out in England. It will also exercise considerable influence upon other countries of the world, completely changing the hitherto existing mode of their development and accelerating it greatly. It is to be a world revolution, and will, therefore, have the whole world as its arena.

**Question 20:** *What will be the consequences of the final abolition of private ownership?*

*Answer:* The expropriation by society of the private capitalists of the use of all productive forces and means of communication, as well as of the exchange and distribution of products, and their management by society according to a plan based on the available means and the requirements of society as a whole, will eliminate first of all the bad consequences large-scale industry entails at present. Crises will cease to be; the extended production, which in the present system of society spells overproduction and is such a mighty cause of misery, will then not even suffice and have to be further expanded. Instead of bringing misery in its wake, over production exceeding the immediate

needs of society, will satisfy the needs of all, will create new needs and simultaneously the means for their gratification. It will become the condition and stimulus of further progress, it will achieve progress, without, as heretofore, always involving the social order in confusion. Once liberated from the yoke of private ownership, large-scale industry will develop on a scale that will make its present level of development seem as paltry as seems the manufacturing system compared with large-scale industry of our time. This development of industry will provide society with a quantity of products sufficient to satisfy the needs of all. Agriculture, too, hindered by the pressure of private ownership and the parcellation of land from introducing available improvements and scientific achievements, will mark a new advance and place at the disposal of society an ample mass of products. Thus society will produce sufficient products to arrange a distribution that will satisfy the requirements of all its members. The division of society into various antagonistic classes will thereby become superfluous. Not only will it become superfluous, but it will even be incompatible with the new social order. Classes came into existence through the division of labour and the division of labour in its hitherto existing form will entirely disappear. Mechanical and chemical auxiliaries do not alone suffice to develop industrial and agricultural production to the described heights, the abilities of the people setting these auxiliaries in motion must likewise be correspondingly developed. Just as in the last century, the peasants and the manufactory workers had to change their entire way of life, and themselves became totally different people, when they were drawn into large-scale industry, so also will the joint management of production by society as a whole and the resultant new development of production require quite different people and also mould them. The joint management of production cannot be carried on by people as they are today, when each individual is assigned to a single branch of production, is shackled to it, exploited by it, of whom each has developed only *one* of his abilities at the expense of all others, knows only *one* branch, or only a branch of a branch of production as a whole. Even contemporary industry finds less and less use for such people. Industry which is carried on jointly and according to plan by the whole of society wholly presupposes people whose abilities have been developed all round, who are capable of surveying the entire system of production. Consequently, the division of labour already undermined by the machine system, which makes one man a peasant, another a shoemaker, a third a factory worker, a fourth a stockjobber, will thus completely disappear. Education will enable young people quickly to acquaint themselves with the whole system of production, it will enable them to pass in turn from one branch of industry to another according to social needs or the bidding of their own inclinations. It will therefore abolish the on-sidedness in development imposed on all by the present

division of labour. Thus, a communistically organised society will be able to provide its members with the opportunity to utilise their comprehensively developed abilities in a comprehensive way. Concomitantly, the various classes will vanish of necessity. Thus, on the one hand, communistically organised society is incompatible with the existence of classes, on the other, the making of this society itself provides the means for removing these class distinctions.

It follows from all this that the antithesis between town and country will likewise disappear. The carrying on of agriculture and industrial production by the same people, instead of by two different classes, is, even for purely material reasons, an essential condition of communistic association. The scattering of the agricultural population throughout the country, alongside the crowding of the industrial population in the big towns, is a state adequate only to an undeveloped stage of agriculture and industry, an obstacle to all further development, which is making itself very perceptible even now.

The general association of all members of society for the common and planned exploitation of the productive forces, the expansion of production to a degree where it suffices to provide for the needs of all, the cessation of the condition when the satisfaction of the needs of some is effected at the expense of others, the complete abolition of classes and their antitheses, the all round development of the abilities of all the members of society through the abolition of the hitherto prevalent division of labour, through industrial education, through the change of activity, through the participation of all in the blessings produced by all, through the fusion of town and country — such are the main results to be expected from the abolition of private property.

**Question 21:** *What influence will the communistic order of society have upon the family?*

*Answer:* It will make the relations between the sexes a purely private affair which concerns only the persons involved, and calls for no interference by society. It is able to do this because it abolishes private property and educates children communally, destroying thereby the two foundation stones of hitherto existing marriage — the dependence of the wife upon her husband and of the children upon the parents conditioned by private property. This is an answer to the outcry raised by moralising philistines against the communistic community of wives. Community of wives is a relationship belonging entirely to bourgeois society and existing today in perfect form as prostitution. Prostitution, however, is rooted in private property and falls with it. Hence, the communistic organisation rather than establishing the community of women, puts an end to it.

**Question 22:** *What will be the attitude of the communistic organisation towards the existing nationalities?*

— remains.†

**Question 23:** *What will be its attitude towards the existing religions?*

— remains.†

**Question 24:** *In what way do communists differ from socialists ?*

*Answer:* So-called socialists may be divided into three groups.

The first group consists of adherents of feudal and patriarchal society which has been or is still being daily destroyed by large-scale industry and world trade, and by bourgeois society which these two have brought into existence. From the ills of present day society this group draws the conclusion that feudal and patriarchal society should be re established because it was free of these evils. All their proposals lead directly or indirectly to this goal. This group of *reactionary* socialists, despite their alleged sympathy for and shedding of hot tears over the miseries of the proletariat, will be strongly opposed by the communists, because:

1. They are striving after something purely impossible.

2. They are endeavouring to re establish the rule of the aristocracy, the guild masters and the manufacturers, with their retinue of absolute or feudal monarchs, officials, soldiery and priests, a society which, although it was free from the drawbacks of present day society, nevertheless had at least as many ills of its own and did not even have the prospect of an emancipation of the oppressed workers through a communistic organisation.

3. They always reveal their genuine intents whenever the proletariat turns revolutionary and communistic, in which case they immediately ally themselves with the bourgeoisie against the proletarians.

The second group is composed of adherents of the present-day society, in whom the ills which are its inevitable outcome have awakened anxiety for the existence of that society. They are, therefore, endeavouring to keep the present day society intact while eliminating the ills linked with it. With this end in view, some of them propose various welfare measures, while others advocate magnificent reform systems which, under pretext of reorganising society, would retain the foundations of present day society, and thereby present day society itself. These *bourgeois socialists* will have

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† This apparently means that the answer was to remain as formulated in one of the preliminary draft programs of the Communist League, which has not come down to us. — *Ed.*



likewise to be persistently opposed by the communists, for they are working for the foes of the communists and are defending the society which the communists are out to destroy.

Finally, the third group is made up of democratic socialists, who in the same way as the communists desire part of the measures in Question —,† but not as means for a transition to communism but as measures sufficient for the abolition of the misery and ills of present day society. These *democratic socialists* are either proletarians who are not yet sufficiently enlightened regarding the conditions of the emancipation of their class, or they are members of the petty bourgeoisie, a class which, until the winning of democracy and the realisation of socialist measures which must follow it, has in many respects identical interests with the proletariat. At moments of action the communists will, therefore, have to reach agreement with the democratic socialists, and for the moment at least to generally pursue a common policy with them when this is possible, so far as these democratic socialists do not enter the service of the ruling bourgeoisie and attack the communists. It is obvious that this common action does not exclude the discussion of differences with them.

**Question 25:** *What is the attitude of the communists towards the other political parties of our day?*

*Answer:* This attitude differs from country to country. In England, France, and Belgium, where the bourgeoisie rules, the communists have for the time being still interests in common with the various democratic parties, and this community of interests is the greater the closer the democrats in the socialist measures they are now advocating everywhere approximate the aims of the communists, that is, the clearer and the more definitely they uphold the interests of the proletariat and the more they lean upon the proletariat. In *England*, for instance, the Chartists, who are all workers, are incalculably nearer to the communists than are the democratic petty bourgeois or so-called radicals.

In *America*, where a democratic constitution has been introduced, the communists must make common cause with the party that will apply this constitution against the bourgeoisie and use it in the interests of the proletariat, that is, with the national agrarian reformers.

In *Switzerland* the radicals, although they still form a very mixed party, are yet the only people with whom the communists can have anything to do, and among these radicals, those in the cantons of Vaud and of Geneva are again the most progressive.

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† The manuscript has a blank space here. See the answer to Question 18. — *Ed.*

Finally, in *Germany* the decisive struggle between the bourgeoisie and the absolute monarchy is still in the offing. Since, however, the communists cannot count on waging the decisive struggle with the bourgeoisie until the latter rules, it is in the interests of the communists to help the bourgeoisie to attain that rule as speedily as possible in order to overthrow it as soon as possible. Communists must, therefore, always take the side of the liberal bourgeois against governments but must be on their guard lest they should come to share the self-deception of the bourgeois or to believe the tempting declarations of the bourgeoisie that its victory will have beneficial results for the proletariat. The only advantages a victory of the bourgeoisie offers to the communists would be: (1) Various concessions which would make easier for the communists the defence, discussion and spread of their principles, and thereby the unification of the proletariat in a compact, combative and well organised class, and (2) The certainty that, from the day on which the absolute governments are overthrown, the turn will come round for the struggle between bourgeois and proletarians. From that day onwards the party policy of the communists will be the same as that in the countries where the bourgeoisie already rules. ■

**‘The history of all  
hitherto existing society  
is the history of class  
struggles.’**

**— The Communist Manifesto**

## Appendix 2

# Rules & Constitution of the Communist League

*Proletarians of all lands, unite!*

## **Part I. The League**

Article 1. The aim of the League is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of the rule of the proletariat, the abolition of the bourgeois social order founded upon class antagonisms, and the inauguration of a new social order wherein there shall be neither classes nor private property.

Article 2. Conditions for membership are:

- a. The way of living and the activities of the members shall be consonant with these aims.
  - b. The members shall be filled with revolutionary energy and with zeal for the propagation of these ideas.
  - c. They shall make communism their creed.
  - d. They must abstain from participation in any other communist, political, or nationalist society, and must inform the competent authorities of the League as to whether they are members of any other body.
  - e. They shall obey the decisions of the League.
  - f. They shall not disclose any matters concerning the internal life of the League.
  - g. The communes shall have to be unanimous in acceptance of new members.
- Those who do not observe these conditions shall be expelled. (See below, Part VIII.)

- Article 3. All members are equal, are brothers, and as such they owe one another helpful service in every emergency.
- Article 4. All who enter the League shall assume special membership names.
- Article 5. The League is organised into communes, circles, leading circles, central committee, and congress.

## Part II. The Commune

- Article 6. The commune shall consist of not less than three and not more than 20 members.
- Article 7. Each commune shall elect a chairman and an assistant. The chairman shall preside over the meetings, the assistant shall take charge of the finances and shall replace the chairman should the latter fail to appear.
- Article 8. New members shall be enrolled by the chairman and the proposer, after the commune has agreed to accept him or her.
- Article 9. The communes are not to know one another or to carry on any correspondence with one another.
- Article 10. Each commune shall adopt a distinguishing name.
- Article 11. Any member changing his dwelling place shall previously inform the chairman of his commune.

## Part III. The Circle

- Article 12. The circle shall consist of not less than two and not more than 10 communes.
- Article 13. The chairmen and assistants of the communes shall constitute the circle committee. This shall elect a president from among its own members. Correspondence is to be maintained by the circle both with the communes and with the leading circle.
- Article 14. The circle committee is the fully accredited authority for all the communes it represents.
- Article 15. Isolated communes must either affiliate to the most conveniently situated circle or they must get into touch with other isolated communes so as to form a new circle.

## Part IV. The Leading Circle

- Article 16. The various circles of a land or a province are subject to a leading circle.
- Article 17. The allotment of the circles of the League to provinces and the nomination of the leading circle is the business of the congress acting under the advice

of the central committee.

Article 18. The leading circle is the fully accredited authority for the aggregate of circles in a province. It corresponds with the circles and with the central committee.

Article 19. Newly-formed circles shall affiliate to the nearest leading circle.

Article 20. Provisionally, the leading circles are responsible to the central committee and in the last resort are answerable to congress.

## **Part V. The Central Committee**

Article 21. The central committee is the executive authority of the whole League, and as such must render account to the congress.

Article 22. It consists of at least five members and is chosen from among the circle committees of the place where the congress is convened.

Article 23. The central committee corresponds with the leading circles and every three months issues a report upon the condition of the League as a whole.

## **Part VI. Generalities**

Article 24. The communes, the circle committees, and the central committee shall meet at least once a fortnight.

Article 25. The members of the circle committees and of the central committee are elected for one year; they are eligible for re-election; they are subject to recall at any time by those who elected them.

Article 26. The elections take place in September.

Article 27. The circle committees must guide the discussions of the communes in conformity with the aims of the League.

Should the central committee deem the discussion of certain questions to be of general interest, it shall suggest their discussion by the whole League.

Article 28. Individual members shall communicate at least once a quarter, and the individual communes at least once a month, with their respective circle committees.

Each circle shall communicate at least every two months with its leading circle; every leading circle shall send in a report to the central committee at least once a quarter.

Article 29. It is incumbent upon each committee of the League, on its own responsibility but within the limits imposed by the rules and regulations, to carry out such measures as may be needed for the safety and effective activity of the League. It must promptly report upon these matters to the

higher authorities of the League.

## Part VII. The Congress

- Article 30. The congress is the legislative authority of the League. Proposals for the alteration of the rules shall be sent in to the central committee by the leading circles. They will then be laid before the congress.
- Article 31. Each circle sends one delegate.
- Article 32. A circle composed of less than 30 members shall send one delegate; of less than 60 members, two delegates; of less than 90 members, three delegates. A circle can be represented by a proxy delegate. In such a case the delegate must be given very precise instructions.
- Article 33. The congress shall assemble each year in the month of August. In case of great urgency, the central committee can summon an extraordinary congress.

**‘Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class.’**

**— The Communist Manifesto**

- Article 34. The congress decides the place which the central committee shall make its headquarters for the coming year. It also decides the place where the congress shall next meet.
- Article 35. The central committee takes part in the congress in a deliberative capacity only.
- Article 36. After each meeting the congress shall issue, in addition to its circular, a manifesto in the name of the party.

### **Part VIII. Offences Against the League**

- Article 37. Any infringement of the conditions for membership (see Article 2) shall be followed, according to circumstances, either by suspension or expulsion. A member once expelled cannot be accepted into the League again.
- Article 38. The congress alone can decide upon expulsion.
- Article 39. A member may be suspended by the circle or by the isolated commune to which he belongs. But the higher authorities must immediately be informed. The final decision rests with the congress in such cases likewise.
- Article 40. A suspended member can be reinstated by the central committee at the request of the circle concerned.
- Article 41. Any act inimical to the League comes under the jurisdiction of the circle authorities, who are also responsible for enforcing whatever decision they may arrive at.
- Article 42. Expelled or suspended members, and likewise all persons under suspicion should, for the sake of the League, be supervised and rendered harmless. Any machinations on the part of such individuals are to be instantly reported to the commune concerned.

### **Part IX. Finance**

- Article 43. The congress decides the minimum amount that shall be contributed by each member of the League.
- Article 44. Half of such contributions shall go to the central committee; the remaining sum shall go to the funds of the circle or the commune.
- Article 45. The funds accruing to the central committee shall be utilised as follows:
- 1 To defray the costs of correspondence and administration.
  2. To pay for printing and circulating propaganda leaflets.
  3. To send out emissaries, appointed by the central committee, for the carrying out of special missions.
- Article 46. The funds accruing to the local committees shall be spent as follows:

1. In paying costs of correspondence.
2. In printing and circulating propaganda leaflets.
3. In sending out special emissaries.

Article 47. Communes and circles neglecting to send in their contributions to the central committee for a period of six months shall be suspended by the central committee.

Article 48. The circle committees shall send in an account of receipts and expenditure at least every three months to their communes. The central committee shall render account to the congress as to administrative expenditure and as to the condition of the League's finances. Any tampering with the funds belonging to the League will be rigorously dealt with.

Article 49. Extraordinary expenditure and the congress expenses will be covered by special contributions.

## Part X. New Members

Article 50. The chairman of the commune shall read the applicant Articles 1 to 49, shall explain their significance, and shall then in a short speech emphasise the responsibilities membership of the League entails. The aspirant shall then be asked: "Do you still wish to enter the League?" Should the answer be in the affirmative, the chairman puts the aspirant on his honour to fulfil the duties of a League member, pronounces him to be a member of the League, and takes him to the next meeting of the commune.

*London, December 8, 1847*

In the name of the Second Congress, held in the autumn of 1847

The Secretary  
(Signed) *Engels*

The President  
(Signed) *Karl Schapper*



### Appendix 3

# **Demands of the Communist Party in Germany**

*Motto: Proletarians of all lands, unite!*

1. The whole of Germany shall be declared to be a one and indivisible republic.
2. Every German, having attained the age of 21, and provided he has not been a condemned criminal, shall be eligible both for election and as elector.
3. Representatives of the people shall be salaried so that manual workers, too, shall be able to become members of the German parliament.
4. Universal arming of the people. In future the army shall be simultaneously a worker army, so that the military arm shall not, as in the past, merely consume, but shall produce more than is actually necessary for its upkeep.  
This will likewise be an aid to the organisation of labour.
5. Gratuitous legal services.
6. All feudal dues, exactions, *corvées*, tithes, *etc.*, which have hitherto pressed upon the rural population, shall be abolished without compensation.
7. Royal and other feudal domains, together with mines, pits, and so forth, shall become the property of the state. The domains shall be cultivated on the large scale and with the most up-to-date scientific devices in the interests of the whole of society.
8. Mortgages on peasant lands shall be declared the property of the state. Interest on such mortgages shall be paid by the peasant to the state.

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Written by Marx and Engels in Paris between March 21 and 24, 1848. It was adopted by the Central Authority of the Communist League. In various versions it was widely circulated in Germany during the revolutionary period.

9. In localities where farming methods are well developed, the land rent or the earnest money shall be paid to the state as a tax.

The measures advocated in Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9 have been put forward with a view to decreasing the burdens hitherto imposed upon the peasantry and the small farmers, without cutting down the means available for defraying state expenses and without imperilling production.

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The landed proprietor who is neither a peasant nor a farmer, has no share in production. Consumption on his part is, therefore, unwarrantable.

10. A state bank, whose paper issues are legal tender, shall replace the many private banking concerns now in existence.

By this method credit can be regulated in the interest of the people as a whole, and thereby the dominion of the magnates of the monetary world will be undermined. Further, by gradually substituting paper money for gold and silver coin, the means of exchange (that indispensable prerequisite of bourgeois trade and commerce) will be cheapened, and gold and silver will be set free for use in foreign commerce. This measure in the long run is necessary in order to bind the interests of the conservative bourgeoisie to the cause of the revolution.

11. All the means of transport, railways, waterways, steamships, roads, *etc.*, shall be taken over by the state. They shall become the property of the state and shall be placed at the disposal of the non possessing classes, gratuitously, for their own use.
12. Salaries of all civil servants shall be identical, except in the case where a civil servant has a family to support. His requirements being greater, his salary shall be higher.
13. Complete separation of church and state. The clergy of every denomination shall be paid by the voluntary contributions of their congregations.
14. The right of inheritance to be curtailed.
15. The introduction of a steeply graduated income tax, and the abolition of taxes on articles of consumption.
16. Inauguration of national workshops. The state guarantees a livelihood to all workers and provides for those who are incapacitated for work.
17. Universal and gratuitous education.

It is to the interest of the German proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie, and the small peasantry to support these demands with all possible energy. Only by the realisation of these demands will the millions in Germany who have hitherto been exploited by a handful of persons and whom the exploiters would fain still keep in subjection, win the rights and attain to the power which they, as the producers of all wealth, are entitled to expect.

The Committee:

<i>Karl Marx</i>	<i>Karl Schapper</i>
<i>H. Bauer</i>	<i>F. Engels</i>
<i>J. Moll</i>	<i>W. Wolff</i>

## Appendix 4

# Chronological Table of Some Key Events in the History of the Socialist & Working-Class Movements from 1500 to 1848<sup>1</sup>

- 1516 *Utopia* by Thomas More (1478-1535).
- 1525 Great Peasant War in Germany. Twelve points in the peasants' program. In Thuringia, religious communistic teaching among the urban poor. The leading protagonist of these doctrines was Thomas Münzer, who was cast into gaol in 1525 (born 1490).
- 1534-35 The rule of the Anabaptists in Münster. Johann Matthyszoon, a baker from Haarlern; Johann Bockholdt, a tailor from Leyden — these were religious communists.
- 1549 Robert Kett's rebellion in England. The rebels consisted of peasants and handicraftsmen from Norfolk, one of the centres of the wool industry. Kett was hanged.
- 1568-79 Rebellion of the Netherlands against the Spanish dominion, and the rise of the independent states. Holland becomes the sanctuary for the refugees from among the revolutionary Protestants and Anabaptists.
- 1623 *The City of the Sun* by Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639).
- 1642-58 The Great Rebellion in England. The Levellers as the representatives of revolutionary democracy. Their demands: single chamber government; electoral rights for all citizens who had reached the age of 21; annual parliaments; freedom of conscience; direct taxes on property; a national militia; local self-government; the abolition of all

- privileges. Leading representative of the Levellers was John Lilburne (1615-57).
- 1649 Sanguinary repression of the Levellers' rising by Cromwell.
- 1649 The Diggers, or "true Levellers", denounced private landowning, and seized some unoccupied ground which was to be cultivated communally, for the general advantage.
- 1652 Gerrard Winstanley's *Law of Freedom in a Platform*. Winstanley had been the leader of the Diggers.
- 1656 *Oceana* by James Harrington (1611-77). A utopia, an ideal state founded upon an equitable distribution of landed property.
- 1695 The proposal to found an institute of labour for all industries and for agriculture which shall bring profit to the rich, sufficient abundance to the poor, and shall provide an excellent education for the young. The author, John Bellers (1654-1725), whom Marx describes as a veritable phenomenon in the history of political economy, advocated the inauguration of cooperative labouring colonies, which should put an end to contemporary educational methods and the division of labour, and should substitute for these the combination of productive manual labour and brain work.
- 1735 Jean Meslier (1664-1729): Testament. Meslier was a French parish priest and a communist. His testament only existed in manuscript until Voltaire published an extract from it in 1762. The testament contains a severe criticism of ecclesiastical, political and social conditions in France during the first third of the 18th century. It summons all nations to a common fight against tyrants; advocates communal ownership as the basis of society; proposes the formation of isolated communist groups linked together by a general pact; abolition of religions; free marriage.
- 1755 *The Code of Nature's Laws* by Morelly. Abolition of private property. Obligatory labour for all from 20 years of age to 40. Between the ages of 20 to 25, agricultural labour to be obligatory for all citizens. Marriage to be binding for 10 years. Communal education for children. Administration of the state by a president elected for a life term.
- 1776 *Principles of Legislation* by Mably (1709-85). The incompatibility of equality with the existence of private property, which latter he regards as the source of all evil.

- 1760-1832 Industrial Revolution in Great Britain.
- 1793-94 The fraction of the “mad” in the Paris sections; Jean Roux, Varley, Leclerc; in close relationship with proletarian elements; advocated decisive measures against speculators and strict regulation of the supply of provisions.
- 1796 The Conspiracy of the Equals headed by Babeuf (1760-97) and his companions (Darthé and Buonarroti); communist; seizure of political power; dictatorship; execution of Babeuf and Darthé.
- 1792-95 The beginning of the revolutionary working-class movement in England; foundation of the London Corresponding Society. Thomas Hardy (1752-1832) and John Thelwall (1767-1834). Prosecution of the British Jacobins.
- 1793 *Political Justice* by William Godwin (1756-1836).
- 1798 Arrest of the whole committee of the London Corresponding Society.
- 1799 Prohibition of all working-class societies and unions in Great Britain.
- 1798-1850 *System der Sittenlehre* [System of Ethics] (1798), and *Exclusive Mercantile State* by Johann Fichte (1762-1814).
- 1805 *Action of Civilisation on the Masses* by Charles Holly (1745-1825). Pointed out the antagonisms extant in the capitalist order; the growth of wealth and the increase in poverty; the need for the abolition of inequality in the matter of possessions.
- 1808 *Théorie des quatre mouvements* [Theory of the Four Movements] by Charles Fourier (1772-1837). Two other important works by the same author: *Traité de l'association agricole domestique* [Treatise on Domestic Agricultural Association], published in 1822, and *Le nouveau monde industriel* [The New Industrial World], published in 1829 and 1830.
- 1812-13 *New View of Society* (1813) by Robert Owen (1771-1858). In 1815 his *Observations on the Influence of the Manufacturing System* appeared; in 1817 he publicly broke with established religions; in 1819 he issued his first appeal to the workers; in 1821 appeared his *Social System*, wherein he already championed the communist outlook.
- 1812-16 *Wissenschaft der Logik* [Science of Logic], by Georg Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). In 1821 Hegel's *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* [Elements of the Philosophy of Right]; the principle of the dialectical development of all phenomena.
- 1817 *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* by David Ricardo

- (1772-1823).
- 1817 *L'Industrie* [Industry] by Saint-Simon (1760-1825). In 1821 *Du Système industriel* [The Industrial System] was published; in 1824 *Catichisme des industriels* [Catechism of Industry]; in 1828 *Nouveau Christianisme* [New Christianity].
- 1816-23 Revival of the revolutionary movement in England. The Society of Spencean Philanthropists (Thomas Spence, 1750-1814), was out for the nationalisation of the land and for electoral reforms. The radical clubs. The agitation carried on by William Cobbett (1762-1835) and Henry Hunt (1773-1835).
- 1819 In August, Hunt chaired meeting in St. Peter's Field, Manchester, which was dispersed by an armed force — the Peterloo massacre.
- 1820 The Cato Street conspiracy of Thistlewood (1770-1820), and his companions, all of them members of the Spencean Society. Thistlewood and four others were executed for high treason.
- 1824 Repeal of the Combination Laws in Great Britain.
- 1825 The first commercial and industrial crisis. Owen's attempt to found his colony, the New Harmony, in Indiana, USA.
- 1828 *The History of Babeuf's Conspiracy* by Michel Buonarroti (1761-1837).
- 1830 The July Revolution [in France].
- 1831 The Lyons workers rise in revolt. A big stir among the workers of Britain.
- 1832 The "great" electoral reforms in Britain. Owen's equitable labour exchange system, with labour notes, to supersede middlemen and the ordinary means of exchange.
- 1834 Foundation of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union. New Poor Law Act, 1833-34. Owen's cooperative experiments.
- 1836 Foundation of the London Workingmen's Association. William Lovett (1800-77) and Henry Heatherington (1792-1849). The beginning of the Chartist organisation.
- 1838 The publication of the People's Charter.
- 1833 Abortive rising of the German revolutionists at Frankfurt-on-Main. Karl Schapper (1813-70).
- 1834 The Exiles' League, founded in Paris by Jacob Venedey (1805-71) and Theodore Schuster (born 1807).
- 1832-37 Weidig's (1791-1837) and Georg Büchner's (1818-37) agitation among the peasantry of Hesse. *Hessischer Landbote* [The Hessian Courier] by

- Büchner. Weidig, Wilhelm Liebknecht's uncle, committed suicide in prison.
- 1836 Foundation of the League of the Just in Paris. Karl Schapper, Heinrich Bauer, the shoemaker, and Wilhelm Weitling the tailor, among its members.
- 1837 Feargus O'Connor founds the *Northern Star*.
- 1838 *Die Menschheit, wie sie ist und wie sie sein sollte* [Humanity as It Is and as It Should Be], by Wilhelm Weitling (1808-70).
- 1839 Unsuccessful attempt by Auguste Blanqui (1805-71) and Armand Barbès (1809-70) to raise a revolt in Paris on May 12. Chartist congress held in London. Agreement between the protagonists of moral force (Lovett) and physical force (Feargus O'Connor 1794-1851). The first national petition containing 1,280,000 signatures. The arrest of the majority of the congress.  
*L'organisation du travail* [The Organisation of Labour] by Louis Blanc (1811-82).
- 1840 Foundation of the National Charter Association. Schapper and Bauer, forced to leave Paris after the May rising, go to London and form the German Workers' Educational Society, which subsequently took the name of Communist Workers' Educational Society.  
*Qu'est ce que la propriété* [What is Property] by Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-65).  
*Voyage en Icarie* [Voyage to Icaria] by Etienne Cabet (1788-1865).
- 1841 *Das Wesen des Christentums* [The Origin of Christianity] by Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72).
- 1842 *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit* [Gaurantees of Harmony and Freedom] by Weitling. Second congress of the Chartists held in London. Second national petition containing this time 3,315,752 signatures. Attempt to bring about a general strike. Climax of the agitation of the Anti-Corn Law League.
- 1843 *Code of Laws of the Commune* by Theodore Dézamy (died in 1850). Karl Marx (1818-83), after the suppression of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, emigrates to Paris. Friedrich Engels (1820-95), at this time in Manchester, studies the condition of the working class in England.
- 1844 *Deutsch Französische Jahrbücher*. Articles by Marx on Hegel's philosophy of right, and by Engels on *Outline Critique of Political Economy*.



- Rising of the Silesian weavers. Armed troops attack the villages of Peterswaldau and Langenwaldau.
- Transference of the Chartists' central organ, the *Northern Star*, to London. George Julian Harney (1817-99), influenced by Engels, becomes a communist.
- 1845 Foundation of an international society called the Fraternal Democrats. Schapper, Harney and Oborsky, a Pole, became members.  
*Die heilige Familie* [The Holy Family] by Marx and Engels.  
*Die Lage der arbeitende Klasse in England* [The Condition of the Working Class in England] by Friedrich Engels.  
Foundation of the League for the Realisation of an Agricultural Plan by O'Connor, who advocated distribution of small lots of land to the workers for cultivation. Bronterre O'Brien (1805-64) opposes this scheme and champions land nationalisation.
- 1846 The Cracow rising. Repeal of the Corn Laws in Britain.
- 1847 The Ten Hours Law for women and children passed by the British Parliament.  
*Misère de la philosophie* [The Poverty of Philosophy] by Karl Marx.  
Communist congress in London. Foundation of the Communist League. Marx and Engels are commissioned to draw up a program.
- 1848 The *Communist Manifesto* published. The February revolution in France. The March revolutions in Austria and Germany. ■

**‘Political power ... is merely  
the organised power of one  
class for oppressing another.’**

**—The Communist Manifesto**

# Notes

## Introduction

- 1 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow, 1970), Vol. 3, pp. 116-117.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 126.
- 3 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1981), Vol. 5, p. 53.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- 5 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow, 1975), p. 64.
- 6 V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works* (Moscow, 1975), Vol. 2, p. 261.
- 7 V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow 1977), Vol. 4, p. 211.
- 8 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 386.
- 9 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 179.
- 10 Quoted in P. N. Fedoseyev, *Karl Marx: A Biography* (Moscow, 1977), p. 117.
- 11 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 92.
- 12 Quoted in D. Struik, *The Birth of the Communist Manifesto* (New York 1971), p. 57.
- 13 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 533-538.
- 14 *Ibid.*, Vol. 17, p. 78.
- 15 *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 586.
- 16 *Ibid.*, Vol. 17, pp. 78-79.
- 17 *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, 633.
- 18 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 98.
- 19 K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Moscow, 1973), p. 150.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 150.
- 21 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 254-255.
- 22 K. Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
- 23 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 191-192.
- 24 K. Marx & F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 626.
- 25 Fedoseyev, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

## Prefaces to the Communist Manifesto

- 1 In fear of attempts on his life by the revolutionary terrorist People's Will, the Russian tsar, Alexander III, whose father had been assassinated by the organisation in 1881, shut himself up in his palace at Gatchina and postponed indefinitely his formal coronation.

## Manifesto of the Communist Party

- 1 In their later works Marx and Engels used the more exact terms "the value of labour power" and "the price of labour power" introduced by Marx instead of "the value of labour" and "the price of labour". ■

## Other titles from Resistance Books

- The Aboriginal Struggle and the Left** by Terry Townsend. 2009, 104pp, \$15
- Capitalism & Workers' Struggle in China** by Chris Slee. 2010, 36pp, \$5
- Charter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rights** Socialist Alliance Policy. 2009, 28pp, \$3
- Christianity, Islam and Atheism** *Reflections on Religion, Society and Politics* by Michael Cooke. 2014, 124pp, \$15
- Conflict in the Unions** *The Communist Party of Australia, Politics & the Trade Union Movement 1945-60* by Douglas Jordan. 2013, 312pp, \$30
- The Cuban Revolution and Its Leadership** *A Criticism of Peter Taaffe's Pamphlet "Cuba: Analysis of the Revolution"* by Doug Lorimer. 2000, 64pp, \$6.75
- Cuba** *How the Workers and Peasants Made the Revolution* by Chris Slee et al. 2008, 56pp, \$6
- The Dispossession of Women** *A Marxist Examination of New Evidence on the Origins of Women's Oppression* by Pat Brewer. 1999, 48pp, \$5.50
- How to Make an Ecosocialist Revolution** by Ian Angus. 2011, 20pp, \$4
- Imperialism in the 21st Century** *War, Neo-Liberalism and Globalisation* by Doug Lorimer. 2002, 44pp, \$4.95
- The Kurdish Freedom Struggle today** by Dave Holmes & Tony Iltis. 2015, 44pp, \$6
- Racism** *What It Is and How to Fight It* by John Tully et al. 2016, 40pp, \$5
- Rainbow Cuba** *The Sexual Revolution Within the Revolution* by Rachel Evans. 2012, 48pp, \$6
- A Short History of Social Democracy** *From Socialist Origins to Neoliberal Theocracy* by John Rainford. 2015, 184pp, \$20
- State Capitalism** *A Marxist Critique of a False Theory* by Barry Sheppard & Ernest Mandel. 2007, 48pp, \$5
- Women of Steel** *Gender, Jobs & Justice at BHP* by Carla Gorton & Pat Brewer. 2015, 76pp, \$10

# Glossary

**1848-49** — Europe was swept by a wave of revolutionary struggles as peoples fought to throw off the shackles of feudal absolutism and achieve national independence and democratic reform. France in 1848 saw the first open clash between the emerging working class and the ruling bourgeoisie.

**Babeuf, Gracchus** (real name: François Noël) (1760-97) — French revolutionary; plotted unsuccessfully (the “Conspiracy of Equals”) to overthrow the conservative post-revolutionary regime of the Directory and establish a communistic system. The plot failed and Babeuf was executed.

**Bakunin, Mikhail** (1814-76) — Russian democrat and writer, took part in the 1848-49 revolution in Germany. One of the best-known ideologists of anarchism. He participated in the First International but opposed the Marxists and was expelled at the Hague Congress in 1872.

**Bernstein, Eduard** (1850-1932) — The most prominent theoretician of revisionism in the German Social-Democracy from the mid-1890s. He rejected the Marxist idea of class struggle and revolution as the only road to socialism, instead advocating class collaboration.

**Blum, Léon** (1872-1950) — The main leader of the French Socialist Party in the 1930s and premier in 1936 of the first People’s Front government.

**Cabet, Etienne** (1788-1856) — French utopian communist. Author of *Travels in Icaria*. On the eve of the 1848 revolutionary upsurge in Europe, he led 1500 followers across the Atlantic in an unsuccessful attempt to establish a utopian communist (“Icarian”) colony in the United States.

**Chartism** — The first mass movement of the English working class, organised to press for the People’s Charter which called for universal male suffrage and other electoral reforms. The movement arose in the late 1830s and was active to varying degrees through the next decade.

**Chautemps, Camille** (1885-1963) — Leader of the bourgeois Radical Socialists; French premier three times (1930, 1933-34 and 1937-38).

- Cologne Communist Trial** (October 4-November 12, 1852) — Trial of 11 members of the Communist League, framed by the Prussian government. Charged with high treason on the basis of faked documents and false evidence, seven of the accused were sentenced to imprisonment in a fortress for terms from three to six years.
- Communist International** — Also referred to as the Third International or Comintern; founded in 1919 as the revolutionary alternative to the social democratic Second International. Guided by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in its early years it later became bureaucratised under Stalin. The Comintern was dissolved by Stalin in 1943 as a sign to his wartime imperialist allies of his non-revolutionary intentions.
- Democratic and socialist revolutions** — The relationship between the two in the colonial and semicolonial countries dominated by imperialism was first elucidated by Lenin, most notably in his 1905 work *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, originally outlined in *Results and Prospects* (1906), puts forward a different analysis and line. For a systematic critique of Trotsky's writings on the subject see *Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution: A Leninist Critique* by Doug Lorimer (Resistance Books, 1998).
- English reform agitation** — Called for a reform of the electoral law. Under mass pressure this was finally passed by parliament in 1832. The reform was directed against the monopoly rule of the landed and finance aristocracy and opened the way to parliament for the representatives of the industrial bourgeoisie. The working class and petty bourgeoisie who were the main force in the struggle for reform were deceived by the liberal bourgeoisie and were not granted the franchise.
- Epigones** — Literally: inferior imitators and followers of a great artist. Trotsky often referred to the Stalinists as epigones who distorted Lenin's teaching after his death.
- February 1848** — Revolution in France which overthrew the regime of Louis Philippe which represented, not the whole capitalist class, but the financial aristocracy. The Paris workers played the main role in the insurrection.
- Fourier, Charles** (1772-1837) — Outstanding French utopian socialist. Marx and Engels admired his sharp criticism of capitalist society and his ideas influenced their work.
- Fourth International** — Formed by Trotsky and his cothinkers in 1938 as an alternative to the Stalinised Comintern. He hoped that out of the crisis of the coming war the small organisation would grow to become a powerful force. However, the outcome of the Second World War was a strengthening of Stalinism and the continued isolation of the Trotskyist forces.
- International Working Men's Association** — The First International; founded in London in 1864. Marx wrote its inaugural address and rules and was its acknowledged leader. In the period of reaction that followed the suppression of

the Paris Commune in 1871, the International's centre was transferred to the United States and the organisation ceased to exist in 1876.

**July 1830** — Revolution in Paris overthrew the “legitimate” Bourbon dynasty and installed the Duke of Orleans under the name of Louis Phillippe. The Bourbons represented the big landed nobility whereas the Orleanists relied on the finance aristocracy and big bourgeoisie.

**June 23-26, 1848** — Insurrection of the Paris workers; the first great civil war between the working class and the bourgeoisie. It was suppressed by the authorities with extreme brutality.

**Kautsky, Karl** (1854-1938) — After the death of Engels in 1895, Kautsky was regarded as the foremost Marxist theoretician of international social-democracy. However, he occupied a centrist position during World War I and was an opponent of the 1917 Russian revolution.

**Kolokol** (The Bell) — A revolutionary-democratic newspaper published abroad by the Russian exile Alexander Herzen (1812-70).

**Largo Caballero, Francisco** (1869-1946) — Leader of the left wing of the Socialist Party; premier of the Spanish Republic in 1936-37 during the civil war struggle with the Francoists.

**Lassalle, Ferdinand** (1825-1864) — German writer and lawyer. Participated in the 1848-49 revolution. In 1863 he founded the German Workers Union but his energetic work was compromised by his dealings with the Prussian chancellor Bismarck. He called on the state to provide aid to establish workers cooperatives.

**Legitimists** — The adherents of the “legitimate” Bourbon dynasty overthrown in July 1830. In their struggle against the ruling Orleanist dynasty a section of the Legitimists resorted to social demagoguery and presented themselves as defenders of the working people against the exploitation of the bourgeoisie.

**Negrín Lopez, Juan** (1889-1956) — Led right wing of Spanish Socialist Party; succeeded Largo Caballero; the last premier of the republican government.

**Obshchina** — The Russian village community.

**Owen, Robert** (1771-1858) — Great English utopian socialist. As a Welsh factory owner, he formed a model industrial community at New Lanark in Scotland. Turning towards communism he immersed himself in the workers movement. But he remained a pacifist utopian, opposed the Chartist movement and did not understand the need for an independent workers party. He played an active role in promoting labour legislation and pioneered cooperative societies.

**Paris Commune** — Emerged out of the defeat of the imperial regime of Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. The radicalised workers held power in the city

from March 18-May 28, 1871. The Commune was brutally crushed: tens of thousands of workers were massacred and many more suffered harsh repression at the hands of the victorious bourgeois reaction.

**People's Front** (or Popular Front) — The line adopted at the Comintern's Seventh Congress in 1935 committed the communist parties to seeking coalitions with social-democratic and bourgeois parties on a procapitalist program. This was justified by the supposedly overriding threat of fascism. The Popular Front governments in both France and Spain in the 1930s served to brake the revolutionary movement of the masses and preserve the capitalist order in a period of severe crisis.

**Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph** (1809-1865) — French ideologist of petty-bourgeois socialism. Author of *What Is Property?* (1840) and *The Philosophy of Poverty* (1846). An opponent of Marxist communism, he opposed strikes and participation in the political struggle, advocating instead various schemes (such as a people's bank) to overcome the contradictions of capitalist society.

**The Red Republican** — A Chartist weekly published in London by George Julian Harney from June to November 1850. It carried an abridged version of the Manifesto in Nos. 21-24, November 1850.

**Réformistes** — Adherents of the French newspaper *La Réforme* (published in Paris from 1843 to 1850), stood for a republic and democratic and social reforms. Marx and Engels called for critical cooperation with them.

**Saint-Simon, Henri** (1760-1825) — Great French utopian socialist.

**Second International** — Established in 1889, it united socialist parties in a number of countries. In the period before the World War I a great organisational and educational work was accomplished under its banner, particularly by the German Social-Democracy, its largest and most influential section. However, it embraced both revolutionary and procapitalist elements and failed the decisive test of the war, with most party leaderships supporting their respective governments. After the war, inspired by the Russian revolution, the revolutionary elements established the Communist International.

**Le Socialiste** — A weekly French-language newspaper published in New York from October 1871 to May 1873. It was an organ of the French sections of the North American Federation of the First International; after the Hague Congress it broke away from the International. The French translation of the Manifesto of the Communist Party referred to in the text was published in *Le Socialiste* in January-March 1872.

**Soviets** — The word means “council” in Russian — first arose in the 1905 Russian

revolution. In 1917 they were the organs of working class and popular democracy. Under the leadership of the Bolsheviks they were the vehicle of the revolutionary overturn and the basis of the new government.

**Weitling, Wilhelm** (1808-71) — German utopian communist; wrote *Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom* (1842). He believed communist society could be established by a small conspiratorial organisation, irrespective of actual social and economic conditions and the consciousness of the masses.

**“Young England”** — A group of British politicians and writers belonging to the Tory Party. Formed in the early 1840s it expressed the dissatisfaction of the landed aristocracy with the growing economic and political power of the bourgeoisie. The “Young England” leaders resorted to demagoguery to bring the working class under their influence and use it in their struggle against the bourgeoisie.

**Zasulich, Vera** (1851-1910) — Russian revolutionary. ■

**‘Let the ruling classes  
tremble at a communist  
revolution. The  
proletarians have  
nothing to lose but  
their chains. They have  
a world to win.’**

**— The Communist Manifesto**



Written some 170 years ago, the Communist Manifesto is arguably the most famous political work of all time.

This edition contains the original document by Marx and Engels plus a number of prefaces written by them to various editions. A 1938 commentary by Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky provides a ringing defence of the relevance of the key ideas of the Manifesto to the realities of the modern world. And an introduction by Doug Lorimer sets the Manifesto in its political context.

The Communist Manifesto is not only a great historical work. As world capitalism slides into ever deepening crisis on so many levels, the revolutionary perspective put forward so forcefully by Marx and Engels remains the only way forward for humanity.

*Resistance books*