

Marx, Karl. *The Communist Manifesto*. Translated by Samuel Moore. Edited by Fredric L. Bender. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) worked as a German philosopher and social revolutionary. Marx, who has been deemed by some as one of the great economists of history, worked closely with his friend Friedrich Engels in producing *The Communist Manifesto* and *Capital*, his major works. Engels, during the many lean times the communist agitators experienced, supported Marx and his wife and seven children with profits from the Engels family business. With Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, Marx is regarded as a founder of social science. In the name of Marxist revolution, Stalin, Trotsky, Lenin, and Mao fomented communist revolutions which proved to be among the most murderous of history.

Preface to the German Edition of 1872. The Communist League commissioned this work in secret in 1847. The Manifesto is as true today as the day it was written. Experience with communist revolutions (February Revolution and Paris Commune) has demonstrated that workers cannot simply co-opt existing state governments and run them.

Preface to the Russian Edition of 1882. So much has changed since the Manifesto was published. America becomes a giant economically. Russia has taken the forefront in communist agitation.

Preface to the German Edition of 1883. Marx has died and been buried in London. His thought perseveres. Economics determines the character of an epoch. Since primitive tribal society crumbled, class struggles have defined western Europe. Communism will define the next epoch. This is Marx's thought.

Preface to the English Edition of 1888. Communists have been beleaguered all over the continent. The Communist League disbanded. The Manifesto seemed destined for obscurity. Yet, the Manifesto's principles worked behind the scenes, winning adherents silently. Intellectual and social history derives from economic structure. History holds class struggle between exploiters (bourgeoisie) and exploited (proletariat).

Preface to the German Edition of 1890. Engels recounts the recent history of translations of the Manifesto. Working men, especially in America and Europe, continue uniting, working for improved labor conditions.

Preface to the Polish Edition of 1892. As industrialism spreads, so too does Marxism. As Poland has turned to manufacturing, so its workers demand copies of the Manifesto.

Preface to the Italian Edition of 1893. A country must be free of foreign domination to become a communist nation. So, all wars of independence augur well for Marxists. Italy was the first capitalist nation. Perhaps from its ancient lands will come the first communist society.

MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Communism threatens Europe. Establishment leaders make common cause to address the inroads of communism. By so doing, they admit that communism is potent. It is high time communists declared their views to the world. This work is an internationally authorized summary of the communist worldview.

I. Bourgeois and Proletarians. All history is a tale of economic struggles between classes. The bourgeoisie controls land and production, while oppressing and prospering. The proletariat labors, while being oppressed and suffering. With industrialization and new trade routes, markets grew and the medieval status quo crumbled. The industrial bourgeoisie emerged in the long course of these changes. The bourgeoisie controls the state executive, which serves monied interests. The bourgeoisie dismantled feudalism in favor of raw profit

exchanges. Its only value is unimpeded exchange of goods manufactured by pitiless exploitation. Money has rendered everything a marketable entity: religion, law, family, poetry. The market has accomplished wonders by monetizing mankind. Each time the bourgeoisie modernizes its factories, all of society is upended. All tends to make of the planet a single marketplace, and so makes all nations interdependent. So, the entire globe, in order to survive, becomes bourgeois. Rural populations abandon the inanity of farming, and all grow dependent upon cities. Power, and government, centralizes. The bourgeoisie has done more in 100 years than have all previous generations. Just as bourgeois society grew from the soil of feudalism, so now communism sprouts from capitalism. Periodic depressions savage workers, which depressions result from overproduction of goods. Markets collapse, and new social structures threaten to emerge. The bourgeoisie compel mass suffering in the masses and open new markets as remedies for depressions, only to set the stage for a yet more expansive depression in the future. The workers rebel at these depredations. They market themselves like commodities, and are tied to machines. Wages fall as machines supplant human skills. As labor loses its personal character, the labor of women draws equal to that of men, and all are fungible. Slowly, even the middle class sinks into the proletariat, because even these lack the huge resources to compete with modern industry. The proletariat goes through stages. First, workers fight individual capitalists. Later, they organize themselves as unions, and riots break out. The bourgeoisie are themselves embattled with landed aristocracies and other capitalists, and so they educate and enlist the workers to help, making the workers able to rebel. Some few of the bourgeoisie understand the historical current, and go over to the proletariat. For it is the proletariat that brings revolution. The lower middle class seeks to roll history back, and so are reactionary. Unlike other classes, the proletariat lacks property to defend, a nation, or other values. He lives to destroy the old order of private property. Unlike previous class transitions, the proletariat are a majority seeking its own benefit. All will change. So, the relation of bourgeoisie and proletariat is a simmering civil war that will issue in outright violent revolution.

History is everywhere the tale of oppressors oppressing and the oppressed resisting. The bourgeoisie has lost its claim to legitimacy because it crushes the workers, leaving them paupers and in need of assistance just to survive. Capitalists need capital, which they get from the sweat of laborers. Laborers compete, and eventually form unions. And these labor unions undermine the bourgeoisie control of production and capital. Proletarian victory is inevitable.

II. Proletarians and Communists. Communists focus attention of workers on international aspects of all workers everywhere. Communists want what all workers want: to unite workers and seize power from capitalists. Private property is the root cause, and so must be forbidden, because it underpins all capitalists do. What is at issue here is not worker's tools and hovels, but industrial capital. Capital emerges only by social action, and therefore belongs to the collective. As to wages, capitalists set those so workers support themselves, but never have excess by which to improve their lot. Capitalists steal all the excess. In a communist society, all excess would improve the life of workers. To seize capital is to overthrow the capitalists. Objectors complain that collectivizing property diminishes individuality and freedom. Communists rejoin that what is lost is bourgeois society only. Objectors predict that workers owning capital will breed laziness. Has it done so for the capitalists, who never work? Objectors predict the collapse of artistic culture. Only bourgeois culture will collapse. All bourgeois ideas reflect capitalist production: law, culture, freedom, individuality, family, education, marriage, nations. All are the thoughts of that bourgeois life to be eradicated. It is so in every epoch. Rulers claim their views divine, and impose them over the majority. Workers have no nations. Their families and children have been turned into tools of capital. Global trade renders nations less and less relevant. The rule of workers will do so even more quickly. When class antagonisms decline, so too will international tensions.

Religious and philosophical criticisms of communism lack merit. Rulers impose their ideas on subjects. Ideas emerge from economic relations. Since communism strikes at the heart of private property, it portends a huge change in thought patterns.

The proletariat will take over State mechanisms at the polls, then seize private property for the State, and, bit by bit, eliminate the social order of the past. This process will most often include: 1) public ownership of all land, 2) high income taxes, 3) confiscatory inheritance taxation, 4) seizure of all property of state enemies, 5) centralized banking and credit, 6) nationalizing transportation and communications, 7) rapid industrial expansion, 8) forcing all people to work, especially as farmers, 9) redistribution of population out of cities and into the countryside, and 10) free universal education and abolition of child labor. When all power lies with the proletariat, the state will cease functioning politically (for political power is the oppression of one class by another). The freedoms of one will be the freedoms of all.

III. Socialist and Communist Literature.

1. Reactionary Socialism.

- A. **Feudal Socialism.** English and French aristocrats railed against the upstart middle class by facetiously complaining of the bourgeoisie's abuse of their workers. The "feudal socialism" of endangered gentry complained that shopkeepers radicalized workers. The church joined these feudal socialists, since Christian piety weds neatly with aristocratic rhetoric.
 - B. **Petty-Bourgeois Socialism.** The petty-bourgeoisie hover between workers and capitalists, aspiring to wealth, but often suffering defeat and becoming proletarian. Such socialism offers helpful critique of capitalism, but in the end seeks restoration of the old, now passing, values.
 - C. **German, or "True," Socialism.** German socialists created an arid idealism from the French Revolution's ideas. In so doing, they rendered the French ideas impotent. German socialism became the silly mouthpiece of the petty bourgeoisie. It wrongly condemned the heedless destructiveness of communism.
2. **Conservative, or Bourgeois, Socialism.** The conservative socialist reforms capitalist society, shaving off its sharp corners, to make it more palatable to workers. Conservative socialism seeks administrative improvements, not revolutionary upheaval of the economic mode of production.
 3. **Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism.** Early communist theorists could not adequately formulate a theory because the proletariat was in its infancy. The workers exist in their minds only as a beleaguered group, not as an inexorable social force. These utopians think themselves above class struggles. Their schemes propose to benefit all, even the wealthy. And they seek the approbation of rulers, since their proposals portend no injury to them. These dreamers imagine that little experiments and peaceful persuasion will win the day. Still, though dreamers, they are communists. They attack every foundation of society and make many worthy reform proposals. Because they miss the role of the workers in revolution, they end up dampening class struggle, and waste their time with little experimental communities. In the end, they serve the capitalists with their mystical view of the power of their social thinking and their pacifistic opposition to meaningful conflict.

IV. Position of the Communists in Relation to the Various Existing Opposition

Parties. Communists support Chartists and Agrarian Reformers, social-democrats and radicals everywhere. Wherever action overthrows existing institutions, Communists provide support, redirecting enthusiasm to the question of property. Communists unite all parties seeking change. Communists coerce others to create a society they approve. The capitalists should quake. Workers have nothing, and so stand to lose nothing, but their miseries. If they will unite internationally, workers shall control the world.