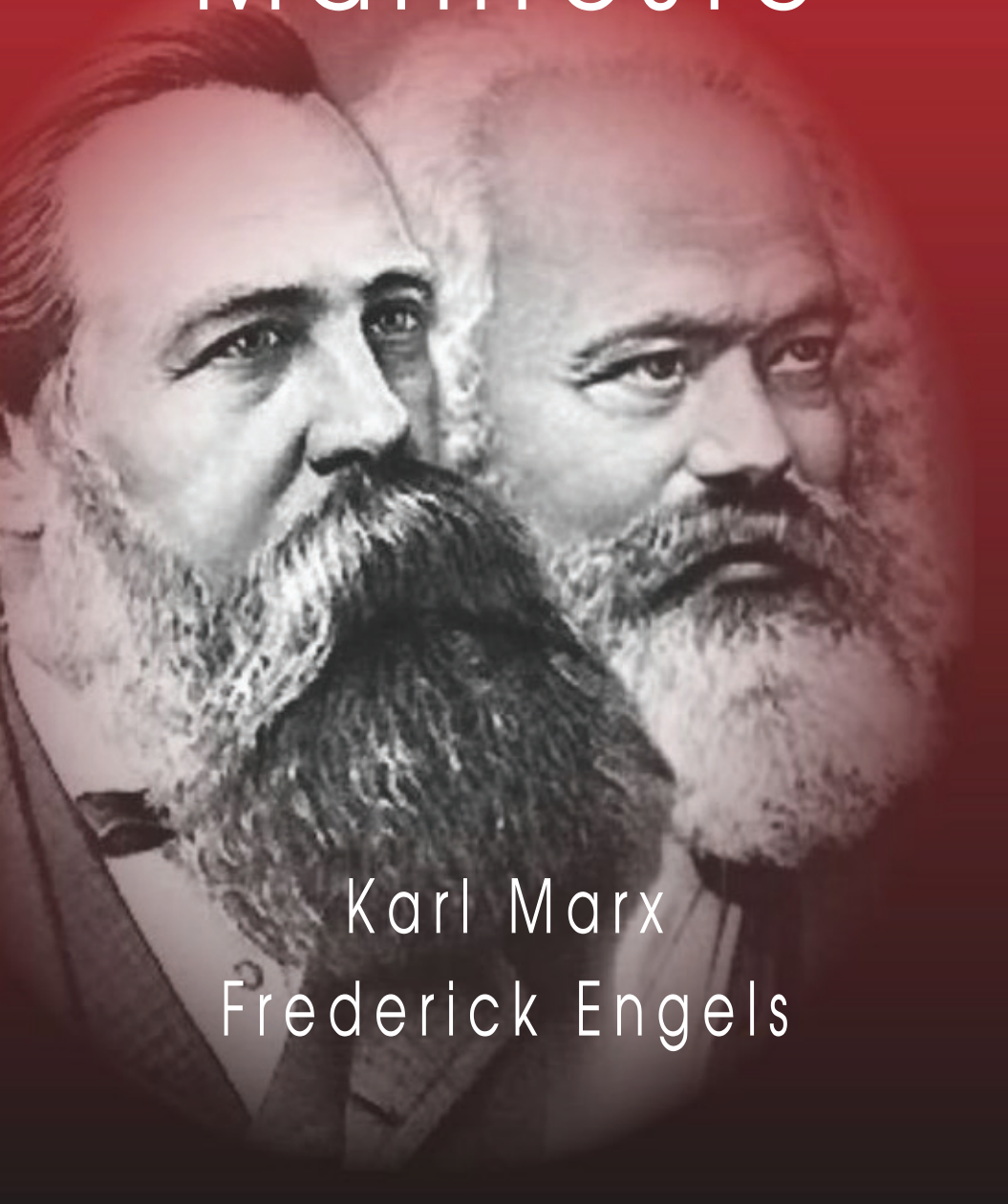


Communist Manifesto



Karl Marx
Frederick Engels



Price: Rs. 50

June 2014

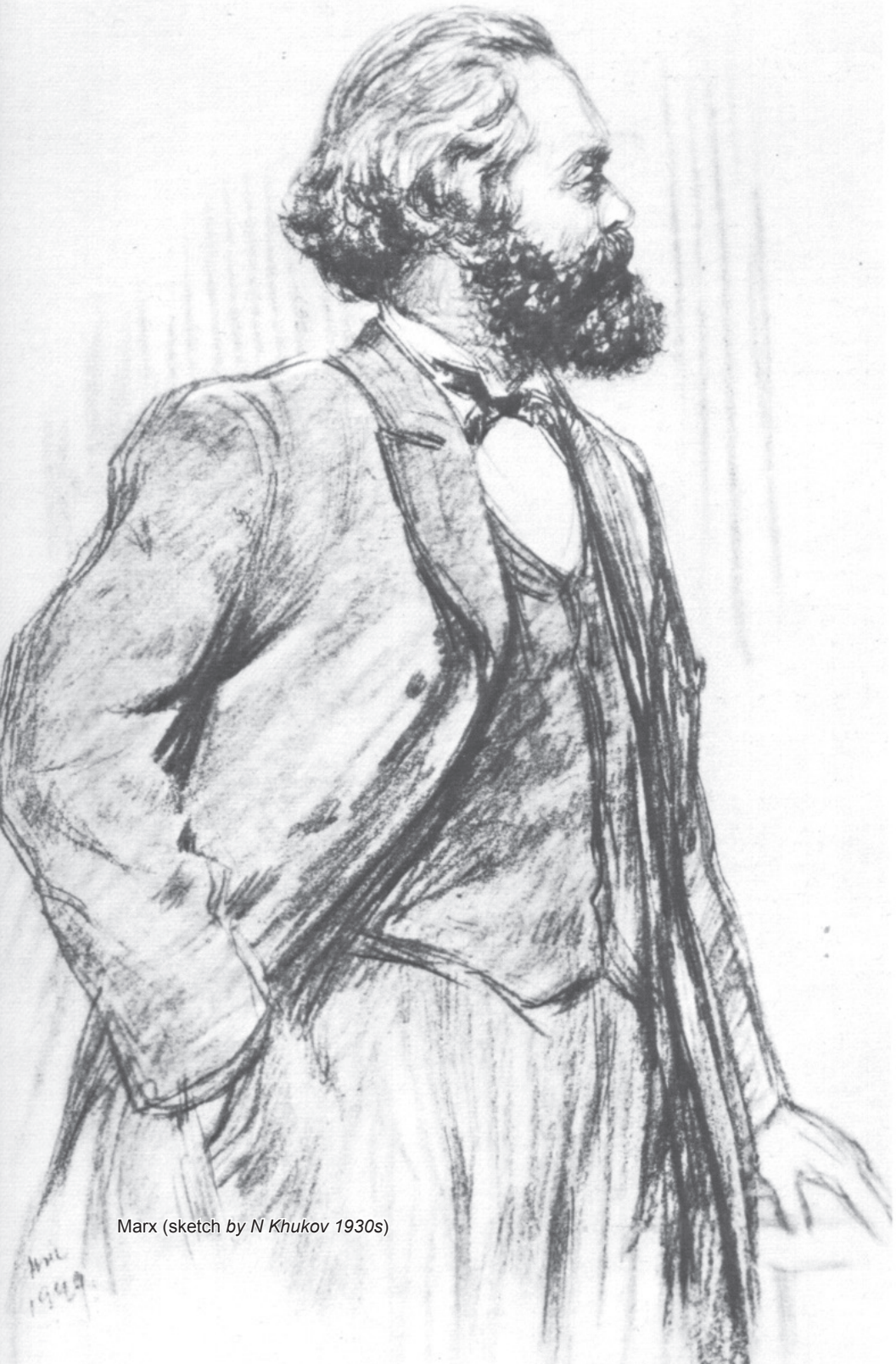
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COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

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Marx (sketch by N Khukov 1930s)

Khukov
1930s

“With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world-conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat – the creator of a new, communist society...”

- V. I. Lenin



Marx (Lithograph by V Lapin, 1957)

Publisher's Note

The Indian Institute of Marxist Studies is planning to reprint a series of Marxist classics to help new readers get acquainted with the Marxist worldview. The Communist Manifesto marks the beginning of this series. In this edition we have included, in addition to the original text of the classic together with the Prefaces written jointly by Marx and Engels and by Engels alone, Vinod Mishra's Foreword to a Hindi edition of the classic published by Samkaleen Prakashan in November 1998 and an Introduction to this edition by Arindam Sen.

This English version will be followed by translations in several other languages. Your feedback and suggestions will be of great value in this endeavour.



Marx arrested in Brussels in March 1848 (painting by N Khukov 1930s)

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Marx speaking in London, 19th C Engraving

Foreword¹

Vinod Mishra

The Congress of the Communist League held in London in November 1847 had commissioned Marx and Engels to write a 'detailed theoretical and practical programme for the Party'. Accordingly Marx and Engels drafted the Communist Manifesto in January 1848, the first German edition of which came out just a few weeks before revolution broke out in France on 24 February, 1848.

In view of the massive growth of modern industry and the concomitant expansion and development of working class party organisations, and especially in the light of the experience of the 1871 Paris Commune, a quarter century after the publication of the Manifesto, Marx and Engels felt that the programme had become dated in some of its details. They said the programme outlined at the end of the second chapter would have been written quite differently. The critique of socialist literature was also incomplete in the sense that it did not cover the period beyond 1847. Most of the parties described in the Manifesto had also become extinct by then. And the sea change in political situation had also rendered much of the comments about the relations of communists with other opposition parties considerably outdated.

The Communist Manifesto has now completed 150 years. These 150 years witnessed major periods of crisis in global capitalism, the quest for control over the world market led to two world wars among bourgeois states, socialist revolutions became victorious leading to the

[1] Comrade VM wrote this for a Hindi edition of the Communist Manifesto published by Samkaleen Prakashan, Patna, in November 1998.

rise of socialist states, yet in the last decade of the twentieth century it was capitalism which prevailed over socialism in the global contention between the two (socialism and capitalism).

A unipolar world, a new world economic order, the breakneck speed of globalisation, the all-out domination of multinational corporations, the scientific and technological revolution and the more recent information revolution reducing the whole world to a single village – such are the principal features of the present age. Rifts in the international solidarity of the working class, the rise of ethnic, feminist and environmentalist movements, the philosophy of post-modernism – all these are questioning the very relevance of Marxism and the communist movement.

When the communist movement across the world finds itself at the crossroads, Marxist intellectuals are once again returning to a renewed study of Marxist classics to find directions for an answer to today's questions. Indeed, it has become imperative for every progressive individual to revisit the Communist Manifesto and study it afresh.

According to the Communist Manifesto, “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 conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.”

Further on, we find, “In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production.”

And then “The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of commu-

nication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. ... In one word, it creates a world after its own image. ... 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 informed reader can see in these lines a living picture of today’s globalisation.

The picture of internationalism of the working people drawn by Marx and Engels in contrast to this globalisation of capital clearly underlines the complex interrelationship between national and international circumstances as between classes and nations: “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. ...

“In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another will be 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 Manifesto had clearly stated that “The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” Even in its most liberal and broadest form of parliamentary democracy, the modern state can essentially be nothing else. The socialist state, in contrast, champions real democracy for the common people. In spite of this if the bourgeoisie has succeeded in projecting the defeat of socialism as the victory of democracy, we will surely have to deeply investigate the reason.

In the wake of the experience of the Paris Commune (1871) in which the proletariat had controlled political power for full two months, Marx had drawn the important conclusion that “the working

class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.” (The Civil War in France).

Lenin, in his debate with Kautsky in his all-important work “The State and Revolution”, raises the crucial question as to whether the old state machinery will continue after revolution or be smashed. Citing the aforementioned inference drawn by Marx, Lenin answers this question categorically: the old state machinery will have to be smashed because the bourgeois state rests on the very basis of alienation of the people from state power.

According to Lenin, democracy in a capitalist society is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, the majority of the population is denied participation in public and political life.

In clear contrast to Kautsky who limits the political struggles of the proletariat to the goal of securing parliamentary majority and establishing parliamentary control over the state machinery, Lenin advocates a representative assembly of the proletariat which will be a working body, executive and legislative at the same time, where the electorate will enjoy the right to recall and representatives will have to work and take responsibility for implementing the laws they have legislated, will have to test their impact in real life and will have to be accountable directly to the electorate.

“[T]he *mass* of the population”, emphasised Lenin, “will rise to taking an *independent* part, not only in voting and elections, but *also in the everyday administration of the state*. Under socialism *all* will govern in turn and will soon become accustomed to no one governing.” (The State and Revolution)

According to Lenin the Paris Commune was one such organisation and after the Russian revolution, the Soviets had also emerged as similar organisations. Regarding the state Lenin goes so far as to say that in the first phase of the communist society, the socialist state itself is a remnant of the bourgeois state: “The state withers away insofar as

there are no longer any capitalists, any classes, and consequently, no class can be suppressed. But the state has not yet completely withered away, since there still remains the safeguarding of “bourgeois law”, which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely, complete communism is necessary.”


This is why “In its first phase, or first stage, communism cannot as yet be fully mature economically and entirely free from traditions or vestiges of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that communism in its first phase retains “the narrow horizon of bourgeois law”. Of course, bourgeois law in regard to the distribution of consumer goods inevitably presupposes the existence of the bourgeois state, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of enforcing the observance of the rules of law.

“It follows that under communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois law, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!” (The State and Revolution)

Since the days of the Paris Commune to the Soviet and Chinese Revolutions, we have seen several experiments with proletarian state power. The Cultural Revolution in China witnessed vibrant debates on the nature and form of proletarian state power. The setbacks suffered by socialism in recent years have further intensified these debates.

While Social Democracy accepts parliamentary democracy as the ultimate limit of democracy, anarchism ends up negating democracy itself by its primitive negation of parliamentary democracy. The basic challenge facing Marxists today is to explore the broadest form of proletarian democracy beyond the limits of parliamentary democracy so that the defeat of world capitalism in the coming century is seen as the victory of not just socialism but also democracy.

Many changes could possibly be made in the Communist Manifesto in the light of the questions arising from the experiences of the last 150 years of the international communist movement, but as Marx and Engels wrote in the preface to the 1872 German edition, “the Manifesto

has become a historical document which we have no longer any right to alter". Indeed, nobody has this right today, especially because the general principles delineated in this document, remain by and large as true as they were 150 years ago. The practical implementation of these principles will however depend on the historical circumstances of a given country and time. 

Our Epoch, Our Manifesto

Arindam Sen

How dramatically can political mood and ideological discourse change in a mere couple of decades! In January 1989 the *New Yorker* greeted the collapse and crisis of pseudo-communism in Eastern Europe and the USSR with an article titled “Triumph of Capitalism”. The theme was widely echoed in the print and electronic media, while more serious works like *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) also appeared on the scene.¹ The boastful assertion of TINA – There Is No Alternative (to capitalism) – rent the air.

[1] In this widely discussed book Francis Fukuyama essentially says that liberal democracy is the final form of government for all nations, from which there can be no progression to an alternative system. Marxists like Perry Anderson have been among Fukuyama’s fiercest critics. Jacques Derrida in *Spectres of Marx* (1993) held that Fukuyama—and the quick celebrity of his book — was but one symptom of the anxiety to ensure the “death of Marx”. He strongly refuted Fukuyama’s celebration of liberal hegemony: “... it must be cried out, at a time when some have the audacity to neo-evangelize in the name of the ideal of a liberal democracy that has finally realized itself as the ideal of human history: never have violence, inequality, exclusion, famine, and thus economic oppression affected as many human beings in the history of the earth and of humanity.”

Crisis of Neoliberalism and the Return of Karl Marx

But the triumphalism did not last long. With the onset of the South-Asian crisis of 1997-98, the same *New Yorker* in its October 20, 1997 issue announced "The Return of Karl Marx". Marxist scholars and parties also came forward to revisit the classics. A number of new editions of the Communist Manifesto were published in 1998 (150th anniversary of its first publication) e.g., one with a Introduction by Eric Hobsbawm and another, published by the Monthly Review Press, with a Foreword by Paul M Sweezy and an Article by Ellen Meiksins Wood.

By the turn of the new millennium, TINA was yielding place first to the vaguely optimistic slogan of "Another World Is Possible" and then to the confident battle-cry of "21st-Century Socialism". The world began to look increasingly like a turbulent sea of myriad mass movements. In a situation like this, Alain Badiou's "The Communist Hypothesis" (2008) – which generated a lot of interest and provided the stimulus for an international conference devoted to the "Idea of Communism", conducted chiefly by Slavoj Žižek, in London in 2009 – and Terry Eagleton's "Why Marx Was Right" (2011) helped create a new awareness about the relevance of Marxism in the 21st century. Jason Barker, writer-director of the 2011 German documentary film "Marx Reloaded", sounded quite convincing when he said, "[P]olitical thinking today is again converging on precisely the type of social conditions in which Marx lived".

As a backdrop to the last-mentioned books, films and events, of decisive importance was the financial crisis-cum-economic recession that struck the world in 2007-08. While the bourgeois ideologues once again started screaming about the resurrection of the dead philosopher whom their counterparts in the 19th century used to grudgingly call "the Red Doctor" (a reference to the doctorate degree in philosophy Marx earned at the age of 21), the more intelligent among them were trying to explore if the Marxian

theory could be used for saving capitalism. Among others, the Pope and the French President were reported to be consulting *Capital* to understand the causes (maybe cures too) of the ravaging crisis. *Financial Times* then conducted an extensive discussion focussed on Marx's *Capital* and featured an interview with Jason Barker titled "Can Marx Save Capitalism?"; now *The Economist* has hailed Thomas Piketty as "The Modern Marx". Well, they think they have found a sterilised, innocuous Marx, who is not questioning the foundations of capitalism – such as the extraction of surplus value – or the devastating ways of present day imperialism. A mellowed Marx, who instead of saying expropriators will be expropriated, solemnly declares: rentiers will be heavily taxed!²

Such shifts in ideological-political discourse, considered in conjunction with various social upheavals, clearly point to a constant quest – going on at various levels of the conscious and the subconscious among ever larger sections of people – for a radical, viable alternative to capitalism. It is to aid this quest, particularly in our country, that we considered it necessary to bring out the present Indian edition of the seminal vision statement of communists – the Communist Manifesto – in English and different Indian languages. Of course, one cannot expect ready-made solutions to our contemporary concerns in a document this old and this brief. But definitely one would find here – in this panoramic view of the historical evolution and global spread of capitalism as well as its

[2] In *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* Thomas Piketty demonstrates that, as a rule, the rate of return on private capital (money, land, factories and other properties) has been significantly higher than the rate of growth of income and output. This implies that "Wealth accumulated in the past grows more rapidly than output and wages.... The entrepreneur inevitably tends to become a rentier, more and more dominant over those who own nothing but their labor." The result is a consistent (covering the past three centuries, save the period spanning the two world wars) growth of inequality of income and wealth, which was one of the major causes of the crisis of 2008 and which can endanger the whole system again. Interested readers may see a brief critical review of Piketty's propositions in *Liberation*, June 2014.

contradictions, crises and ultimate collapse – possibly the best point of entry into a serious, systematic study of the society we are born into. As Chris Harman observed,

“There is still a compulsive quality to its prose as it provides insight after insight into the society in which we live, where it comes from and where it’s going to. It is still able to explain, as mainstream economists and sociologists cannot, today’s world of recurrent wars and repeated economic crisis, of hunger for hundreds of millions on the one hand and “overproduction” on the other.”³

This is certainly true. Indeed there are passages – those on globalisation readily come to mind – which by common consent sound even more realistic and relevant today than they did when the document was published. We shall return to this shortly, but let us first acquaint ourselves with the specific historical setting in which this timeless classic appeared.

Socio-Political Backdrop of the Communist Manifesto

If the famous “Declaration of the Rights of Man” – the manifesto of the French Revolution – heralded the advent of what Eric Hobsbawm aptly called “The Age of Revolution” (the period between 1789 and 1848), the culminating point of that era was marked by the appearance of the *Manifesto*. Both these documents were historical milestones of great revolutionary significance, and the progression from the former’s grand idea of “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” to the latter’s clarion call of “Working Men of the World, Unite!” represented a great leap forward in the history of human consciousness and the ever-ongoing march towards a better society.

However, the French Revolution, or the age of bourgeois revolutions as a whole, had not totally eliminated pre-capitalist relations

[3] “The Manifesto and the World of 1848” in *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick). Bloomsbury, London: Bookmarks.

and traditions either in economic base or in ideological-political superstructure. Germany for example was yet to experience a bourgeois revolution and when that took place soon after the publication of the *Manifesto* (as it had correctly predicted) it did **not** lead to a proletarian revolution (as the *Manifesto* had expected) but revealed a thoroughly conservative/counterrevolutionary character. But it was mainly Germany and, next to it, continental nations like France, Italy, Poland and the Netherlands that the Communist League (the organisation that issued the *Manifesto*) was focused on – not England, capitalistically the most advanced nation at the time, which would later provide the base for Marx's *Capital*. In these countries, besides working class movement, various other struggles – of serfs against masters, peasants against landlords, common people including the bourgeoisie against the feudal aristocracy and so on – were quite significant. The *Manifesto* therefore attached much importance to unity of communists with democratic forces emerging from and leading those progressive struggles.

The “Age of Revolution” was, naturally, also one of counterrevolutionary repression. A good number of revolutionaries (individually and in groups) who had been exiled, or fled, from Germany and other countries, began to interact and regroup mainly in London and Paris from 1830s onwards. Thus in 1833 the “Society of Exiles” was founded by German revolutionaries in Paris. Following a split, those under the influence of the French anarchist Blanqui formed the “League of the Just”. This organisation played a major role in the Paris uprising of 1839, which was ruthlessly crushed, whereupon some of them, including Karl Schapper, migrated to London. There they founded in 1840 an organisation named, largely as a cover to avoid police harassment, “Workers’ Education Society”.

Another leader of the League, Wilhelm Weitling, fled to Switzerland. There he published a book that called for revolution based mainly on the lumpenproletariat. Jailed and then sent back to Germany, he migrated to London in 1844. The arrival of this

energetic and highly influential anarchist leader encouraged the émigrés there, including Schapper, to found “The Society of the Democratic Friends of All Nations”.

Interactions between The League of Just on one hand and the Chartists (in England) and various other fighting forces in different countries were also going on, and so was the debate between various schools of socialism/communism. In the process, most members of the League began to appreciate the superiority of the scientific socialism, being developed by Marx and Engels, over various utopian ‘systems’. League leaders like Heinrich Bauer, Joseph Moll and Karl Schapper issued a circular in late 1846 proposing an international communist congress to set up a “strong party”. That congress was held in London in June 1847. Marx, then in Brussels, could not attend but gave detailed advice to Wilhelm Wolf, the delegate from that city; Engels attended as a delegate from Paris.

The congress adopted the new name “Communist League” and adopted, as the basis of its programme, the “Communist Confession of Faith (or Credo)” drafted by Engels in the form of a revolutionary catechism – the form in which workers’ societies were then wont to formulate their programmes. As proposed by Marx and Engels, the congress replaced the utopian socialist motto “All Men Are Brothers” by the class-conscious rallying cry: “Working Men of the World, Unite!” Whereas the old slogan obfuscated the real situation and sowed the illusion that with sufficient propaganda, capitalists and landlords could be turned into brothers of workers and peasants, the new one pointed to the specific political task at hand – that workers must unite on a *worldwide scale* for *class struggle*, for the forcible overthrow of the old social order and the construction of a new society. This was a tremendous advance indeed.

Shortly after the Congress, a district committee of the Communist League was founded in Brussels under the leadership of Marx. For all practical purposes it began to act as the leading ideological centre, although the Central Committee was based in London. Marx

and Engels felt that the illegal and relatively narrow organisational structure of the League – which was imposed on it by the absolutist states in Europe – should be surrounded with a network of open workers’ societies. They soon established the German Workers’ Society in Brussels and took an active part in founding the Brussels Democratic Association. Marx’s lectures in the Workers’ Society were later published as *Wage Labour and Capital* and he was elected one of the two vice-chairmen of the Democratic Association. The Association also did a good job in building a broad alliance of democratic forces in different countries.

Engels’ *Principles of Communism*, a revised and enlarged version of the *Communist Confession of Faith*, was regarded as an outline programme of the League. However, very soon Engels himself felt it necessary to “drop the catechism form and call the thing *Communist Manifesto*.” (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p 45). Marx readily agreed and that was what the second congress of the Communist League, held in London in November-December 1847, decided to bring out.

The League already included among its members leading Chartists and the congress was attended by delegates from most European countries including England. Marx fought vigorously against various erroneous ideas and, ably supported by Engels, secured a majority for his proposals. On a motion moved by Marx and Engels, the congress resolved that in its external relations the League should take an open stand as a communist party and entrusted Marx and Engels (as recorded in the *Preface to the German Edition of 1872*) with the task of drafting its Manifesto.

From Utopian to Scientific Socialism

By this time Marx already had to his credit such landmarks as *The Holy Family* (1845, written jointly with Engels) and *Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) and Engels, *The Condition of Working Class in England* (1844) and *Principles of Communism* (1847). The two friends had been working closely together since 1844 on various theoretical projects (writing *The German Ideology*, for example) and political organisational initiatives, as described above. Both worked in the *Deutsche-Briisseler-Zeitung*, a democratic-socialist fortnightly founded, incidentally, by a suspected police informer (without knowing this, of course) and turned it into an undeclared organ of the League.

Their first-hand experience of political work among workers, their interactions with various democratic forces and the intense, wide-ranging debates they had to conduct with Weitling, Bakunin and others – all these had helped the duo shape up their distinct world outlook and political-organisational views. Now, immediately after the congress, they conferred for days together in London and Brussels on how best to give concrete shape to their shared wealth of ideas. Marx then worked for a whole month to actually write down the document, to some extent drawing on the *Principles*.

He completed the work just on the deadline, after the CC had warned from London that should he fail to do his job by February 1, 1848, the task would be handed over to someone else. The pamphlet was published from London in German towards the end of February 1848, followed by Polish, Danish, French and English editions, while the first Russian one came out in the early 1860s.

Some scholars seem to find it fashionable to describe the *Manifesto* as a work of Marx alone. But what we noted above, read with Marx's explicit statement that the *Manifesto* was "jointly written by Engels and myself"⁴ completely refutes this position. In the

[4] *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Volume I

last-named preface, Marx also mentioned the independent evolution of Engels' theoretical thought to the same point as his and made particular mention of "his [Engels'] brilliant sketch on the criticism of economic categories". So, the *Manifesto* was definitely a joint work of the co-founders of the communist movement, the modest words of Engels in the *Preface to the German Edition of 1883* notwithstanding.

With the publication of this incisive and wide-ranging document, socialism no longer remained a grand utopia. The era of scientific socialism had begun.

Post publication, the *Manifesto* "had a history of its own", as Engels wrote in the *Preface to the German Edition of 1890*. Its popularity rose and fell with crests and troughs in the working class movement, Engels pointed out, but the overall trend certainly was towards wider recognition. After the death of its authors, the classic was printed in all major languages all over the world, as fresh editions in many cases, and to this day it continues to attract new readers every year, everywhere. Beyond Left circles, it has won universal recognition, including from ideological adversaries, as the most widely read, most influential political document and the second best-selling book (after the Bible) of all time.

Style, Structure and Method

Among the many sources of the *Manifesto's* strong and enduring appeal, probably the first to strike the reader is the lyrical yet bold direct speech with profound power of penetration matching the immensely rich content. The free-flowing text sings here like a nimble mountain spring, thunders there as a mighty waterfall and, in the end, swells and beckons like an endless ocean, the ocean of world revolution. The beauty of brevity is simply enthralling; right from the famous opening sentence to the passionate concluding call,

the gem sparkles with the lofty Promethean spirit of the modern proletariat.

No less instructive is the construction or presentation: simple and straightforward, often in a dialogic form, always without pretensions. The *Manifesto* begins with a clear and concise statement of purpose: to “meet this *nursery tale* of the spectre of communism with a manifesto of the party itself” (emphasis added to draw attention to what the authors actually meant by “spectre”). The pithy yet profound prelude is followed by the four sections with short simple titles indicating the logical structure or building blocks of the first international Marxist programme. Section I examines, in the context of the doctrine of class struggle, the principal class antagonists in capitalist society: “Bourgeois and Proletariat”. Section II, on “Proletarians and Communists”, clarifies the organic relation of the class to the organised vanguards and lays down certain core propositions of communism juxtaposed against the highly pretentious bourgeois common sense. But these propositions needed to be clarified also in contradistinction with various vulgar socialist and utopian communist ‘systems’ then in vogue; this is done in section III – a critical review of “Socialist and Communist Literature”. Section IV, on “Positions of Communists in Relation to Other Existing Opposition Parties”, explains the basic principles of communist strategy, tactics and united front policy.

Through these four sections, the basic propositions emerge effortlessly yet systematically one after the other and bind together in a neat theoretical coherence, even as the centrality of class struggle comes alive from pages of history to present times, finally leading to the crescendo – an open call to arms to those who have nothing to lose but their chains, and a world to win! Also embedded in this lofty futuristic vision is a broad outline of practical measures which the proletariat should begin to implement immediately after coming to power.

Although issued as a manifesto, i.e., a lean pamphlet for mass circulation, the document was intended to be – as we gather from the “Preface to the German Edition of 1872” – “a detailed theoretical and practical programme”. The authors managed to meet such contradictory demands in a marvellous manner. They did not write separate chapters on the dialectical worldview, the materialist interpretation of history, the doctrine of class struggle, detailed charters of practical demands in different countries, and so on. They rolled all these into one multi-dimensional but composite, seamless narrative.⁵ What the world proletariat got as a result was a practical-political programme of action woven around a robust theoretical core. It was – and remains – a cogent summing up of the past, an insightful portrayal of the present and a scientific-imaginative foray into the future.

Without a doubt the *Manifesto* will forever be admired as a great historical watershed. But has not the march of time robbed the document of its practical-political relevance?

Well, it has and it has not. The authors themselves pointed out in 1872 that already by that time part of the text (the criticism of contemporary socialist literature, the assessment of opposition parties and the 10-point revolutionary programme) had become “deficient” or “antiquated”. But even here, as we shall see in our discussion of communist strategy and tactics, the scientific approach and the basic principles remain as valuable as ever.

Before we proceed, we must take note of another feature of the method adopted in the *Manifesto*. One should not expect here a photocopy or photographic details of reality. What is to be savoured are the broad, swift, powerful strokes of a creative artist who has a keen eye for observation that is better than the lens of the best camera, but who takes the liberty to highlight what she or he believes to be the most vital contours or features of the subject, leaving out certain others, so as to drive home the intended message.

[5] (See Lenin’s observation quoted at the beginning of this book)

As for our method of study, in the pages that follow we should, while focusing on this text of Marxism, check up with the subsequent developments in Marxist thought on some of the more important issues raised here. For thus alone can we begin to grasp Marxism as a live philosophy of praxis, continually trying to update and enrich itself in course of active engagement with the ever-changing world.

Bourgeois Society: Then and Now

Remarkably enough, Marx and Engels did not use the term capitalism in the *Manifesto*. They preferred expressions like “bourgeois society”, “our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie” and presented the whole discussion in terms of class struggle between the basic classes of this era: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, depicting in the process the essential features and tendencies of capitalism.

They saw these features and tendencies as inseparable parts of a composite whole, but different people with different class viewpoints have tended to pay one-sided attention to this or that element, missing the wood for her/his favourable tree. Thus the World Bank in its 1996 *World Development Report* and Thomas Friedman in the 1999 bestseller *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* quoted select passages from the *Manifesto* on globalisation, with great appreciation, to describe the present world economy. What they chose not to look at was the discussion on inevitability of crises under capitalism.

The 1848 document brilliantly captures *the motion of capitalism in the dialectical unity of its two opposite tendencies: towards global supremacy propelled by the most rapid and continuous development of productive forces on one hand, and on the other, recurrent, ever deeper crises brought about by the conflict of the expanding productive forces with the constricted relations of production.*

And sure enough, this analytical framework has proved to be eminently useful for understanding bourgeois societies in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Let us consider the two sides of the same historical process one by one.

A corollary of the rapid growth of productive forces, the *Manifesto* observes, is a striving towards centralisation and concentration of economic and political power: “giant, modern industry” in place of manufacture, “the industrial millionaires” in place of “the industrial middle class”, “centralised means of production, and... concentrated property in a few hands”, “political centralisation” as a “necessary consequence” of this, and so on. This trend continued to grow and, as Lenin demonstrated about 70 years later in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, culminated in a global system of imperialism or monopoly capitalism – a qualitatively new and so far the highest stage of capitalism. Today, another hundred years on, we see a **new phase** of the **imperialist stage** of capitalism – neoliberal⁶ globalisation.

Whereas in Marx and Engels’ time the principal vehicle of the globalising thrust was old-style colonialism, in our century the latter has been replaced by modern imperialism and neo-colonialism. The change from crude direct rule to more and more sophisticated indirect rule has been associated with a shift of emphasis

[6] The prefix ‘neo’ alludes to the emphatic return to liberal capitalism freed from the government interference imposed during the quarter-century of post-war welfare statism and social democracy. The latter represented a compromise thrust upon old-style laissez-faire capitalism by advancing waves of mass movements and the growing appeal of socialism. A whole range of measures were adopted, such as free/subsidised education, employment guarantee and unemployment benefits, vital services like transportation, communications etc. provided through a non-profit public sector, a considerable degree of state control on economic affairs, and so on. All these together provided capitalism – ailing if not moribund – with a new lease of life, as it were. The inevitability of periodic crises was, of course, still a law of capitalism and when it struck in the 1970s, the most powerful sections of the bourgeoisie ventured upon a rollback of welfare statist/social democratic measures and restoration of a new, more aggressive version of liberalism or market fundamentalism.

from merchandise export to export of capital and the emergence of monopolies in all sectors of the economy and particularly the rise of an all-powerful financial oligarchy.

The change was succinctly described by Lenin mid-way through the period which separates us from the *Manifesto*: "It is characteristic of capitalism in general that the ownership of capital is separated from the application of capital to production, that money capital is separated from industrial or productive capital, and that the rentier who lives entirely on income obtained from money capital, is separated from the entrepreneur.... Imperialism, or the domination of finance capital, is that highest stage of capitalism in which this separation reaches vast proportions. The predominance of finance capital over all other forms of capital means the predominance of the rentier and of the financial oligarchy", and of "a small number of financially powerful states". (*Imperialism*)

This "separation" of "money capital... from industrial capital" has by now grown much deeper, with international finance almost freed from its moorings in production and thriving on speculation in share, commodity and currency markets, investment banking and insurance, real estate, etc.

Similarly, while Marx and Engels point out that the expansion of the bourgeois order from the West to the East makes the latter dependent on the former, in our century this dependence has been perpetuated and perfected as "development of underdevelopment". Through devices such as unequal exchange, selective discriminatory protectionism and the lure of debt trap, the larger part of "the East" - or the Third World in today's terminology - has been systematically developed into a vast region of retarded, deformed, half-baked capitalism catering to the interests of the metropolitan centres.

Writing in 2008, Michael Löwy gave a lively picture of the advanced stage globalisation has now reached:

“In fact, capital has never succeeded as it has in the 21st century in exerting a power so complete, absolute, integral, universal and unlimited over the entire world. Never in the past was it able, as today, to impose its rules, its policies, its dogmas and its interests on all the nations of the globe. International financial capital and multinational companies have never so much escaped the control of the states and peoples concerned. Never before has there been such a dense network of international institutions – like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation – devoted to controlling, governing and administering the life of humanity according to the strict rules of the capitalist free market and of capitalist free profit. Finally, never at any time prior to today, have all spheres of human life – social relations, culture, art, politics, sexuality, health, education, sport, entertainment – been so completely subjected to capital and so profoundly plunged into the “icy water of egotistical calculation”. (The Communist Manifesto 160 Years Later)

But this full-spectrum domination of capital has been accompanied by an unprecedentedly universal spread of the crisis (during the last comparable crisis in the 1930s, the Soviet Union remained outside its pale).⁷ The *twofold contradictory tendencies of capitalism* noted above are thus most conspicuous today.

Closely related to this there is another and perhaps even more important tendency inherent in this mode of production. The very methods on which capital relies for overcoming recurrent crisis, the *Manifesto* tells us, are precisely the ones that pave the way for more destructive crisis and reduce the means available for preventing them in future. This is also proving to be truer than ever.

[7] For a relatively detailed discussion of the latest outbreak of capitalist crisis, see our trilogy *Capital in Crisis: Causes Implications and Proletarian Response* (2009); *Crisis of Neoliberalism and challenges before Popular Movements* (2013) and *India in the Grip of Deep Economic Crisis: Causes and Quests for Solution* (2014).

The two basic methods capital resorts to are: “conquest of new markets” and “more thorough exploitation of the old ones” (Section I). But capitalism is now a universal system in economic terms, so there is no further scope for external expansion by old methods like colonising new regions or prising the markets of (erstwhile) socialist countries. The only way traditionally available to global capital was unprecedentedly more intensive exploitation of old markets by various means such as enhanced market penetration into personal and social life with commodities like mobile phones and other electronic gadgets, various lifestyle products, social networking services, etc. However, such expansion of commodities and services catering to expanding human needs is not enough to satisfy capital’s growing hunger for profit. So new techniques had to be adopted, both in the global North and the global South.

In the former, the principal instruments were financialisation and speculative activities as major sources of profit and easy credit as a means to promote effective demand even as wage levels are kept low. In the South, especially the so-called “emerging economies” including our country, the foremost weapon was LPG (Liberalisation-Privatisation-Globalisation) which ensured for big capital, indigenous and foreign, hefty profits and asset accumulation by dispossessing the people and the nation.

But in both the North and the South, the temporary boost to GDP growth provided by these measures were more than offset by dangerous ‘side-effects’ like rising inequality, growing disconnect between the swelling financial sector and the stagnating real economy and so on, eventually leading to the crisis that began to spread around the world from ‘the most successful’ capitalist economy in 2007-08.

This latest round of periodic crisis is evidently proving to be exceptionally prolonged and deeply structural, reminding us of the *Manifesto*’s observation that crises “by their periodical return put on trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire

bourgeois society” (Section I). In such hopeless circumstances the highest and leading echelons of the bourgeoisie, while doggedly continuing with the strategy of financialisation, are now relying more and more on redistribution of incomes and wealth – inter-class (from producers of surplus value to its appropriators, more generally, from the poor to the rich and the upwardly mobile middle classes), intra-class (from lower to higher to the highest strata of the bourgeoisie by way of centralisation/monopolisation as well as a slew of other measures), from peripheries of the global economy to the centre (from underdeveloped nations to metropolitan countries).

But this is manifestly furthering recessionary trends in rich as well as poor countries. In fact the triad of the bourgeois order today – North America, Western Europe and Japan – is in the grip of what John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney have called the stagnation- financialisation trap (See “The Endless Crisis”, Monthly Review Press). Early this year (2014) Christine Lagarde, managing director of IMF, even went to the extent of ringing the alarm bell about the threat of deflation – the dreaded ogre that wrought havoc in the US in the early 1930s.

So much for globalisation and the crisis of capital. In these vital respects, capitalism has no doubt changed a lot, but mainly in the direction indicated in the *Manifesto*.

The other most important characteristic of the bourgeoisie/ the bourgeois order lies in its revolutionary role. We are used to viewing this generally in the historical fact of replacement of the outmoded feudal order by a relatively advanced socio-economic system; for Marx and Engels this role lay also, and above all, in the creation of both the material and cultural foundations for communism **and the class force** capable of realising this great transformation. The *Manifesto* gives us a fairly detailed analysis of the process involved.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising, the *Manifesto* states, (a) “the instruments of production” (machines, skills and technologies); (b) “and thereby the relations of production” (basic relations among all economically active men and women, e.g., capitalists and workers, which together constitute the economic structure of a particular society); (c) “and with them the whole relations of society” (familial, cultural, political). For instance, the rule of money and “egotistical calculations” turn love, dignity, family ties and knowledge into objects to be bought and sold, while “exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions”, is substituted by “naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation”. More important, these are not one-time changes. Constant flux in all realms is a basic, inalienable feature of the bourgeois epoch (Section I). In this dynamism, we could add in the light of post-*Manifesto* experience, lie the basic strength of capitalism, as also the source of many a new contradiction.

But how about the reactionary side of the bourgeoisie? Two things are notable here. First, the *Manifesto*, never intended to be a comprehensive critique of the emerging bourgeois order, does not go into all its imperfections, deviations and distortions. Thus, cheap commodities are singled out as “the heavy artillery” with which the East was won, but there is only a veiled hint – “expeditions” – at the physical torture and real guns widely used for the same purpose. There is, again, no mention of the physical violence and cultural coercion involved in the metropolitan bourgeois project of “create[ing] a world after its own image”.

Some of such omissions might be due to lack of information and the compulsion to keep the text short, but mainly they seem to be deliberate. The intention probably was to hammer home the *principal aspect*: the transformational role of the bourgeoisie, which has made the world ripe for another, and more fundamental, transformation.

Second, while the authors were well aware of the lack of capitalist development in much of the West (*cf.* Engels, *The Civil War in Switzerland* (1847), *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. VI) the real reactionary/conservative/counterrevolutionary role of the bourgeoisie came into full view only during and after the revolutions of 1848, i.e., *after* the *Manifesto* was written. Marx was quick to take note of this in *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-revolution* (*Selected Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. I). Written in the same year (December 1848) in almost the same style, it contains a very strong indictment of the bourgeoisie that could well be read as an epilogue or afterword to the *Manifesto*:

“The Prussian bourgeoisie reached the political summit, not by means of a peaceful deal with the Crown, as it had desired, but as the result of a revolution. It was to defend, not its own interests, but those of the people – for a popular movement had prepared the way for the bourgeoisie – against the Crown, in other words, against itself. ...

“The March revolution in Prussia should not be confused either with the English revolution of 1648 or with the French one of 1789.

“In 1648 the bourgeoisie was allied with the modern aristocracy against the monarchy, the feudal aristocracy and the established church.

“In 1789 the bourgeoisie was allied with the people against the monarchy, the aristocracy and the established church. ...

“In both revolutions the bourgeoisie was the class that really headed the movement. ...

“The revolutions of 1648 and 1789 were not English and French revolutions, they were revolutions in the European fashion. They did not represent the victory of a particular social class over the old political system; they proclaimed the political system of the new European society. The bourgeoisie was victorious in these revolutions, but the victory of the bourgeoisie was at that time the victory of a new social order, the victory of bourgeois own-

ership over feudal ownership, of nationality over provincialism, of competition over the guild, of partitioning [of the land] over primogeniture, of the rule of the landowner over the domination of the owner by the land, of enlightenment over superstition, of the family over the family name, of industry over heroic idleness, of bourgeois law over medieval privileges. The revolution of 1648 was the victory of the seventeenth century over the sixteenth century; the revolution of 1789 was the victory of the eighteenth century over the seventeenth. These revolutions reflected the needs of the world at that time rather than the needs of those parts of the world where they occurred, that is, England and France.

“There has been nothing of this in the Prussian March revolution.

“...Far from being a European revolution it was merely a weak repercussion of a European revolution in a backward country. Instead of being ahead of its century, it was over half a century behind its time. ...It was not a question of establishing a new society, but of resurrecting in Berlin a society that had expired in Paris. ...”⁸

Such counterrevolutionary traits continued to grow, and after the Paris Commune and the Russian revolution they became the predominant feature of the bourgeoisie. To save itself from the sporadic but mighty advances of the working people, the bourgeoisie recoiled completely from its revolutionary disposition and joined hands with the reactionary forces and trends like feudalism, religious fanaticism, racism etc. On a world scale, imperialism under the rule of finance capital became the vehicle of decadence and reaction. In countries like India and China comprador capitalism emerged in close alliance with feudalism and colonialism. Europe witnessed fascism – first as a campaign and then in power. Later the so-called “Asian tigers” and some other countries like India saw the emergence (and crisis) of crony capitalism. In recent decades, the official secular religion of neoliberalism spread – from the West

[8] From Marx/Engels Internet Archive, accessed on 30th March, 2014.

across the world – in covert connivance with ultra rightist trends like neo-fascism, communalism and the like.

We are thus living in a world where spectacular progress in production, communications and all branches of science and technology go hand in hand with arch-reactionary trends in economics, politics and culture and alarming ecological degradation. While there can be no two opinions about such achievements of the bourgeois epoch as the internationalisation of intellectual-cultural creations of different nations, a certain erosion of national narrow-mindedness among the people etc. (as mentioned in Section I), we cannot therefore ditto the *Manifesto* where it speaks of vanishing national antagonisms and things like that. In the age of imperialism, probably no less important, if not the main trend, is the non-fulfilment of many of the lofty promises of the dawn of the bourgeois epoch – in fact a certain regression from its initial achievements.

Now for another characteristic feature of this social order, as observed by the authors of the *Manifesto*: “society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.” In this sense, they held, this era “has simplified the class antagonisms.” How far do these observations correspond with the present-day reality?

The *Manifesto* defines “the proletariat, the modern working class” as “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.” Engels’ *Principles of Communism* (1847) also defines it as “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.”

Apart from substituting for sale of "labour" the more correct expression "labour power", Marx and Engels never changed this definition. And it clearly covers ordinary employees (excluding the top state functionaries, corporate executives etc. who earn enough to become capitalists and whose incomes usually include large dividends from shares, interests from other investments etc), including computer-operators in offices, banks etc., who live by selling their (intellectual) labour power. When these sections, including workers in the huge informal sector – agriculture and allied sectors in our country, for example – are counted, their numbers are growing, certainly in absolute numbers and probably also as percentage of the population in many countries. Our country for instance has witnessed in recent decades a great expansion of the rural proletariat including, but not limited to, agrarian labourers. Many Latin American countries are experiencing a noticeable growth in the number of rural proletariat thanks to the spread of commercial agriculture under the auspices of foreign corporations. Moreover, primitive (according to some scholars, a more correct word for the German original would be primary) accumulation of capital – a spreading menace across the third world today – is leading to fresh additions to the ranks of proletariat, mainly the industrial reserve army, from various categories of petty producers/self-sustaining poor people such as the adivasis in our country.

To be brief, in the broad sense of buyers and sellers of labour power, this process of polarisation has generally (with some exceptions, that is) and *in a somewhat modified form* continued since the nineteenth century, gaining in the 21st a new political expression in the slogan " the 99% against the 1%".

Still, the *Manifesto's* observation needs to be qualified on at least three counts. First, in all countries we find a very large number of self-employed persons – from small traders to street vendors and hawkers, and from small/middle peasants to various professionals. Secondly, stratification within the camp of wage and salary earn-

ers has grown appreciably. The conditions of work and life styles of workers differ widely across various sectors even in the same country: for example in rural and urban occupations, in sunset and sunrise industries, in blue collar and white collar jobs, in formal and informal sectors.

Thirdly, non-class identities like gender, race, nationality, caste etc. have emerged as important bases for various kinds of mobilisations against dominant social forces. This relates in some cases to the nature of capitalism itself (its historic and continuing reliance on patriarchy and racialised imperialism for example), and in others to its uneven development and the various specific historical alliances between capitalism and pre-capitalist and retrograde forces. Marxists therefore now have to engage with and wherever possible contribute to these movements for social justice, demonstrating how these forms of oppression are related to capitalism, alongside and as part of their basic task of promoting and guiding class struggle.

The Proletariat: Then and Now

The *Manifesto* was written at a time when the proletariat in Europe and America was rapidly developing from a class-in-itself to a class-for-itself – a class that is conscious about the conditions of its own emancipation and its world-historic mission. Its two characteristics, as noted in this document, were quite conspicuous: chronic pauperisation and revolutionary zeal. What is the situation today in these respects?

As in our time, so in those days, there were considerable wage differentials across and within countries, with certain sections of workers getting relatively better pay packets. In fact capitalism never entailed a secular and linear decline in wages; nor did Marx and Engels ever say so. Such a theory about the “iron law of wages” was actually propounded by Lassalle and thoroughly refuted by Marx.

Marxists recognise that under certain conditions and in certain periods – e.g., during periods of boom, when enhanced demand for labour tends to augment the bargaining power of workers and enables them to extract higher wages while higher profits prompt the capitalists to grant that rather than face a strike; during periods of exceptional growth of productivity; during high tides of working class movement – real wages *may* rise, while in opposite circumstances they tend to fall. Obviously, such upward and downward trends vary considerably from country to country and even between industries in the same country, the most important among the determining factors being the relative strength of the belligerent classes – the capitalists and the workers.

Under this general rule, *impoverishment/pauperisation* is possible in both *absolute* and *relative* terms. The former can happen among sections like (a) “the reserve army of labour”, i.e., the unemployed, (b) the old, disabled etc, who are permanently thrown out of employment, and (c) certain sections of the unorganised or the lowest rungs of even organised workers. As noted earlier, before our very eyes the process of primary accumulation of capital or accumulation by dispossession is leading to pauperisation of large sections of already marginalised working people.

As for relative impoverishment, first of all we must remember that poverty, like affluence, is a thoroughly relative term. The minimum needs of the workers and employees increase steadily as a result of intensification of labour; higher skills, education and training required; higher costs of living thanks to growing urbanisation and also in response to overall improvements in standards of living throughout society. So, when nominal wages go up or even real wages (wages measured not in money terms but in terms of the goods and services they will buy, i.e., the nominal wages adjusted for changes in the price index) remain constant or rise slightly, there can be *relative impoverishment* of workers, whose real needs rise faster. This is what actually happens in most cases, and can be

measured in terms of the relative share of wages vis-a-vis profit in national income or, at a disaggregated level, in specific sectors of the economy. A few practical examples will help clarify the matter.

In our country, the brief periods of high manufacturing growth in the mid-1990s and the 2000s were propelled by increased productivity of labour. But labour was denied the fruits of growth. Wages as a share of net value added in the manufacturing sector were close to 30% in the 1980s, declined to around 20% in the 1990s and dropped to an all-time low of 10% by 2008-2009. Naturally, the share of profits in net value added, which was around 20% throughout the 1980s, climbed above 30% in the 1990s, and rose to an incredible 60% in 2008. The same story was repeated in the service sector. Here the share of wages declined from more than 70% in the 1980s to less than 50% by 2009 while profit- share increased from 30% in the 1990s to more than 50% after 2004-05.

Aspects of India's Economy No. 55⁹ tells a fascinating story about the growing deprivation of Indian workers, their fight-back, and partial success.

In the decade ending 2009-10, real wages – particularly in the automobile sector – had fallen steeply. But the Annual Survey of Industries (2011-12) indicates that reversing a trend of many years, the real wages of factory workers rose by 8.5 per cent in 2010-11 and 6.3 per cent in 2011-12. However, wages still remained below 1995-96 levels. This is true for the automobile sector also, where real wages rose by 6.3 per cent and 3 per cent respectively in the last two years. As a price for this, Maruti workers had to face unprecedented repression: 148 of them rotting in jail for months on end and over 2,000 dismissed.

The story of workers' deprivation can be studied from another angle: the relative share of workers' wages, *vis-à-vis* that of managerial salaries, in 'total emoluments'. From 64.8 per cent in 1991-92, the former fell to 56.9 per cent in 1997-98, to 48.4 per cent in 2007-08

[9] <http://rupe-india.org/55/wages.html>

and then to 46.5 per cent by 2011-12. That is, *less than half the 'wage bill' of industry now goes to workers.*

The same trends are visible almost all over the world, at least on the longer term. Take the case of the world's wealthiest nation for example.

Between 1979 and 2007, the average inflation-corrected hourly wage of non-supervisory workers in the US declined by 1 percent, while inflation-corrected nonfinancial corporate profits after taxes rose by a stunning 255 percent. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in that country productivity rose by 93 percent between 1980 and 2013, while pay rose by 38 percent (all inflation-adjusted). Real wages for most US workers have virtually stagnated since the 1970s, but salaries and perks for the top 1 per cent have risen 165 per cent, and for the top 0.1 per cent have risen 362 per cent. At the same time, over the last 40 years, the top marginal tax rate in the US has declined from 70 to 35 per cent. But the biggest tax reductions have come on capital income, including corporate and inheritance taxes.

Like pauperisation, the revolutionary character of the working class was never seen by Marx and Engels as an abstract, absolute truth. They were aware of various non-proletarian tendencies in the working class; Engels even spoke of a "bourgeois proletariat" in England bribed by the British bourgeoisie out of the excessive profits made from its colonial exploits and industrial supremacy.¹⁰

Lenin later elaborated the concept of "workers' aristocracy" – a small section raised in all imperialist countries on the strength of super profits made in colonies, locating here the economic basis of reformism/right opportunism.¹¹ At the same time, however, he showed that in Russia the highest-paid metal workers played the

[10] See Engels' letter to Marx, 7 October, 1858 where he reports from London: "...the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois" (Marx Engels Selected Correspondence)

[11] See, in particular, *Imperialism and the Split in Socialism* (Collected Works of Lenin, Volume 23)

most advanced role in the revolution of 1905. In our country too we have seen many instances, in yesteryears as well as in the recent past, of organised and better-paid workers in ports and docks, the rail, coal and power sectors, banks, the automobile sector, etc. playing a vanguard role as a bloc. On the other hand, we know of innumerable instances – in Russia, in our country and elsewhere – of the most pauperised sections of workers playing an exemplary role in revolution.

So facts of history tell us that there is no mechanical one-to-one relation between poverty and revolutionism, that everything depends on the summation of various aspects of the objective situation and, equally important, on adequacy of subjective preparations and correctness (or otherwise) of principles and tactics adopted.

Now to sum up our discussion on the proletariat. The *Manifesto* traces the revolutionary role of the working class mainly to its objective position in capitalist organisation of production and distribution, in its status in the class hierarchy of the capitalist system. Being “the lowest stratum of our present society”, it “cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.” (Section I) In *The Holy Family* the authors of *Manifesto* had given an even clearer exposition of the matter:

“If Socialist writers attribute this world-historic role to the proletariat, this is not at all because they regard the proletarians as gods. ... It is not a matter of knowing what this or that proletarian or even the proletariat as a whole conceives as its aim at any particular moment. It is a question of knowing what the proletariat is and what it must historically accomplish in accordance with its nature”.

Proceeding from this theoretical premise, and in the light of experience gained over the past nearly 170 years, we can conclude that (a) the composition of working class (the relative numerical strength of “blue-collar” and “white-collar” workers, and formal and informal sector workers, for example) has been, and will be,

changing inevitably with the changing structures of capitalist production and distribution, (b) such changes, as well as those in their working and living conditions, do help or render more difficult the process of movement and organization, (c) despite the changes, being the class with no stake in the preservation of private property in the means of production, the proletariat is *objectively* best placed to fight for abolition of that private property, i.e., of leading capitalism's transformation into socialism, and (d) *subjectively* the working class needs to be trained and organized for this historic mission by its revolutionary party, the communist party, in which this objective destiny attains self-conscious and concentrated expression.

This brings us to the question of strategy and tactics to be adopted by communist parties.

Communist Strategy and Tactics

Among the basic Marxist canons of which the *Manifesto* remains a treasure house, we would like to draw the reader's attention especially to certain cardinal principles of revolutionary strategy and tactics. For despite the numerous changes in socio-political conditions and consequently in the nature of communist activities, these principles still constitute invaluable guidelines for, and a trusted touchstone to judge, all parties claiming to be Marxist.

To start with, look at the first nine paragraphs of section II. In place of the boastfulness and arrogance of many a 'Marxist' party and leader of our time, we find here the natural modesty of true communists; in place of the petty bourgeois sectarianism that vitiates the Left movement today, the proletarian vanguard's largeness of mind, which does not even recognise any special interests of a communist party apart from those of the entire working class, and sees its role not in fighting other working class parties but in leading them forward. Even the theoretical superiority of communists

is viewed not as a great discovery by some “would-be universal reformer”, not as power of omniscience (as vulgar ‘Marxists’ tend to do) but as “merely express[ing], in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes.” But who does not know that this “mere” general expression did to social science what another ‘simple’ generalisation $E=mc^2$ did in modern physics?

The sobriety and the spirit of unity, however, did not prevent the authors of the *Manifesto* from mounting a merciless attack, in Section III, on the existing schools of “reactionary” and “bourgeois” socialism, complete with a relatively respectful though straightforward criticism of the followers of deceased utopian socialists like Charles Fourier, Saint Simon and Robert Owen. This they considered as necessary for educating the ranks of the proletariat as the aggressive defence of the basic communist positions against virulent bourgeois propaganda, which they did in Section II.

Another distinctive quality of communist politics highlighted in *Manifesto* is this: “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.” (Section IV) Marx and Engels speak here of a continuous and consistent linking of the immediate task to the ultimate goal, of tactics to strategy, and this principle can act as a powerful preventive against the instinctive striving towards easy success in disregard for future consequences.

But in practice we are pained to see, for example, how parties professing by Marxism often keep themselves confined within the immediacy of economism and how the long-term interests of the working class are sacrificed at the altar of immediate parliamentary gains, sought to be secured through unprincipled alliances with bourgeois parties, thereby corrupting the consciousness of the working people. In this way, abandonment of this mandatory principle of Marxism, this bulwark against opportunism, gives

rise to the opposite of Marxism – to revisionism: “To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment – such is the policy of revisionism.” (Lenin in “Marxism and Revisionism” (1908))

Then there is the principle of broad-based unity with all fighting forces against the common enemy *together with* full political independence of the Communist Party, including the right to freely criticise the allies. Principled relations of unity and struggle were developed with militant reformists like Chartists in England; Agrarian Reformers in America; Social Democrats in France; the insurrectionists in Poland and so on (Section IV). The next, wider, circle of unity was the “union and agreement of the democratic parties of all countries”. Here “parties” referred to various fighting democratic parties as well as forces/parties in the making, with a good many of whom Marx had direct link as one of the vice-chairmen of the Brussels Democratic Association, and certainly not to those who were democratic in name alone.

What about communists’ relation with the bourgeoisie? Obviously it is antagonistic. But in the era of democratic revolution, *under certain conditions* there could be elements of unity too. In Germany, the *Manifesto* declares, Communists “fight with the bourgeoisie *wherever it acts in a revolutionary way*” (emphasis ours) even as they educate the proletariat about its “hostile antagonism” with that class, so that it embarks upon a struggle against the bourgeoisie itself as soon as the latter comes to power.

The absolute condition for communist support to the bourgeoisie – or a section/sections of it, we may add – is very clear: the latter must prove itself to be revolutionary **in action**, not merely in words. Experience of the past 160 years and more tells us that such an oc-

casation arises extremely rarely. It never arose in Russia, which was why Bolsheviks never accepted the Menshevik line of unity with the Cadets – for example in Duma elections in the name of warding off the Tsarist black hundreds. In China the Kuomintang did act in a revolutionary way for brief periods by conducting armed struggle against Japanese aggressors; during those periods the Communist Party of China joined them in the war of national liberation while simultaneously continuing political struggle against it. In contrast to such positive examples, we find Indian Mensheviks uncritically allying themselves with this or that bourgeois party in the name of keeping the “main enemy” at bay and often with the explicit calculation of securing some immediate electoral gains – thebe-all and end-all for those who do not “represent and take care of the future” of the communist movement in India.

The *Manifesto*'s directive that communists should prepare seriously for, and “immediately begin”, the struggle against the bourgeoisie after the latter attains political supremacy, in a way introduces the concept of uninterrupted revolution – the seamless progression from democratic to socialist revolution. As we know, Lenin and Mao developed this idea consistently and successfully in their respective countries; the majority of Indian Marxists are also committed to this strategic-tactical principle, calling the first stage the stage of *people's* or *new* or *national* democratic revolution so as to distinguish it from the old type of democratic revolution led by the bourgeoisie.

But how will the proletarian revolution forge ahead? The *Manifesto* spells out the basic steps:

“The proletariat of each country must... first of all, settle matters with its own bourgeoisie”, i.e., “acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself *the* (italics in the original) nation” and thus “win the battle of democracy”. (Section II) That is to say, it will strive to carry the democratic revolution to consummation under its leadership.

It will then “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 a ruling class;” and to rapidly develop the productive forces. “[I]n the beginning” this will involve “despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production.” Gradually these measures will outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order” and eventually lead to “entirely revolutionising the mode of production”. (*Ibid*)

Clearly, what is envisaged here is “revolution in permanence”, as the authors of the *Manifesto* would call it shortly afterwards¹². A general idea about the proposed practical measures – the transitional steps bridging the democratic and the socialist revolution – is given in ten points at the end of section II, but it is categorically stated that (a) these are relevant only for capitalistically “most advanced countries” and (b) they will differ from country to country and, as stated in the Preface to the German Edition of 1872, *from time to time* depending on the actual conditions.

A couple of most important and widely debated themes presented here merit our attention.

One, the *Manifesto* declares: “though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle.” There is no hint at all that the working class in a particular country must not take power so long as its counterparts in at least several other countries have prepared themselves to do the same. On the contrary, Germany was *singled out* as the country where “the bourgeois revolution... will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.”

It is another matter that this expectation did not come true, but there is evidence that Marx and Engels took it very seriously. In March 1948 they fought vigorously against the “export revolution”

[12] See *Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League* (March 1850)

plans of a good many foreign immigrants in Paris (plans for sending armed legions to their home countries to start revolutions there) and drew up, on behalf of the Communist League, *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*, which elaborated on the brief ten-point outline programme of the *Manifesto* in the specific context of Germany. This *national* programme was widely circulated in France and Germany. From Paris (where Marx, after being arrested in and exiled from Brussels, had come to settle in March and setup the new CC of the League along with Engels and others) more than 300 German workers were sent one by one to participate in the unfolding revolution in Germany. In early April both Marx and Engels themselves proceeded to their native land to try and veer the revolution to a socialist course. Never did they subsequently say that this attempt at seizure of political power in a single country was a mistake.

From all this, one point clearly stands out. Marxists are staunch internationalists; they know that the struggle for socialism is essentially an international struggle that can be *consummated* only by the joint effort of the proletariat in all, or at least the most developed countries. But this does not prohibit the working class in one country to *initiate* that struggle if conditions are conducive there.

Second, the *Manifesto* offers us a preview of sorts about the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It appears towards the end of Section II, just before and after the ten point programme. We find that proletarian dictatorship is conceived as a necessary link – the last link – in a long chain of historical developments. The working class, the authors say, “*is compelled by the force of circumstances*” (emphasis added) to organise and fight as a class; in course of that fight makes itself the ruling class; forcibly sweeps away the old, oppressive socio-political system and ushers in a classless society, thereby abolishing also “*its own supremacy as a class*”. Public power, no longer an organised political power in the hands of one class (the bourgeoisie under capitalism, the working class during dictatorship of the proletariat) to rule over other classes, is now

vested in “a vast association of the whole nation”, where “the free development of each is a condition for the free development of all”.

Has there ever been, before or after the *Manifesto*, a more radical yet constructive view of the abolition of the state, a nobler vision of free, all-round, synchronised development of one and all, of the individual and the collective?

Very clearly, then, the point of departure and axis of socio-historical progress is class struggle and the destination – classless communist society. In this forward march of history across millennia, proletarian dictatorship is a relatively very short but extremely challenging last leg – the last bridge leading humanity from its strife-torn “prehistory”¹³ – as Marx would call it later – to the beginning of the true history of *humanity* as such, which is no longer split into antagonistic classes.

Inchoate ideas like these were subsequently developed in such works as *The Civil War in France; Critique of the Gotha Programme* (both by Marx), *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (three chapters from Engels’ *Anti-Duhring*) – not exhaustively though, because the authors of the manifesto refused, as a matter of principle, to compose the music of the future. They took the Paris Commune – where, as they pointed out, the proletariat established majority rule for the first time in history -- as a primary model of proletarian dictatorship and highly appreciated the Commune’s non-formalistic, participatory-democratic features such as universal suffrage, people’s right to recall elected representatives and merging of legislative and executive functions of the state. In these features Marx saw a “thoroughly expansive political form” and observed that a bureaucratic structure in their place would go completely against the spirit of the commune.

[13] Marx in *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (op. cit) described bourgeois society as the last social formation based on class antagonism which “brings... the prehistory of human society to a close.” The implication is that antagonistic history would end with capitalism yielding place to communism, which will necessarily involve a form of direct democracy.

In this view, proletarian dictatorship is to be founded on the direct, active and enthusiastic participation of the masses in policy-making and governance. Herein is rooted the prospect and promise – and also the necessary condition – of gradually overcoming or transcending the dictatorship and its practical embodiment – the state – in course of socialist material and cultural construction.


A World to Win

“[M]ankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation.” (Karl Marx in *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*).

At the turn of the nineteenth century humankind set itself, with full courage of conviction, the lofty task of ushering in a harmonious society freed of exploitation and oppression. By that time, the material abundance required for fulfilling the basic needs of the entire human race were rapidly developing in the womb of capitalism; the foundations or components of the theory required to guide this great transformation had started taking shape in the works of outstanding philosophers, economists and social scientists; and the historical agency – the social force capable of actually executing this revolutionary change i.e., the potential “grave-diggers” of capitalism – had already appeared on the stage of history, ideologically not yet fully prepared though to execute its mission. But the presence of these conditions did not mean that capitalism would collapse automatically. For that, what still remained to be done was to connect, and build on, these disparate ingredients so as to (a) arm that social force, the modern proletariat, with a holistic, consistently revolutionary worldview, (b) formulate a correct and widely acceptable strategic vision with an immediate action programme, and (c) build an ideologically consolidated communist party to lead the expanding movement. The *Manifesto*

magnificently achieved the first two conditions and proceeded to fulfil the third, thereby flagging off the proletariat's conscious march to conquer the world for *the Wretched of the Earth*.

The march has continued ever since through ups and downs along a tortuous hilly track.

Today, in the age of globalisation and the world-wide-web, no "spectre of communism is haunting Europe", but the entire global order is visibly shaken by a terrible triple crisis: economic, environmental and socio-cultural – bringing in its trail large-scale social churnings and upheavals. Let all of us join the protracted war to reclaim the globe from the clutches of imperialism and its running dogs, to win the battles of democracy and socialism in the spirit of the Manifesto, which belongs as much to our age as it did to the past two centuries. The task humankind set itself in the nineteenth century can and must be accomplished in the twenty-first. 

Prefaces

Written by Marx and Engels
to Various Editions

of the

Manifesto

Preface to The 1872 German Edition

The Communist League, an international association of workers, which could of course be only a secret one, under conditions obtaining at the time, commissioned us, the undersigned, at the Congress held in London in November 1847, to write for publication a detailed theoretical and practical programme for 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 [French] Revolution [in 1848]. First published in German, it has been republished in that language in at least twelve 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. The 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 Germany. A Russian translation was published in Geneva in the sixties¹. Into Danish, too, it was translated shortly after its appearance.

However much that state of things may have altered during the last twenty-five years, the general principles laid down in the Manifesto are, on the whole, as correct today as ever. Here and there, some detail might be improved. The practical application

[1] The first Russian translation of the Manifesto of the Communist Party was made by Bakunin, who despite being one of Marx and Engels' most pronounced opponents in the working class movement, saw the great revolutionary importance contained within the Manifesto. Published in Geneva in 1869 (printing it in Russia was impossible due to state censorship), Bakunin's translation was not completely accurate, and was replaced a decade later by Plekhanov's translation in 1882, for which both Marx and Engels wrote a preface.

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 organization 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 programme has in some details been 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, 1871*, 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; but this reprint was too unexpected to leave us time for that.

Karl Marx & Frederick Engels
June 24, 1872, London

Preface to The 1882 Russian Edition

The first Russian edition of the Manifesto of the Communist Party, translated by Bakunin, was published early in the 'sixties by the printing office of the Kolokol [a reference to the Free Russian Printing House]. 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 occupied at that time (December 1847) is most clearly shown by the last section: the position of the Communists in relation to the various opposition parties in 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. Both were, therefore, in one way or another, pillars of the existing European system.

How very different today. Precisely European immigration fitted North America for a gigantic agricultural production, whose competition is shaking the very foundations of European landed property – large and small. At the same time, 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 a revolutionary manner upon America itself. Step by step, the small and middle land ownership of the farmers, the basis of the whole political constitution, is succumbing to the competition of giant farms; at the same time, a mass industrial proletariat and a fabulous concentration of capital funds are developing for the first time in the industrial regions.

And now Russia! During the Revolution of 1848-9, 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 Gatchina², and Russia forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe.

The Communist Manifesto had, as its object, the proclamation of the inevitable impending dissolution of modern bourgeois property. But in Russia we find, face-to-face with the rapidly flowering capitalist swindle and bourgeois 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 such 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
January 21, 1882, London

[2] A reference to the events that occurred in Russia after the assassination, on March, 1, 1881, of Emperor Alexander II by Narodnaya Volya members. Alexander III, his successor, was staying in Gatchina for fear of further terrorism.

Preface to The 1883 German Edition

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 any one else – rests at Highgate Cemetery and over his grave the first grass is already growing. Since his death [March 14, 1883], there can be even less thought of revising or supplementing the Manifesto. But I consider it all the more necessary again to state 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 *primaevae* 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 evolution; 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, class struggles – this basic thought belongs solely and exclusively to Marx.³

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

Frederick Engels ; June 28, 1883, London

[3] “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 *Conditions 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]

Preface to The 1888 English Edition

The Manifesto was published as the platform of the Communist League, a working men'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 November 1847, Marx and Engels were commissioned to prepare a complete theoretical and practical party programme. 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.

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 henceforth doomed to oblivion.

When the European workers 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 programme broad enough to be acceptable to the English trade unions, to the followers of Proudhon in France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain, and to the Lassalleans in Germany.⁴

Marx, who drew up this programme 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 in 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 favorite 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 in 1874, left the workers quite different men from what it found them in 1864. Proudhonism in France, Lassalleanism in Germany, were dying out, and even the conservative English trade 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 Swansea, their president [W. Bevan] could say in their name: "Continental socialism has lost its terror for us." In fact, the principles of the Manifesto had made considerable headway among the working men of all countries.

[4] 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 first public agitation, 1862-1864, he did not go beyond demanding co-operative workshops supported by state credit.

The Manifesto itself came thus to the front again. Since 1850, the German text had been reprinted several times in Switzerland, England, and America. In 1872, it was translated into English in New York, where the translation was published in *Woorhull 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, 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 had not seen. Thus the history of the Manifesto reflects the history of the modern working-class movement; at present, it is doubtless 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 total social change, called itself Communist. It was a crude, rough-hewn, purely instinctive sort of communism; still, it touched the cardinal point and was powerful enough amongst the working class to produce the Utopian communism of Cabet in France, and of Weitling in Germany. Thus, in 1847, socialism was 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 workers 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 the nucleus belongs to Marx. That proposition is: That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which it is built up, and from that 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 forms a series of evolutions 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 "Conditions 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 that state of things may have altered during the last twenty-five years, the general principles laid down in the 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 organization 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 programme has in some details been antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that "the working class cannot simply lay hold

of 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 1871*, 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
January 30, 1888, London

Preface to The 1890 German Edition

Since [the first German preface of 1883] was written, a new German edition of the Manifesto has again become necessary, and much has also happened to the Manifesto which should be recorded here.

A second Russian translation – by Vera Zasulich – appeared in Geneva in 1882; the preface to that edition was written by Marx and myself. Unfortunately, the original German manuscript has gone astray; I must therefore retranslate from the Russian which will in no way improve the text. It reads:

[Reprint of the 1882 Russian Edition]

At about the same date, a new Polish version appeared in Geneva: *Manifest Komunistyczny*.

Furthermore, a new Danish translation has appeared in the *Socialdemokratisk Bibliothek*, Copenhagen, 1885. Unfortunately, it is not quite complete; certain essential passages, which seem to have presented difficulties to the translator, have been omitted, and, in addition, there are signs of carelessness here and there, which are all the more unpleasantly conspicuous since the translation indicates that had the translator taken a little more pains, he would have done an excellent piece of work.

A new French version appeared in 1886, in *Le Socialiste* of Paris; it is the best published to date.

From this latter, a Spanish version was published the same year in *El Socialista* of Madrid, and then reissued in pamphlet form: *Manifiesto del Partido Comunista* por Carlos Marx y F. Engels, Madrid, Administracion de El Socialista, Hernan Cortes 8.

As a matter of curiosity, I may mention that in 1887 the manuscript of an Armenian translation was offered to a publisher in Constantinople. But the good man did not have the courage to publish something bearing the name of Marx and suggested that

the translator set down his own name as author, which the latter however declined.

After one, and then another, of the more or less inaccurate American translations had been repeatedly reprinted in England, an authentic version at last appeared in 1888. This was my friend Samuel Moore, and we went through it together once more before it went to press. It is entitled: *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Authorized English translation, edited and annotated by Frederick Engels, 1888, London, William Reeves, 185 Fleet Street, E.C. I have added some of the notes of that edition to the present one.

The Manifesto has had a history of its own. Greeted with enthusiasm, at the time of its appearance, by the not at all numerous vanguard of scientific socialism (as is proved by the translations mentioned in the first place), 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 "by law" in 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 European workers 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 programme which would not shut the door on the English trade unions, the French, Belgian, Italian, and Spanish Proudhonists, and the German Lassalleans. This programme - the considerations underlying the Statutes 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 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 of their former universal panaceas, and make their minds more receptive to a thorough understanding of the true conditions for working-class emancipation. 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 ten 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 programme 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 patch-work, without hurting capital and profit in the least. In both cases, people who stood outside the labor 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” communists 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 task of the working class itself,” [from the General Rules of the International] we could have no hesitation as to which of the two names we should choose. Nor has it ever occurred to us 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 joined hands in 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 today⁵, as I write these lines, the European and American proletariat is reviewing its fighting forces, mobilized for the first time, mobilized 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

[5] This preface was written by Engels on May 1, 1890, when, in accordance with the decision of the Paris Congress of the Second International (July 1889), mass demonstrations, strikes and meetings were held in numerous European and American countries. The workers put forward the demand for an 8 hour working day and other demands set forth by the Congress. From that day forward workers all over the world celebrate the first of May as a day of international proletarian solidarity.

Workers' Congress of 1889. And today's spectacle will open the eyes of the capitalists and landlords of all countries to the fact that today the proletarians of all countries are united indeed.

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

Frederick Engels

May 1, 1890, London

Preface to The 1892 Polish Edition

The fact that a new Polish edition of the Communist Manifesto has become necessary gives rise to various thoughts.

First of all, it is noteworthy that of late the Manifesto has become an index, as it were, of the development of large-scale industry on the European continent. In proportion as large-scale industry expands in a given country, the demand grows among the workers of that country for enlightenment regarding their position as the working class in relation to the possessing classes, the socialist movement spreads among them and the demand for the Manifesto increases. Thus, not only the state of the labour movement but also the degree of development of large-scale industry can be measured with fair accuracy in every country by the number of copies of the Manifesto circulated in the language of that country.

Accordingly, the new Polish edition indicates a decided progress of Polish industry. And there can be no doubt whatever that this progress since the previous edition published ten years ago has actually taken place. Russian Poland, Congress Poland, has become the big industrial region of the Russian Empire. Whereas Russian large-scale industry is scattered sporadically – a part round the Gulf of Finland, another in the centre (Moscow and Vladimir), a third along the coasts of the Black and Azov seas, and still others elsewhere – Polish industry has been packed into a relatively small area and enjoys both the advantages and disadvantages arising from such concentration. The competing Russian manufacturers acknowledged the advantages when they demanded protective tariffs against Poland, in spite of their ardent desire to transform the Poles into Russians. The disadvantages – for the Polish manufacturers and the Russian government – are manifest in the rapid spread of socialist ideas among the Polish workers and in the growing demand for the Manifesto.

But the rapid development of Polish industry, outstripping that of Russia, is in its turn a new proof of the inexhaustible vitality of the Polish people and a new guarantee of its impending national restoration. And the restoration of an independent and strong Poland is a matter which concerns not only the Poles but all of us. A sincere international collaboration of the European nations is possible only if each of these nations is fully autonomous in its own house. The Revolution of 1848, which under the banner of the proletariat, after all, merely let the proletarian fighters do the work of the bourgeoisie, also secured the independence of Italy, Germany and Hungary through its testamentary executors, Louis Bonaparte and Bismarck; but Poland, which since 1792 had done more for the Revolution than all these three together, was left to its own resources when it succumbed in 1863 to a tenfold greater Russian force. The nobility could neither maintain nor regain Polish independence; today, to the bourgeoisie, this independence is, to say the last, immaterial. Nevertheless, it is a necessity for the harmonious collaboration of the European nations. It can be gained only by the young Polish proletariat, and in its hands it is secure. For the workers of all the rest of Europe need the independence of Poland just as much as the Polish workers themselves.

F. Engels

London, February 10, 1892

Preface to The 1893 Italian Edition

Publication of the Manifesto of the Communist Party coincided, one may say, with March 18, 1848, the day of the revolution in Milan and Berlin, which were armed uprisings of the two nations situated in the centre, the one, of the continent of Europe, the other, of the Mediterranean; two nations until then enfeebled by division and internal strife, and thus fallen under foreign domination. While Italy was subject to the Emperor of Austria, Germany underwent the yoke, not less effective though more indirect, of the Tsar of all the Russias. The consequences of March 18, 1848, freed both Italy and Germany from this disgrace; if from 1848 to 1871 these two great nations were reconstituted and somehow again put on their own, it was as Karl Marx used to say, because the men who suppressed the Revolution of 1848 were, nevertheless, its testamentary executors in spite of themselves.

Everywhere that revolution was the work of the working class; it was the latter that built the barricades and paid with its lifeblood. Only the Paris workers, in overthrowing the government, had the very definite intention of overthrowing the bourgeois regime. But conscious though they were of the fatal antagonism existing between their own class and the bourgeoisie, still, neither the economic progress of the country nor the intellectual development of the mass of French workers had as yet reached the stage which would have made a social reconstruction possible. In the final analysis, therefore, the fruits of the revolution were reaped by the capitalist class. In the other countries, in Italy, in Germany, in Austria, the workers, from the very outset, did nothing but raise the bourgeoisie to power. But in any country the rule of the bourgeoisie is impossible without national independence. Therefore, the Revolution of 1848 had to bring in its train the unity and

autonomy of the nations that had lacked them up to then: Italy, Germany, Hungary. Poland will follow in turn.

Thus, if the Revolution of 1848 was not a socialist revolution, it paved the way, prepared the ground for the latter. Through the impetus given to large-scaled industry in all countries, the bourgeois regime during the last forty-five years has everywhere created a numerous, concentrated and powerful proletariat. It has thus raised, to use the language of the Manifesto, its own grave-diggers. Without restoring autonomy and unity to each nation, it will be impossible to achieve the international union of the proletariat, or the peaceful and intelligent co-operation of these nations toward common aims. Just imagine joint international action by the Italian, Hungarian, German, Polish and Russian workers under the political conditions preceding 1848!

The battles fought in 1848 were thus not fought in vain. Nor have the forty-five years separating us from that revolutionary epoch passed to no purpose. The fruits are ripening, and all I wish is that the publication of this Italian translation may augur as well for the victory of the Italian proletariat as the publication of the original did for the international revolution.

The Manifesto does full justice to the revolutionary part played by capitalism in the past. The first capitalist nation was Italy. The close of the feudal Middle Ages, and the opening of the modern capitalist era are marked by a colossal figure: an Italian, Dante, both the last poet of the Middle Ages and the first poet of modern times. Today, as in 1300, a new historical era is approaching. Will Italy give us the new Dante, who will mark the hour of birth of this new, proletarian era?

Frederick Engels
London, February 1, 1893

Karl Marx
Frederick Engels

MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Manifesto of the Communist Party

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 is 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 Proletarians¹

The history of all hitherto existing society² is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master³ and 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.

[1] 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. [Engels, 1888 English edition]

[2] That is, all written history. In 1847, the pre-history of society, the social organisation existing previous to recorded history, all but unknown. Since then, August von Haxthausen (1792-1866) discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Georg Ludwig von 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 organisation of this primitive communistic society was laid bare, in its typical form, by Lewis Henry Morgan's (1818-1861) 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 dissolution in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, second edition, Stuttgart, 1886. [Engels, 1888 English Edition and 1890 German Edition (with the last sentence omitted)]

[3] Guild-master, that is, a full member of a guild, a master within, not a head of a guild. [Engels, 1888 English Edition]

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 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, in which industrial production was monopolised by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. 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 manufacturer 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 the 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 commune⁴: here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany); there taxable “third estate” of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacturing proper, serving either the semi-feudal 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.

[4] This was the name given their urban communities by the townsmen of Italy and France, after they had purchased or conquered their initial rights of self-government from their feudal lords. [Engels, 1890 German edition] “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. [Engels, 1888 English Edition]

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 to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which reactionaries 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 conditions 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 connexions 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 inter-dependence 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 commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all 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 in it, and the economic 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 the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. 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 over-production. 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? On 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 the 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 maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour, 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 the 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, by 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 portions 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 workpeople of a factory, then by the operative of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions 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 bourgeois. 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 increasing 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 (Trades' 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 ten-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 time with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles, it sees itself compelled to appeal to

the proletariat, to ask for 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 class 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 progress 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 only so 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", [*lumpenproletariat*] 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 industry 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 process 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 over-riding 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 and Communists

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

The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to the 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 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 condition 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 only 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, of 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 non-existence 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 non-existence 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, &c. 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 [*Aufhebung*] 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 com-

plement in the practical absence of the family among the 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 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, &c.? 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 clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parents and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all the 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 bourgeoisie in chorus.

The bourgeois sees 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 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 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 community 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 the 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 will also be 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 the ideas that revolutionise society, they do but express that 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 degree, 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 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 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 waste-lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
8. Equal liability of all to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of all the distinction between town and country by a more equable distribution of the populace 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, &c, &c.

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 and 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 agitation⁵, these aristocracies again succumbed to the hateful upstart. Thenceforth, a serious political struggle was altogether out of the question. A literary battle alone remained possible. But even in the domain of literature the old cries of the restoration period had become impossible.⁶

In order to arouse sympathy, the aristocracy was obliged to lose sight, apparently, of its own interests, and to formulate their indictment against the bourgeoisie in the interest of the exploited working class alone. Thus,

[5] A reference to the movement for an electoral reform which, under the pressure of the working class, was passed by the British House of Commons in 1831 and finally endorsed by the House of Lords in June, 1832. The reform was directed against monopoly rule of the landed and finance aristocracy and opened the way to Parliament for the representatives of the industrial bourgeoisie. Neither workers nor the petty-bourgeois were allowed electoral rights, despite assurances they would.

[6] Not the English Restoration (1660-1689), but the French Restoration (1814-1830). [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

the aristocracy took their revenge by singing lampoons on their new masters and whispering in his ears sinister prophecies of coming catastrophe.

In this way arose feudal Socialism: half lamentation, half lampoon; half an 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 bourgeois 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 high-falutin 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.⁷

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 water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings 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 burgesses 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

[7] 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.]

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 expressions 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* (men of letters), 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 Eighteenth 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 philosophical 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 those 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 flogging and bullets, with which these same governments, just at that time, dosed the German working-class risings.

While this “True” Socialism thus served the government as a weapon for fighting the German bourgeoisie, it, at the same time, directly represent-

ed a reactionary interest, the interest of German Philistines. In Germany, the *petty-bourgeois* class, a relic of the sixteenth century, and since then constantly cropping up again under the 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.⁸

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.

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

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 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 and 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, 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. Bourgeois and Proletarians).

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 the 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, 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 function of the state into a more 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 “phalansteres”, of establishing “Home Colonies”, or setting up a “Little Icaria”⁹ – 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 [or] 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*.

[9] *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.]

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 with the Social-Democrats¹⁰ 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 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.

[10] The party then represented in Parliament by Ledru-Rollin, in literature by Louis Blanc, in the daily press by the *Réforme*. The name of Social-Democracy signifies, with these its inventors, a section of the Democratic or Republican Party more or less tinged with socialism. [Engels, English Edition 1888]

But they never cease, for a single instant, to instil 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 seventeenth, and France in the eighteenth 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 Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

Working Men of All Countries, Unite!