

The History of the  
**COMMUNIST  
MANIFESTO**  
of **MARX** and **ENGELS**

By V. ADORATSKY

Director, Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute



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OF MARX AND ENGELS

*Introduction*

THE *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (the *Communist Manifesto*) saw the light of day shortly before the February Revolution of 1848. In this brilliant work written ninety years ago—seventy years before the victory won in 1917 by the great socialist revolution—Marx and Engels announced the oncoming proletarian revolution, gave strictly scientific grounds for its historic necessity, and foretold the inevitable downfall of the bourgeoisie and the victory of the proletariat.

Marx and Engels scientifically proved their teachings about the world-historic role to be played by the proletariat, the class generated by the development of industrial capitalism and the most revolutionary class in world history.

The historic task of the proletariat is to destroy classes, to create a classless, communist society and to secure the further development of the social productive forces to an extent unknown hitherto. The age-old structure of capitalist society can be destroyed, the domination of the bourgeoisie, which has become incompatible with the further existence and development of society, can be swept away only on condition that the proletariat, the leader of all oppressed and exploited, wins power and establishes its dictatorship. Only under the dictatorship of the proletariat, under the leadership of the proletariat, can the working people build up a communist society.



In 1914, Lenin, evaluating the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, wrote the following:

With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new conception of the world—a consistent materialism extending also to the realm of social life; it proclaims dialectics as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of evolution; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat as the creator of a new communist society. [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 21.]

Here Lenin also noted the supreme revolutionary significance of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and the profound theoretical content of this work, its tremendous scientific importance. In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels announced the oncoming of a new epoch in the history of mankind, and at the same time their work opened up a new epoch in the development of science.

### 1. Theoretical Basis

The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was the fruit of a gigantic amount of preliminary scientific investigation, of a huge amount of preparatory work.

While still a university student (1836-37), Marx began to study philosophy, history and law, and by 1847 had critically worked over all the best studies of the preceding development of scientific, theoretical thought in the works of German classical philosophy, English political economy, and French (and English) socialism.

The development of Engels also followed the same lines as that of Marx. Beginning with the year 1844, there was established between them an immutable friendship and collaboration. Engels, like Marx, had passed through the school of Hegelian philosophy, and made an absolutely independent approach to the elaboration of the views expounded in the

*Manifesto*. In 1845, he published his splendid book, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. In 1845, he visited Marx in Brussels, and jointly with him subjected the theoretical heritage of the bourgeoisie to review and criticism.

Marx cleansed Hegel's dialectical method of idealism, and began to apply it in a materialistic fashion. He carried through this work in the years 1843-46, following Feuerbach to the viewpoint of materialism. But Marx went further than Feuerbach. He did not rest content with Feuerbach's contemplative materialism, but created revolutionary, dialectical materialism, combined science with revolutionary practice, and applied materialism to the study of the history of human society, something that Feuerbach was unable to do.

Marx subjected to criticism the Hegelian philosophy of law (1843) and jointly with Engels critically investigated the idealistic philosophy of Hegel and his disciples—the Left Hegelians (*The Holy Family*, 1844), Hegel's idealistic view on the history of the evolution of nature, human society and thought (*German Ideology*, 1845-46).

The dialectical method teaches us to take all phenomena of nature, history and thought in their development, as a whole, in connection with all the conditions that give rise to them. It seeks the cause of development not in some outer force, but within phenomena themselves, in the struggle of opposites which is characteristic of all phenomena. Having freed the dialectical method of idealism—which is in glaring contradiction to the very nature of dialectical thinking, which demands a profound, comprehensive perception of concrete phenomena as they take place in objective material reality—Marx and Engels solved the task of studying the laws of the development of nature and of human society.

Marx and Engels did away with the gap that had existed

between theory and practice, by placing theory and science at the service of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the liberation of all toiling mankind from capitalist and all other exploitation. Having compelled science to serve the greatest revolution of all, Marx and Engels opened up new, boundless vistas, creating for the first time a strictly scientific basis for the study of social phenomena.

The founders of Marxism clearly showed that the moving cause of development is not contradictions in concepts as taught by Hegel, but the contradictions existing in the material world itself. The moving force of social development is the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat taking place in capitalist society. Armed with the method of materialist dialectics, Marx elaborated the materialist conception of history on the basis of a study of the history of the French bourgeois revolution and the subsequent development of the class struggle in bourgeois society, which had broken the chains of feudalism.

Summing up the historical experience of revolutions, and basing himself on a profound understanding of the essence of capitalist relations, Marx created his theory of the class struggle, his teaching of the world-historic role of the proletariat.

Engels has declared that this theory matured in Marx's mind in 1845. He expounded it to Engels when he met him in Brussels in the spring of 1845. This is its content as succinctly expounded by Engels:

...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 ...consequently (ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various



stages of social evolutions... this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles. [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 192-193.] \*

Having convinced himself of the falsity of the idealistic view of human society, Marx saw that the decisive and fundamental relations in human society are the economic relations arising on the basis of the development of the material productive forces of society. Therefore Marx occupied himself with political economy, the science which makes a study of precisely these relations.

While in Paris (1843-44), Marx studied the works of the best representatives of bourgeois political economy (primarily Adam Smith and David Ricardo) and, continuing his studies and critical examination of bourgeois political economy in Brussels (1845-47), Marx established his theory of surplus value.\*\*

The capitalists, the owners of the means of production, ap-

\* Engels considered it necessary to make the repeated statement that the basic thought of the *Manifesto* as outlined in the above quotation "solely and exclusively" belonged to Marx, that "the greater part of its leading basic principles, particularly in the realm of economics and history, and, above all, its final, clear formulation, belong to Marx... Marx was a genius... Without him the theory would not be what it is today. It therefore rightly bears his name." (See Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, pp. 52-53n.)

\*\* By the time that the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was written, Marx had studied a tremendous amount of special economic literature. In the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, twenty-four big notebooks, dated between 1843-47, which have been preserved, contain extracts and summaries of books read by Marx during this period. These notebooks contain summaries of the work of about seventy economists of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Smith, Ricardo, James Mill, W. Petty, Thomas Tooke, W. Cobbett, W. Thompson, Ure, Babbage, Owen, J. Wade, F. M. Eden, Sismondi, Blanqui, Quesnay, Destutt de Tracy, Boisguillebert, Rossi, Storch, Gülich and a number of others). If these notebooks were to be printed they would cover about 2,250 pages.

appropriate the unpaid labor of the proletarians, the class deprived of their own means of production and compelled to sell their labor power.

The theory of surplus value created by Marx, which solves the basic question as to the origin of exploitation in capitalist society, lay at the basis of Marx's first work on economic theory, the *Poverty of Philosophy* (published in the summer of 1847) and the lectures on *Wage-Labor and Capital* delivered by him before the Brussels German Workers' Educational Society at the end of 1847.

All the scientific works enumerated were the basis of the theory of scientific socialism drawn up by Marx and Engels.

Marx made a thorough analysis of capitalist relations and completely revealed the revolutionary nature of the proletariat, which arises out of the very conditions of the latter in capitalist society, out of their role in production.

Marx and Engels saw the guarantee of the triumph of socialism not in the heads of individual wisacres, but in the really revolutionary struggle of the oppressed and exploited masses of the proletariat, in the growth of their organization, consciousness and revolutionary determination which develop in the course of the struggle. For Marx and Engels, communism was no simple doctrine or dogma. It was based on the revolutionary movement of the proletarian masses, on their actual struggle.

For the Utopian Socialists, the proletariat was a most unfortunate, suffering class whom they intended to endow with blessings from above. Marx and Engels saw in the proletariat a supreme revolutionary force; for them the proletariat was the class in whose hands lay the future. All that needed to be done was to muster the forces of the proletariat, to unite and organize them for the struggle and to lead their struggle on the basis of science, of revolutionary theory.



But theory cannot be presented as a ready-made dogma. It must be acquired by the masses out of their own experience. From this follows the role of leader who is armed with revolutionary theory which, in its turn, is the result of the entire experience of the historical struggle:

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. [Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 219.]

While participating in the direct struggle of the masses and leading it, the foremost unit of the proletariat—the Communist Party—is indissolubly connected with the masses of the working class, and through them with all the toiling masses.

The Communist Party wages an irreconcilable struggle against all bourgeois influences over the proletariat, counters all attempts to blunt the struggle, to reconcile the proletariat to their slave conditions under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, assists in developing the consciousness and organization of the proletariat and in transforming them into a class, assists them in winning power and in fulfilling their task of building communist society.

## *II. Historical Background*

Marx, the first leader and theoretician of the proletariat, was born in the family of a prosperous bourgeois intellectual (his father was a well-known lawyer in Trier, in the Rhine province of Prussia).

Why then did Marx break completely with the bourgeoisie, pass over completely to the side of the working class, while

the principles created by Marx have become the best theoretical weapon in the hands of the working class?

At the time, in the 'thirties and 'forties of the nineteenth century, when Marx's views were formed, capitalism had already undergone a lengthy history of development. Industrial capitalism began to develop in the countries of Western Europe (England) from the middle of the eighteenth century. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, in France, and particularly in England, the conditions inherent in capitalism were completely revealed. Big industry in England had developed with particular rapidity, and had revolutionized all the foundations of bourgeois society. The teeming revolutionary proletariat which filled the industrial centers and big cities came forward as a menacing, independent historical force. In France, in Lyons, the center of the textile industry, the first workers' revolt had taken place in 1831. Between 1838 and 1842, the first workers' movement on a national scale, the movement of the British Chartists, had reached its apex. In Germany, capitalist development had, it is true, hardly begun, but here also in the 'forties the proletarian masses began to come forward with their demands, as was the case with the revolt of the Silesian weavers in the summer of 1844.

The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat began at this time to take first place in the history of the most developed countries of Europe. The struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie assumed an extremely stormy and sharp character.

By reason of his genius, Marx was the first to achieve a theoretical understanding of the entire course of historical development.

Marx, the great revolutionist and brilliant scientist, went over entirely to the proletariat, linked his fate with them,

became their first leader, the organizer of their foremost unit, the Communist Party (the Communist League in 1847-51; the International Workingmen's Association, the First International, in 1864-73) and established the basis of the theory, strategy and tactics of the proletarian party.

For Marx and Engels, who revealed the historical role of the proletariat and created a new revolutionary world outlook, what was important was to win to their side the European and primarily the German working class, to convince them that the understanding of the tasks and conditions of the liberation of the working class, as discovered by them, was a correct one.

In the middle and second half of the 'forties, at the time when Marx and Engels began their revolutionary activity, a turning point was reached in the development of the revolutionary movement in Western Europe. At that time, to employ Lenin's expression, "the revolutionary character of bourgeois democracy had *already* died (in Europe), while the revolutionary character of the socialist proletariat had *not yet* matured."

At that time, capitalism was still undergoing a period of upward development, progressive industrial capital held sway, and the proletariat had not yet succeeded in freeing itself from the ideological and political influence of the bourgeoisie.

The workers, especially the German workers, had not yet completely broken with their handicraft, petty-bourgeois past. In the majority, they were at bottom handicraft workers, small craftsmen and their apprentices engaged primarily in hand-labor (tailors, joiners, etc.). Although the handicraft apprentices waged a struggle against the craftsmen, still their ideal was in the long run to become craftsmen themselves, to have their own independent little workshops.

But the growth of industrial capitalism went on irresistibly.



Handicraft production yielded place to large-scale machine production; the small handicraftsmen fell under the sway of big capital. These developments also found their reflection in the minds of the workers. Among the workers the demand developed for an understanding of the changes going on in society and a very lively interest was aroused in theoretical questions. Workers' study circles provided favorable ground for the acceptance of the ideas put forward by Marx and Engels.

Marx and Engels combined legal and illegal work; they made use of the legal press, maintained connections with all the active figures of the socialist movement in France, England, Switzerland and Germany, and carried on systematic propaganda for their views. They sharply criticized the bourgeois ideas and prejudices that hindered the proletariat in achieving clearly defined class-consciousness, in arriving at the consciousness of their irreconcilable opposition to the bourgeoisie, of the inevitability of the communist revolution. Marx opposed the old, conspiratorial forms of the movement, the organization of plots, apart from the masses. Marx and Engels saw that their task was to organize mass propaganda of the ideas of scientific communism among the workers, and thus to prepare the proletariat for independent action, for the winning of power.

### *The League of the Just*

Marx and Engels had long maintained connections with the secret communist society, the League of the Just.

On May 12, 1839, there took place in Paris the unsuccessful revolt organized by the French secret revolutionary Société des Saisons; with the latter was linked the League of the Just, among whose members were German emigrés. Its leading members, Karl Schapper and Heinrich Bauer, had to leave

Paris, and they moved to London. Beginning with 1840 the headquarters of the League of the Just was transferred to London, thus giving the League an international character. Besides Germans, there began to take part in the organization workers of various nationalities (Scandinavians, Dutchmen, Hungarians, Czechs, South Slavs, Russians, Alsatians) who used German as their common language, it being the one they all understood. On the other hand, the League of the Just began increasingly to assume the character of a propagandist society, because experience had made clear the hopelessness of plots isolated from the masses. In 1840, there was established in London the German Workers' Educational Society, which was under the guiding influence of the illegal League.

Marx and Engels gave every support to these new tendencies of concentrating attention on the tasks of propaganda, of shaking off the old traditions of indulging in conspiracies; they encouraged the striving towards internationalism. They conducted their propaganda by correspondence, by the despatch of circular letters. They carried on systematic work in workers' study circles and gave lectures to working class societies. By ruthlessly criticizing the various teachings of petty-bourgeois socialism, Marx and Engels in 1846 and 1847 succeeded in exerting decisive influence over the League of the Just.

In calling those days to mind, Marx wrote in 1860:

We issued a number of partly printed, partly lithographed pamphlets in which we subjected to ruthless criticism that mixture of French-English socialism or communism and German philosophy that then constituted the secret teachings of the League; in its stead we advanced the study of the economic structure of bourgeois society as the only firm theoretical basis, and finally explained in popular form that it was not a question of carrying some utopian system into life but of consciously participating in the historic process of the revo-



lutionary transformation of society going on before our very eyes. [Karl Marx, *Herr Vogt.*]

Marx and Engels countered the utopian and petty-bourgeois ideas then current among the advanced workers with their own teaching of the organized class struggle of the proletariat, which by its position in production and society is the leader of all the oppressed and exploited.

Marx explained to the workers how dangerous and harmful were all the theories and teachings aimed at diverting the working class from the path of the proletarian class struggle, from the struggle to conquer state power—the only path on which class oppression can be destroyed and the classless, communist society be built.

#### *Criticism of Kriege's Sentimental Socialism*

Marx criticized the utopian communism of Weitling, who had the fantastic notion of liberating the proletariat by organizing a plot. Marx also sharply criticized the sentimental socialism of H. Kriege, which was similar to the views of the Russian Populists. In the *People's Tribune*, published by Kriege in New York, he developed the petty-bourgeois utopian plan of solving the "social problem" once and for all by making small peasants of everybody, utilizing for this purpose the huge expanses of virgin territory in America.

In a special circular letter, Marx criticized this plan of Kriege's, his journal, and the whole tendency it represented. Marx showed that Kriege had no understanding of the real relations of capitalist society and of the whole significance of the peasants' struggle and land reform. Marx wrote in his circular:

Had Kriege regarded the movement aiming at the liberation of the land as the first form of the proletarian movement necessary under certain conditions, had he estimated this

movement as one which by force of the condition in life of the class from which it originates, must necessarily develop further into the communist movement, had he shown how the communist strivings in America must initially appear in this agrarian form, at first sight inconsistent with all communism whatsoever, then there would have been nothing in this to which to object. But Kriege declares this form of the movement of certain real people which is only of subordinate significance, to be the affair of mankind as a whole. Kriege puts this thing forward as the last, supreme aim of every movement whatsoever, thus transforming the definite aims of the movement into the purest high-flown nonsense.

Further, Marx writes of Kriege:

In the same article of issue No. 10 [of the *People's Tribune*], he sings such triumphal songs as: "And there would thus at last be fulfilled the age-long dreams of Europeans, there would be prepared for them on this side of the ocean land which they would have to take and render fertile by the labor of their hands so as to be able to hurl in the face of all the tyrants of the earth the proud declaration: This is *my hut* not built by you, this is *my hearth* that fills your hearts with envy."

Kriege might have had added: This is *my dung heap*, the work of myself, my wife and children, my laborer and my cattle. And what sort of Europeans would see in this the fulfilment of their dreams? Not communist workers at any rate! Surely not the bankrupt shopkeepers and handicraftsmen or ruined peasants who strive for the happiness of again becoming petty-bourgeois and peasants in America.

And of what consists the dream to be fulfilled with the aid of these 1,400,000,000 acres? Of nothing other than the transformation of all people into private property owners. Such a dream is just as incapable of fulfilment and just as non-communist as the dream to transform all people into emperors, kings and popes.

Marx's circular letter was endorsed at the meeting of the Communist Committee organized by Marx in Brussels on

May 11, 1846. At this meeting, in addition to Marx there were present Engels, the Belgian Gigot, the German emigré journalists Sebastian Seiler and Louis Heilberg, the brother of Marx' wife, Edgar von Westphalen, Wilhelm Wolff and Weitling. All the above-mentioned, apart from Weitling, endorsed the sharp criticism directed against Kriege. At the meeting the following decision was adopted, only Weitling being in opposition:

The trend of the *People's Tribune* appearing under the editorship of Hermann Kriege is not Communist.

The childishly bombastic methods with which Kriege comes forward as representative of this tendency seriously compromises the Communist Party both in Europe and in America, insofar as Kriege is considered the literary representative of German communism.

The fantastic, sentimental ravings, preached in New York by Kriege under the name of communism, must have a highly demoralizing effect on the workers if they believe in such nonsense.

This resolution, with the reasons for it, to be reported to Communists in Germany, France, and England. One copy to be sent to the editorial board of the *People's Tribune* with the proposal that it be printed together with the reasons for same in the next issue of the *People's Tribune*.

*Brussels, May 11, 1846.*

### *The Struggle Against Karl Grün*

Marx and Engels waged a struggle against the petty-bourgeois, conciliatory tendency of Karl Grün, the representative of German "True Socialism," and against the teachings of Proudhon who wanted to preserve bourgeois relations while freeing them of their "dark sides," imagining in utopian fashion that this impossible thing could be made possible.

In German workers' study circles in Paris, Grün inculcated Proudhon's projects for the organization of workers' produc-



tion associations; it was alleged that with the aid of such associations and using the workers' savings, it would be possible by peaceful means to become emancipated from capitalist exploitation and thus successfully to solve all social problems. Engels, who in the autumn of 1846 had removed to Paris to carry on the propaganda of the views of scientific communism among the German workers, wrote from there to Marx on September 18, 1846, of his struggle against Grün and elaborated the content of the latter's absurd teachings as follows:

Just imagine, the proletarians have to acquire shares out of their savings. This money (of course, there must be not less than between 10,000 to 20,000 of such workers) will be used at first to build one or more workshops of one or more industries in which a section of the shareholders will be employed, and the products, first, will be sold to the shareholders at the price of the raw material plus labor (the shareholders are thus to receive no profits) and, second, possible surpluses will be sold according to the prices ruling on the world market. To the extent that the capital of the society grows, either as the result of an influx of new members, or through the medium of new savings of the old shareholders, it will serve for the building of new workshops and factories, etc., etc., until such time as *all* proletarians are engaged and *all* productive forces in the country are bought up, and thus the capital in the hands of the bourgeoisie has lost its ability to control labor and to secure profits! . . .

These gentlemen have nothing more nor less in mind than for the time being to *buy up the whole of France*, and then perhaps the whole of the rest of the world by using the savings of the proletariat, and by giving up profits and interest on their capital. Was ever such a splendid plan invented, and would it not be simple, if one is anxious really to do something, to mint five-franc pieces of money out of the silver of moonlight? And foolish workers here—I have in mind the Germans—*believe* in this nonsense. These people who have hardly got six sous in their pockets with which to go to a pub of an

evening will buy up "the whole of beautiful France" out of their savings. Rothschild and Company are the most out-and-out niggards by comparison with these colossal speculators. One could burst with chagrin! This Grün has so spoiled the lads that the most senseless phrase has more meaning for them than the most obvious fact brought forward as argument. It is a pity that one has still to oppose such barbarian senselessness. But one must have patience, and I shall not leave these lads until I smash Grün and clean their infected heads.

In a joiners' study circle, Engels in elaborating his own point of view and that of Marx defined the intentions of the Communists as follows:

1. To achieve the interests of the proletariat in opposition to those of the bourgeoisie.
2. To do this through the abolition of private property and its replacement by community of goods.
3. To recognize no means of carrying out these objects other than a democratic revolution by force. [*Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, p. 2.]

As a result of a heated discussion that lasted several evenings without a break, all the arguments of Grün's supporters were smashed to pieces. It became possible to convince the workers under the influence of Grün's teachings of the correctness of the views of Marx and Engels.

When sharply criticizing the nonsensical reactionary theories so dangerous to the liberation struggle of the working class, Marx was faced with the fact that many of the people who considered themselves his supporters condemned him for being so sharp. They tried to persuade him to tone down his polemics against Grün and Kriege, against the "True Socialists," against Proudhon, etc. For instance, Lüning, editor of the German Socialist journal, *Westphälisches Dampfboot*, wrote to him about this.

Marx expressed himself sharply about these petty-bourgeois



philistines who imagined themselves to be revolutionists and socialists. There were quite a number of such gentlemen among the emigrés in Paris. They irritated Marx very much with the way they kept worrying him and with their complete inability to understand the capitalist system in its totality. These people continued to remain entirely under the sway of bourgeois notions and were incapable of understanding the need for an irreconcilable and ruthless struggle in the interests of the proletariat against all teachings regarding the possibility of reconciliation and agreement with the bourgeoisie. Marx wrote to Georg Herwegh on August 8, 1847:

One can only get rid of such duffers by being exceptionally rough with them. Characteristic of these old women is that they try to slur over and sugar any really party struggle, and present the old German habit of squabbling and whispering as revolutionary activity! Miserable creatures! Here in Brussels at any rate, there is none of this.

### *Events Leading to the Manifesto*

The results of the propaganda work done by Marx and Engels were not slow in making themselves felt. In the winter of 1846-47, Joseph Moll, one of the members of the Central Committee of the League of the Just, was delegated from London to visit Marx in Brussels. Moll was empowered by his comrades to invite Marx and Engels to join the League; and he passed on the request to Marx, should he and Engels agree to join, that they take part in the forthcoming Congress and there outline their theoretical views so that they might be published as the official program of the League.

In view of the fact that Marx and Engels were guaranteed every possibility of assisting in the reorganization of the League, and in drawing up a theoretically reliable program, they agreed to join the League.

At the League Congress which took place in the summer of 1847 in London (Marx was not present at the Congress; Engels and W. Wolff were), there took place the reorganization of the League, and statutes were adopted in which the task of the League were defined in the following way:

The overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the domination of the proletariat, the destruction of the old bourgeois society based on class antagonisms, and the establishment of a new society without classes and without private property.

After its reorganization, the League changed its old name from the League of the Just to the Communist League.

According to the statutes adopted, the organization of the League was thoroughly democratic, thus barring the way to all efforts at plots. The basic organization of the League was the "commune" (*Gemeinde*), which consisted of a minimum of three persons and a maximum of twelve. From two to ten communes constituted a "circle" (*Kreis*). The circles of any individual country or province were subordinated to the leadership of a "leading circle" (*Leitender Kreis*). The leading circles were accountable to the Central Committee and in the last analysis to the Congress. The League while continuing to remain illegal, became transformed into a society for the propagation of the ideas of scientific communism. The statutes adopted at the First Congress of the Communist League were, according to decision of the Congress, submitted to the communes for discussion. At a forthcoming congress they, together with the new program of the League, were to be finally adopted.

Both the leaders of the League and the majority of its members gradually became convinced of the correctness of the views of Marx and Engels, but they were still far from having complete clarity on a number of theoretical questions.

Here, for instance, is the sort of problems raised in one of

the letters of the London Committee of the League in February 1847:

Can community of property be introduced at once, or is a transition period necessary during which to educate the people? How long will this transition period last? Can communism be introduced at once on a big scale, or must small experiments first be carried through? In the introduction of communism has violence to be employed, or can the reorganization of society be carried through peacefully?

In the period intervening between the First and Second Congresses of the Communist League, the local organizations drew up drafts of a "symbol of faith," the title then given to the elaboration of the basic principles of the program. These drafts showed that there was still quite a lot of confusion in the views of Communist League members. For instance, in the draft of the London Committee of the League, proletarians were defined as all "who cannot live on the income of their capital." Hence, the conclusion was drawn that "consequently not only workers, but also scientists, artists and petty-bourgeois are proletarians."

In the League communes in Paris the draft produced by Hess was discussed and met with success. According to Engels, this draft was full of unbelievable theoretical confusion. As against this draft produced by Hess, Engels outlined the basic problems of the program in the shape of questions and answers [*Principles of Communism*].

To ensure the adoption of a theoretically reliable program, a great amount of explanatory work had still to be done.

This work was carried through by Marx at the Second Congress of the Communist League which took place in London at the end of November and the beginning of December, 1847. The discussion on the problems connected with the program lasted ten full days. Marx explained everything



subject to doubt; all disagreements were overcome. The Congress was unanimous in recognizing as correct the views outlined and defended by Marx. A decision was adopted to give Marx and Engels the task of drawing up a manifesto to be published as the official program of the Communist League.

The manuscript of the *Manifesto* was sent at the end of January, 1848, from Brussels to London, where it was printed and saw the light of day in February, 1848. Not long before the June days of 1848 there appeared in Paris the first French translation of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

Young Marx, who was 29 years old when the *Manifesto* was drawn up, came forward then fully armed with the theory he had established. He was recognized as the leader of the Communist Party, the organization of which was illegal by reason of the conditions then existing. Marx officially and publicly came forward under the banner of consistent, modern revolutionary democracy, the core of which is the proletariat.

As regards the views of the proletariat, the following was stated in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*:

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 241.]

During the period of the Second Congress of the Communist League in London, Marx not only took part in the Congress discussions, but also in wider meetings. The young German tailor, Friedrich Lessner, at that time already a member of the Communist League, although he did not attend the Congress sessions since he was not a delegate, heard Marx's

speeches at meetings, saw him in the interval between the Congress sessions and gave the following description of his appearance and the impression created by his speeches and the views propagated by him:

Marx was still a young man at that time, about 28 years of age; in spite of this he made a strong impression on all of us. Marx was of average height, broad-shouldered and full of energy. He had a high, splendid forehead, thick pitch-black hair and a penetrating look; a sarcastic smile would appear around his mouth, filling his opponents with terror. He spoke briefly and concisely; he did not employ superfluous words; every phrase of his was full of thought, and every thought was a necessary link in his argument. The logic of his speech was exceptionally convincing; there was nothing dreamy in it. The more I learned to understand the difference between Weitling's communism and the communism of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, the clearer it became to me that Marx was the representative of mature socialist ideas.

### III. *The Manifesto*

The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* consists of four parts or chapters.

The first chapter, headed "Bourgeois and Proletarians," gives a brief review of the historical development of European society, traces the origin and development of the bourgeoisie, treats of the role played by it in history, of the contradictions that have developed within bourgeois society as a result of which it is inevitably doomed to ruin, examines the history of the development of the proletariat, gives a characterization of the position of the latter in bourgeois society, draws a picture of the process of its transformation into a class, and reveals the revolutionary nature of the proletariat as the "grave-diggers" of the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie underwent a long process of development and "historically, has played a most revolutionary part." It



showed what could be created by human activity. "It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals."

The bourgeoisie, having emerged from its oppressed, tax-burdened, disfranchised position in feudal society, achieved power in the course of a long struggle, "at last . . . conquered for itself, in the modern representative state, exclusive political sway" and established a world after its own image, the bourgeois world in which everything is bought and sold, where even personal dignity and honor are transformed into "exchange value," where "naked self-interest, callous cash payment" reigns everywhere.

Under the domination of the bourgeoisie, the productive forces of society rapidly achieved a tremendous development. But these new productive forces, created under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, outgrew the narrow bounds of bourgeois society. The bourgeois order became a fetter on the development of these powerful social productive forces, the representative of which is the new revolutionary class, the proletariat who developed and grew up together with the bourgeoisie and was brought into being by large-scale machine industry.

In bourgeois society, the proletariat is enslaved by the bourgeois class in whose hands are concentrated all the means of production. In order to live, the proletarians are compelled to sell their labor power. In return for his heavy unattractive work, for the hard labor he does in the capitalist factory, the worker receives only the minimum means of existence necessary for the reproduction of labor power.

With the development of industry there is an increase in the productivity of labor, and commodities cheapen. The workers' commodity, his labor power, also cheapens. "In proportion . . . as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases."

With the progress of industry, the conditions of the workers get worse. The increase in wealth under capitalism inevitably brings in its train an increase in the poverty of the proletariat.

Marx sheds light on the path taken by the proletariat in the course of its development. In the beginning it is spread throughout the whole country, and split up by the competition of the masses. At this stage the bourgeoisie holds undivided sway over the workers and are their political leaders.

But with the growth of the proletariat, there also grows its solidarity and the recognition of its strength. The industrial bourgeoisie while fighting against its enemies—the aristocracy and those sections of the bourgeoisie whose interests are adversely affected by the development of industry, and against the bourgeoisie of foreign states—is compelled to appeal to the proletariat for help. The bourgeoisie itself urges the proletariat onto the road of the political movement. The political experience of the proletariat matures.

The conditions of the proletariat in bourgeois society make it the most revolutionary class. All the remaining classes in society are ruined and undergo a decline with the development of large-scale industry; the proletariat, however, is a product of large-scale industry itself.

Marx shows how the civil war going on without a break in bourgeois society must inevitably reach such an acute level that open revolution breaks out and the proletariat “establishes its own domination by the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie.”

The second chapter, “Proletarians and Communists,” speaks of the role of the Communist Party, of the fact that the latter is indissolubly connected with the working class and is its foremost detachment.

In the struggle of the proletarians of various nations the Communists “point out and bring to the front the common

interests of the entire proletariat, independent of all nationality"; in the course of the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, at its various stages, the Communists "always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole"; scientific communism demands a profound study and understanding of the "line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement."

Further in this chapter a detailed examination and an exposé are made of the lying and hypocrisy of the defenders of bourgeois society, who accuse the Communists of wishing to destroy the very foundations of society, liberty, the family, culture, education, and nationality. Marx shows how only the destruction of bourgeois property can guarantee the personal property of all working people, that only the destruction of the bourgeois order, of bourgeois exploitation, will create the conditions for the development of a really cultured human society.

At the end of the chapter there are enumerated the revolutionary measures that have to be carried through by the proletariat on taking power into its hands.

In 1872, in the preface to the German edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels noted that the correctness of the basic principles of the *Manifesto* had been completely confirmed by the course of historical development; but the practical application of these basic principles would always depend on the existing historical conditions.

In the third chapter, a critical analysis is made of the various forms of socialism:

1. Reactionary socialism: (a) feudal, (b) petty-bourgeois; (c) German or "True";
2. Conservative or bourgeois socialism, of which Marx called Proudhon the representative;
3. Critical-utopian socialism and communism, which in



many respects had given a brilliant criticism of the bourgeois order.

Finally, in the fourth chapter there is a brief treatment of the tactics of the Communist Party which supports every movement directed against the capitalist system.

In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, "Marx and Engels gave the main outlines of the Party as the vanguard of the proletariat without which (the Party) the proletariat could not achieve its emancipation either in the sense of capturing power or of reconstructing capitalist society. Lenin developed these outlines further and applied them to the new conditions of the proletarian struggle in the period of imperialism." (Stalin.)

#### *IV. Social Significance and Meaning Today*

The fate of the *Manifesto* was linked up in the closest degree with that of the labor movement. In June, 1848, the working class took action in Paris, met with no support among the masses of the petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry, and suffered defeat. After the defeat of 1848-49, reaction triumphed in Europe. For a time, the labor movement "vanished from the public arena"; together with it "the *Manifesto* also took a back seat." (Engels.)

At that time there was still ahead of capitalism a wide field of further development. Capitalist relations had only achieved complete development in Western Europe, primarily in England and France. In Germany the development of capitalism was making only its first steps. There still existed tremendous expanses of territory, tremendous continents (America, Africa, Australia, Asia to a considerable degree) whose virgin territory was still little touched by capitalism. In the East of Europe, in Russia, the development of capitalism had hardly begun. In Europe itself progressive industrial capitalism oc-

cupied a dominant position; ahead of it there still lay a rising curve of development.

When the working class recovered from defeat and again accumulated forces for a further struggle against the power of the ruling classes, there came into being in 1864 the International Workingmen's Association, the First International.

During the nine years of the existence of the First International, the working classes were enabled on the basis of their own experience to become convinced that victory could only be achieved through the class struggle and by winning power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, as indicated by Marx. This was particularly clearly shown by the experience of the Paris Commune, the first form of the dictatorship of the proletariat established in history. On the basis of this experience, Marx and Engels further developed their teachings regarding the proletarian revolution, the struggle for the building of communist society.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Marx's theory received general recognition in the ranks of the European working class. In 1890, Engels had every right to declare that the *Manifesto* has become "the most widely circulated, the most international product of all socialist literature, the common program of many millions of workers of all countries from Siberia to California." [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 197.]

Immediately after the publication of the German edition of the *Manifesto*, it was translated into a number of languages. Translations soon appeared in the French, Polish and Danish languages. In 1850 an English translation appeared in London. In 1871, at least three English translations of the *Manifesto* appeared in America. The best English translation of the *Manifesto* was printed in 1888. The translation was done by Samuel Moore and was edited by Engels.

The first Russian translation appeared in 1863 (Bakunin's translation); it was printed in the *Kolołol* printshop. In 1882 a new Russian translation appeared, the work of Plekhanov. A special preface was written for this edition by Marx and Engels.

In 1892 there appeared a second Polish edition for which Engels wrote a preface dated February 10, 1892. In 1893 an Italian edition appeared, also with a preface by Engels specially written for this edition.

Beginning with the 'seventies of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was translated into a number of languages—the Portuguese, Spanish, Roumanian, Dutch, Jewish, Ukrainian, Japanese, Finnish, Chinese, and others.

To date, more than one hundred editions of the *Manifesto* have appeared in the Russian language.

The total number of copies of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that have appeared in the various languages during the last ninety years runs into millions.

Marx revealed a tremendous vista of oncoming battles before the working class, showed them the clear aim and tasks to be fulfilled by the proletariat and taught them that a long and difficult struggle lay ahead. "Ahead of you," said Marx, "lie fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil wars and wars between peoples, not only in order to change existing relations, but also in order to change your very selves and make yourselves fit for political domination."

In the historical period when Marx lived, the conditions for the victory of the proletariat had not yet fully matured. The epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions came after the death of Marx and Engels. Decisive victory was won by the proletariat only in this new historical epoch. Novem-



ber 7, 1917, in Russia saw the beginning of the victorious great socialist revolution. The triumph of the ideas of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was secured by the brilliant perpetrators of the cause of Marx and Engels—Lenin and Stalin, and the Bolshevik Party led by them.

In the Stalin Constitution adopted on December 5, 1936, there is recorded all that has been won by the industrial workers and working people generally of the U.S.S.R. as a result of the victorious proletarian revolution. In the U.S.S.R. there has been brought into being the socialist system, there have been fulfilled the tasks set in the *Manifesto*.

Stalin in his speech on the draft Constitution, on November 25, 1936, gave a detailed characterization of the successes achieved by the working people under Soviet power: All the exploiting classes have been liquidated; the land and means of production have been transformed into public property; the best among the working class have been placed in charge of undertakings.

In all spheres of the national economy of the U.S.S.R., in industry, agriculture and trade, the socialist system has won complete victory.

In Soviet society class antagonisms have been destroyed, power being in the hands of two friendly classes, the workers and peasants, while the state leadership of society (the dictatorship) belongs to the working class as the foremost class.

Consolidated in the Constitution are the international character of Soviet society, the developed, thoroughly consistent democracy which not only proclaims the rights of citizens, but also guarantees the operation of these rights in practice.

In the U.S.S.R. socialism, the first, initial phase of communism, has in the main been built. The slogan, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work" is in operation. But the higher stage of communism in which the

slogan, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," shall prevail, does not yet exist. The leadership of the Party of Lenin-Stalin guarantees our forward advance to the building of complete communism.

In the nine decades that have passed since the *Manifesto* saw the light of day, there has been a fundamental change in the historical situation and the conditions of the struggle for communism. In the days when the *Manifesto* was written the Communist Party was a small illegal group, comparatively still a small detachment of scientific communism. At the beginning of the *Manifesto* it speaks of the "specter of communism," of the menacing, then still elusive harbinger of the oncoming proletarian revolution.

Twenty years have already passed since the victory of the great October Revolution brought about a fundamental change in the history of mankind. The industrial workers and working people of the U.S.S.R. have shown the whole world that the communism of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin is no specter, but a reality. The first stage of communism, socialism, is a most tangible reality, fulfilled in the daily life of the 170,000,000 people inhabiting the tremendous territory of the Soviet Union.

The rivalry between the two economic systems, the capitalist system and the socialist system, increasingly shows the working people of all countries the bankruptcy of the capitalist system of economy and the superiority of the socialist, Soviet system. Capitalism brings to the people of the whole world, slavery, poverty, the atrocities of fascism, the horrors of war. The establishment of socialism in the U.S.S.R. has shown that the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialist proletarian democracy ensures the working people of all nations a happy life, the abolition of slavery, poverty and exploitation, and opens up a new epoch in the development of mankind.

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