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## COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, MARX AND ENGELS

*Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) were German writers who were both familiar with the industrialization of Britain. Marx had studied the phenomena as a journalist and historian, while Engels had managed a family factory in Manchester. They first met in 1842 and shared a mutual passion for radical labor reform. In 1848 they published their Communist Manifesto. The failure of all the liberal attempts at revolution in that year led them both to exile themselves to Britain full time, to continue their research and writing.*

*Marx and Engels were convinced that the working class of Europe had undergone a process of proletarianization, which had reduced them from independent artisans to hourly wage slaves. They were also convinced as proletarianization increased, as workers become more disaffected, they would inevitably rise up and seize power. The Marx / Engels ideal state was one in which there was no class, no property, and no competition. They both believed that the worker revolution coming soon, and that it would be a violent upheaval. This was Marx's understanding of history via Hegel (1770-1831). Hegel's theory of the dialectic, of history as shaped by opposing and clashing forces, is at the heart of Marx and Engels' understanding of class development. Their ideas are second only to nationalism in the duration of its influence.*

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### QUESTIONS

1. How is Communism an anti-nationalist movement?
2. Do Marx and Engels oppose all forms of private property?
3. What function does the family have in the Communist state?

### MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

**A** specter is haunting Europe — the specter of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter: Pope and Czar, 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 specter of communism with a Manifesto of the party itself.

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

#### I. BOURGEOIS AND PROLETARIANS

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

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

## 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 lines 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....

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

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain.

In its completely developed form, this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among 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, etc.? The communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class.

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

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 community of women which, they pretend, is to be openly and officially established. The communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost immemorial.

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

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

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

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

National differences and antagonism between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to 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 all civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

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 question, no matter what its degree of development at the time.

Finally, they labor everywhere for the union and agreement of the democratic parties.

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 are already winning.

### WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

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