

*Crafts
Classics*

Marx and Engels

The Communist Manifesto

ED. BY SAMUEL H. BEER

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KARL MARX and
FRIEDRICH ENGELS

The
Communist Manifesto

with selections from
*The Eighteenth Brumaire of
Louis Bonaparte and Capital*

by KARL MARX



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to use this Introduction merely as a starting point from which to conduct his own study and criticism of what Marx and Marxists have written.

I

THE THEORY OF OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

The Marxist system has many branches. The central doctrine, however, is the conception which came to be known as Historical Materialism, or the materialist conception of history. The classic formulation of this doctrine is found in the preface to the *Critique of Political Economy* which Marx published in 1859. There he describes how he was led to "the conclusion that legal relations as well as forms of the state could neither be understood by themselves, nor explained by the so-called general progress of the human mind, but that they are rooted in the material conditions of life." Expanding on this statement, he continued:

In the social production of their material life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their wills; these relations of production correspond to a definite state of the development of their material forces of production.

The sum total of these relations of production makes up the economic structure of society—the real foundation on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.

The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but rather it is their social existence that determines their consciousness.

At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—what is but a legal expression of the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work before. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.

can one hold, as Marx does, on the one hand that men are conscious, purposive, and indeed inventive, and on the other hand, that their social life, like the processes of blind, physical nature, develops independently of their thought and will?

Thanks not a little to the influence of Marx, this paradox is today a commonplace of social science, which is very much concerned with studying what may be called objective development in society. Economists interest themselves, for instance, in working out the unintended consequences of the behavior of a number of people buying and selling in a free market. In such a situation, each individual is continually making decisions such as whether he shall or shall not offer his goods and what prices he shall ask for them. Yet the final outcome of the "higgling" of the market is not planned and very likely not even foreseen by anyone. So with the other processes of a free, competitive economy: while on the one hand they are carried on by inventive, calculating human beings, on the other hand they arrive at results which no mind has previously conceived and purposively carried out. It is as if, to use Adam Smith's phrase, these processes were guided by "an invisible hand."

Not only in economics, but also in other spheres, processes of objective development take place, providing a subject-matter in which the social scientist seeks to discover uniformities or "laws" of social change and causation. To accept this general conclusion one need not be a Marxist. Nor is there anything peculiarly Marxist about its application to the study of long-run historical development, although Marx was concerned less with repetitive and short-run processes—such as price formation in a free market—than with the long-run tendencies of economic development.

What then distinguishes the Marxian theory of objective development from the notion of objective development in general? Economic development, according to Marx, is subject to certain inexorable laws and must pass through certain definite stages. Each stage has its distinctive mode of production, its system by which the means of produc-

history he referred to as the "thesis," the opposing productive forces which emerge within it as the "antithesis," while the new and more productive economy which results from the union of the two he termed the "synthesis." Marxist economic history, therefore, like the progress of Hegelian truth, is governed by the laws of dialectical movement. Under these laws the mode of production is a whole, a real unity, which gradually produces the forces which will transform it in a sudden catastrophe. The principal motor of development is not thought, but on the contrary, the "productive forces" of the economy.

What did Marx mean by "productive forces?" The briefest way of putting it is to say that they are the elements of which the mode of production is composed; they are the parts, it is the whole. In a modern economy, they would include, for instance, tools, machines, and factories; the materials and natural resources which enter into production; the work of labor, skilled, unskilled, and technical; the manner—e.g. the assembly line—in which labor is used and, in general, the techniques by which production is carried on.

In the development of these parts—in their isolated and unorganized development—objective economic development takes place. Human thought and will enter into this process, but to a limited degree. When the productive forces are increased by the introduction of an invention—for instance, Watt's steam engine—it is obvious that the inventor planned his new machine, tool, or technique. He will not intend or be able to foresee, however, many of the consequences of introducing this machine—for instance, "the dark Satanic mills" which resulted from the introduction of the steam engine in the early days of the Industrial Revolution.

Nor are inventions and new techniques generally the principal means by which productive forces grow. They are only one, and before modern times, one of the least important means. The transition from slave society to feudal society and from feudal society to capitalist society, according to Marx, was accomplished without major advances in technology. The Marxist system lays stress on

world. At this point of our analysis of Marx, we come upon the intimation of entities and powers which transcend the world of every-day experience.

For Marx, change within each period is gradual, but at the transitional point it becomes catastrophic. Changes in quantity, say the Marxists, become a change in quality. As a result of the accretion of small quantitative changes in its constituent parts, the economic system changes *as a whole*. And corresponding to this revolutionary change in the economy is a political revolution. In the Marxist scheme, political development, depending as it does upon economic development, cannot be a gradual evolution, a piece-meal adaptation to changing circumstances. At some point there must be a vast change, a change in the system as a whole. The law of dialectical movement is not a mere ornament of the Marxist system, but a pillar of the dogma of revolution.

II

MARXIST THEORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM

Some of the points in the Marxist system may become a little clearer—some may become more obscure—if we examine its application to the economic development of capitalism. What we have been considering so far have been the general laws of economic development—the laws of the dialectical process—which apply to all the precommunist stages. But Marx also thought that each stage of history had its special laws and he spent many years working out what he regarded as the more particular law of development of capitalism, “the economic law of motion of modern society,” which he set forth in his principal work, *Capital*. In the selection printed in this book he summarizes the main principles of that law.

The cornerstone of Marx' economics is the labor theory of value. This theory, which Marx shared with the fathers of classical economics, Adam Smith and Ricardo, and with his contemporaries, is a theory of price. How do we explain the fact that two things which are qualitatively different—for instance, a coat and a bushel of wheat—can

have the same price? What do they have in common which makes possible this equivalence? Marx' answer was "labor," meaning both the labor directly expended in producing the commodity and the labor which went into producing the tools and machinery which were used in producing it. Roughly, the more hours of labor expended on producing a thing, the greater its value. This proposition, however, he qualified by the reasonable proviso that labor not be foolishly wasted in production, but be used in accord with the existing standard of efficiency in production—it should be "the socially necessary" quantity of labor for producing such a commodity. In this sense, his labor theory of value is that the price of a commodity will be proportional to the quantity of labor directly and indirectly used in producing it.

In an undeveloped economy this theory may be plausible. Where labor is largely of one kind, and is overwhelmingly the main factor in production, prices may tend to reflect the amount of time expended in their production. In the circumstances of a modern economy, however, the theory is hopeless as an attempt to explain prices, and in Marx' own lifetime it lost most of its adherents. Marx' struggles with the theory in the later parts of *Capital* indicate that he himself hardly found it a convenient theory to use.

It is an interesting exercise to try to determine whether the main principles of Marxian economics are logically and necessarily dependent on the labor theory of value. In developing his "law of economic motion," at any rate, Marx assumed the theory and made it the foundation for a major element in his doctrine, the theory of surplus value, or exploitation. The term "exploitation" is heavy with moral condemnation and it is easy to assume that Marx is attacking capitalists and their system for "robbery," for taking from the workers what is rightfully theirs. No doubt many who have been swayed by Marx have so understood him, but this is certainly not what he meant. For, as Marx describes the process, each person receives his due; the worker receives his value, the customer pays

only what the goods are worth—yet the uncreative capitalist is left with his profits.

Marx achieves this result by making the labor theory of value apply in a very special way to labor itself. Under capitalism, he says, the capacity to work is a commodity which like any other commodity is sold in the market for its intrinsic value. Strictly speaking, what the worker sells, Marx insists, is not his labor itself, but his capacity to work, his labor-power. Like other commodities, therefore, this commodity, labor-power, will have a price proportional to the amount of labor which goes into its production; that is, to the amount of labor, direct and indirect, which is needed to keep a worker alive and enable him to reproduce himself—a subsistence wage. Once, however, the worker has sold his labor-power to the capitalist, he works not only a number of hours sufficient to cover the price paid for his labor-power by the capitalist, but also an additional number of hours. These hours, of course, create value and so are reflected in the price of the goods sold to the consumer. The value they create, however, is a surplus over and above what the worker gets. This surplus value the capitalist takes from the process of production in the form of profit, interest, and rent.

Two questions call for an answer. Why is the worker unable to get more wages or to work shorter hours? And what happens to the surplus value which this process has brought into existence? Let us consider the last question first, as it leads to two of the sounder insights of Marxian economics, his theories of accumulation and of centralization.

Marx does not conceive of the capitalist as a pleasure-seeker who dissipates his profits in riotous self-indulgence. The familiar portrait of the fat capitalist with expensive clothes, a gold watch-chain and a big cigar, while it has often been used by Marxist propagandists, is fundamentally untrue to the Marxist theory. The Marxist capitalist—indeed, like the true capitalist—is much more the disciplined, self-denying captain of industry who plows his profits back into the business, turning each increment of

profit into a new element of capital with which more profit is in turn realized. To this central process of the capitalist system—the continual reinvestment of profit by which machinery, tools, and factories are expanded and the system made more productive—Marx attached the utmost importance. Indeed, he “saw this process of industrial change more clearly and realized its pivotal importance more fully than any economist of his time.”⁴

Thus do the productive forces of capitalism grow. If, however, capitalists are disciplined and self-denying, that is not because of inherent qualities of character. They accumulate because they are compelled by competition to accumulate, or go under. Neither choice, nor vision nor creative imagination play a significant role. Equally mechanical and also dominated by the blind forces of competition is the process of centralization of capital. In the ceaseless struggle for existence in the capitalist economy, the more productive firms win out over the less productive. But productivity depends on the scale of production. “Therefore, the larger capitals beat the smaller.”⁵ And as the smaller capitalists are beaten and in part absorbed by the larger, the number of capitalists remaining shrinks, while the size of their economic empires grows. Marx’ anticipation of the advent of Big Business, like his insight into the importance of investment, was remarkable for a thinker of his time. Neither conclusion, it may be noted, depends upon the labor theory of value. Neither, indeed, need be rejected by a defender of the capitalist system, for do they not constitute a story of continual economic progress and a rising standard of living for all?

That, however, is not the story which Marx is telling. When we turn to the next step in his analysis, the plot thickens and the drama of his tale rises in inverse ratio to its plausibility. For we must now ask, what does the law of economic motion bring to the workers? The paradox—the central contradiction—of capitalism, according to

⁴ Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (2nd edn., New York, 1947), p. 32

⁵ below, p. 76

because of that control, men will finally achieve perfect freedom. Before that day, however, they remain slaves to historical necessity and their thought and thinking are rigidly determined by the mode of production. "What else," says the *Manifesto*, "does the history of ideas prove than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed?" And he continues, making clear the line of causation: "When people speak of ideas that revolutionize society, they do but express the fact that within the old society the elements of a new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence."¹²

Our question—and it is one of the most important of the social sciences—is this: when some new pattern of social behavior occurs—for example, a different standard of social conduct or morality, a new mode of organizing business, a reform of the constitution of a state—where shall we find its origin? One possibility is that it occurred first in someone's mind. Perhaps it was the creative idea of a statesman or poet, a businessman or administrator; possibly it emerged from a meeting of minds in some democratic assembly; very probably, if it is an idea of major importance, it came from many minds and developed over the years. At any rate, the general formula of sequence is: first the new thought, then the new pattern of behavior. Creative thinking of this sort, however, Marx entirely rules out as an influence on history. For him the formula is precisely reversed; first comes the behavior, then the thought. Where new patterns develop in history they are first produced unintentionally, blindly, in the course of objective development. Then and only then may these new forms be "reflected" in human minds. Ideas in Marxian language are merely "ideological reflexes and echoes" of man's "material life-process."¹³

What is shaped by the mode of production is thought in the widest sense: not only ideas, but ideals and interests

¹² below, p. 30

¹³ *The German Ideology*, p. 14

*This is the materialism
"which he later de-
nounced."*

men can make inventions which raise the efficiency of production. The advance of technology and science generally, while limited to innovations which are relevant to the needs of the time, nevertheless, has a real part in bringing about historical development. Why then can there not be an advance in "social technology" or "social engineering?" Why in other branches than the technical are men barred by ideology from thinking creatively? But if this question goes without an answer from Marx, even more important is his failure ever to suggest a plausible foundation for his theory of ideology in general. Anyone will grant that economic conditions "affect" the thinking of the time—sometimes more, sometimes less—and one of the most interesting tasks of intellectual history is to try to examine the relationship between thought and economics in particular periods. Marx, however, was not interested in framing interesting tasks for historians, but in stating a fundamental dogma of his revolutionary faith.

Upon this dogma depends the rest of his theory of the social superstructure, of which we may consider his theory of classes and his theory of the state. In the Marxian scheme a class is a set of persons all of whom stand in the same objective relationship to the mode of production. The main division, is, of course, between those who own the means of production and those who do not. Within these classes, however, there may be further distinctions, depending upon the stage of economic development. For instance, in the early period of capitalism, there will be a large class of small owners—craftsmen, shopkeepers, peasants—who because of their economic position will have interests and ideas different from both the large capitalists and the propertyless workers. Analyzing society in these terms, Marx made many forays into the history of his times with results which were often at the same time brilliant and wrong-headed. One is the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* from which selections are reprinted below and which is probably the best of his analyses.

Like the class structure, the state—meaning by this both political institutions and the system of law—also is determined by the mode of production. "Political power," says

the *Manifesto*, "is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another."¹⁵ Each of the three modes of production based on private property has had its corresponding state-form in which, according to Engels, "the most powerful, economically dominant class . . . by virtue thereof becomes also the dominant class politically."¹⁶ Like the slave-owners' state and the feudal state, the modern representative state is a "means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class." Being such an instrument, however, the state has not always existed. In the stage of primitive communism, since there was no owning class, there was no state. Only after private property had been brought into existence by economic development did the state arise.

At first glance, the theory would seem to be that it is the force of the state which keeps the owning class in control of the means of production. And indeed, this would be plausible. For in actual fact, if individuals and other private units of ownership are secure in their control of the means of production, one good reason is that the law backed by public force guarantees their private property. But Marx cannot and does not say this, for to say so would be equivalent to saying that economic power is founded upon political power, quite the reverse of economic determinism. The law which establishes private property must, therefore, in some sense be a reflection of the objective facts of the mode of production. Far from being founded on *a priori* principles of justice, it is, like other elements in the ideology of the ruling class—as the *Manifesto* says, addressing the bourgeoisie—simply "the will of your class made into a law for all, a will whose essential character and direction are determined by the economic conditions of existence of your class."¹⁷ In the causal series first comes the objective necessity of individual control arising from the stage of development

¹⁵ below, p. 32

¹⁶ Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. In E. Burns (ed.), *Handbook of Marxism* (New York, 1935), p. 330.

¹⁷ below, p. 27

of the productive forces. Following this necessity is the law establishing that particular system of private property appropriate to the mode of production.

What is this "objective necessity" behind the various systems of property? Why, for instance, was the system of primitive communism unable to continue as the productive forces developed? Why could not its methods of communal control have been adapted to the higher stages of economic development? Neither Marx nor Engels, nor for that matter their disciples, have given a satisfactory answer. Here in the face of one of the most important problems of the materialist conception—its version, so to speak, of how evil came into the world—we are faced with an insuperable difficulty. Nor is this a problem merely of origins. If it is to be argued, as Marx does, that during the three noncommunist stages of history, private property is the only possible form of legal system, it must be shown that an objective necessity continues to require it.

While the Marxist system maintains that private property is inevitable during the intermediate stages of history, it nevertheless does allow some role for physical force and political power. The social system is not frictionless; as economic forces come into conflict, class behavior reflects that fact and those class struggles ensue of which Marx says the previous history of man has been largely composed. To prevent such struggles from disrupting the economy, the state is used by the ruling class to maintain the mode of production to which its class interest is irrevocably attached. To a certain extent, therefore, a non-economic factor—i.e. the physical force which the state wields—has a causal role. That role, however, is narrowly circumscribed. For when the point of transition is reached, the force in the hands of the old ruling class cannot suffice to maintain the old conditions. The class representing the new mode of production will amass the power necessary to overthrow the old regime. It must do this by violence; and sooner or later it is bound to win.

Why must the revolution be violent? All elements in the Marxist system conspire to that conclusion, but in the

Once the capitalist state has been overthrown by the proletarian revolution, what then? In essence, the historical process no longer has need of the state. The productive powers have developed to the point at which not only capitalism, but any form of individual control is unnecessary and, indeed, impossible. It follows that private property and the means of protecting it, the state, are no longer necessary. Marx, however, allows for an intermediate period when ideas and interests inherited from the old economy still have some influence. This period he calls socialism and while the economy is now communally controlled, individuals—all of whom now are workers—receive their means of existence according to “bourgeois right,” i.e. in accord with their contribution to production.

During this time, also, a form of state remains. Marx used the term “dictatorship of the proletariat” to describe it.¹⁸ This state was not dictatorship in the sense of rule by one man or a few; on the contrary, as he conceived it, this state would be a democracy, in which the majority—the proletariat—exercised dictatorship only over the minority—the remnants of the bourgeoisie.

In time, however, as “cultural lag” was overcome, even this form of state would no longer be needed. Then in Engels’ expressive phrase, it would “wither away.”¹⁹ Force would vanish from the relations of men. The administration of things would take the place of the administration of men. Likewise the mode of distribution would change and now instead of each person being paid in accord with what he produced, the principle of distribution would be “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”²⁰ A society which once again could be called communist would have arrived, and as force had vanished, so also would selfishness. After having

¹⁸ Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1846-95 (New York, 1942), p. 57. Marx, *The Civil War in France* (New York, 1933), *passim*, and its preface by Engels.

¹⁹ *Anti-Duehring* in E. Burns (ed.), *A Handbook of Marxism* (New York, 1935), p. 296

²⁰ *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in *Selected Works* (London, 1942), Vol. II, p. 566

been so long alienated from his true self, man would at last through the grace of the iron laws of history enter into his earthly paradise, where all live together in perfect freedom and community.

This final vision of Marx is ancient and in no sense ignoble. His is, however, a vision—a dangerous vision. To teach that evil arises only from economic institutions is false. Men may be corrupted by power as well as by property and in any society pride will find ways of distorting human nature. To found a movement or a state upon a doctrine which does not recognize these possibilities is an invitation to tyranny.

tionary wrath, is the force which will overturn the capitalist system. Capitalism thus produces its own gravediggers.

But it is not only revolutionary wrath which is at work undermining capitalism. The system of production itself has begun to falter. Economic crises break out from time to time; industry and commerce are brought to a standstill and neither profits nor goods are produced. Neither Marx nor Engels ever gave a convincing explanation of business crises or of why capitalism must decline economically. They did, however, assert that there would be ever more severe crises and cited them as examples of how productive forces were fettered by the mode of production.

If we are less than satisfied with the Marxist explanation of economic crises, no more than a superficial knowledge of economic history is needed to show how wildly out of accord with the facts the "law" of increasing misery has proved to be. But whether Marx is rationally convincing or not, the emotional force of his prophecy of the apocalypse is undeniable:

While there is thus a progressive diminution in the number of the capitalist magnates (who usurp and monopolize all the advantages of this transformative process), there occurs a corresponding increase in the mass of poverty, oppression, enslavement, degeneration, and exploitation; but at the same time there is a steady intensification of the wrath of the working class—a class which grows ever more numerous, and is disciplined, unified, and organized by the very mechanism of the capitalist method of production. Capitalist monopoly becomes a fetter upon the method of production which has flourished with it and under it. The centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labor reach a point where they prove incompatible with their capitalist husk. This bursts asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.*

III

THEORY OF SUPERSTRUCTURE

The second essential of Marxism we have taken to be the notion that the mode of production, developing accord-

* *Capital* (Everyman edn., London, 1930), p. 846

ing to objective laws, determines all other aspects of the society. Strictly speaking, that is to say, there is one and only one chain of causation in history, the economic; all other aspects or events are causally dependent on this chain and do not in turn act causally upon it. Sometimes indeed Marx clearly departs from this strict version of economic determinism. Yet he may not go far, because it is only a strict version which is consistent with the other elements of his system and, in particular, as we shall see, with his belief in the inevitability of violent revolution.

The most striking example of this notion of economic determinism is the theory of ideology—that is, the Marxist view of the causal relation between thought and the mode of production. Marx states this theory in general terms by holding that social existence determines consciousness, not consciousness social existence.¹⁰ We need, however, to try to see more precisely what he means. Already in our discussion of the theory of objective development we have touched on the question. We may be ready to grant to Marx that objective development sometimes occurs in the social process and that such development may show uniformities amounting to social laws. Certainly, however, we must ask why Marx does not take the next step and suggest that men should seek a knowledge of these laws in order to be able to control such developments. That is what a modern social scientist tries to do. An economist, for instance, studies economic depressions in order to learn how they may be prevented or controlled. Does Marx not think that men can gain control over social processes?

He does indeed look forward to the day when the blind forces of history will be subject to conscious, human control. In a sense, such control will be the major consequence of the transition to a communist society. Communism will bring, he writes, "the control and conscious mastery of these powers, which, born of the action of men on one another, have till now overawed and governed men as powers completely alien to them."¹¹ In that society and

¹⁰ above, p. ix

¹¹ *The German Ideology* (New York, 1947), p. 28

MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION OF 1888

By FRIEDRICH ENGELS



THE *Manifesto* was published as the platform of the Communist League, a workingmen's association, first exclusively German, later on international, and, under the political conditions of the Continent before 1848, unavoidably a secret society. At a Congress of the League, held in London in November, 1847, Marx and Engels were commissioned to prepare for publication a complete theoretical and practical party program. Drawn up in German, in January, 1848, the manuscript was sent to the printer in London a few weeks before the French revolution of February 24th.¹ 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 work-

¹ As a result of the revolution in Paris, February 22-24, 1848, Louis Philippe was deposed and a republic proclaimed. Later the republic was overthrown by Louis Bonaparte, the nephew of Napoleon I. See below, pp. 47 ff.

ing 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 4th till November 12th; seven of the prisoners were sentenced to terms of imprisonment in a fortress, varying from three to six years. Immediately after the sentence, the League was formally dissolved by the remaining members. As to the *Manifesto*, it seemed thenceforth to be doomed to oblivion.

When the European working class had recovered sufficient strength for another attack on the ruling classes, the International Workingmen's Association sprang up.² But this association, formed with the express aim of welding into one body the whole militant proletariat of Europe and America, could not at once proclaim the principles laid down in the *Manifesto*. The International was bound to have a program broad enough to be acceptable to the English trades unions, to the followers of Proudhon³ in France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain, and to the Lassalleans⁴ in Germany. Marx, who drew up this program to the satisfaction of all parties, entirely trusted to the intellectual development of the working class, which was sure to result

² Founded in 1864, Marx taking a leading part

³ Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), French socialist, author of *The Philosophy of Poverty* (1846), which Marx attacked in his early work, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847)

⁴ Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864), German socialist leader, founded in 1863 the General German Workingmen's Association, one of the sources of the Social Democratic party [Note by Engels] Lassalle always acknowledged himself to us personally to be a disciple of Marx and, as such, stood on the ground of the *Manifesto*. But in his public agitation, 1862-64, he did not go beyond demanding co-operative workshops supported by state credit.

mokratisk Bibliothek, Copenhagen, 1885; a fresh French translation in *Le Socialiste*, Paris, 1886. From this latter Spanish version was prepared and published in Madrid, 1886. Not counting the German reprints there had been at least twelve editions. An Armenian translation, which was to be published in Constantinople some months ago, I do not see the light, I am told, because the publisher was afraid of bringing out a book with the name of Marx on it while the translator declined to call it his own production. Of further translations into other languages I have heard but have not seen. Thus the history of the *Manifesto* reflects, to a great extent, the history of the modern working-class movement; at present it is undoubtedly the most widespread, the most international production of all Socialist literature, the common platform acknowledged by millions of workmen 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,⁸ both of them already reduced to the position of mere sects, and gradually dying out; on the other hand, the most multifarious social quacks, who, by all manner of tinkering, professed to redress, without any danger to capital and profit, all sorts of social grievances, in both cases men outside the working class movement, and looking rather to the "educated" classes for support. Whatever portion of the working class had become convinced of the insufficiency of mere political revolutions, and had proclaimed the necessity of a total social change, 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 pro-

⁸ Robert Owen (1771-1858), forerunner of socialism and the co-operative movement in Britain, advocated the establishment of small communist colonies under paternalistic rule. The communities proposed by François Charles Fourier (1772-1837) were based on the *phalanstère*, or common building, in which all families lived, and permitted complete freedom to all members.

duce the Utopian Communism of Cabet⁹ in France, and of Weitling¹⁰ 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 working class must be the act of the working class itself," there could be no doubt as to which of the two names we must take. Moreover, we have, ever since, been far from repudiating it.

The *Manifesto* being our joint production, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition which forms its nucleus, belongs to Marx. That proposition is: That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles 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, emancipat-

Etienne Cabet (1788-1856), French socialist and author of *Voyage en Icarie* in which he depicted life in a communist society. His doctrine, like that of Owen and Fourier, was dubbed "utopian" by Engels because it was not founded upon the "scientific" theory of history developed by Marx.

Wilhelm Weitling (1808-1871), a German tailor and leader of the League of the Just, an international society of proletarian revolutionaries which preceded the Communist League. An early friend of Marx, who later attacked him bitterly, he emigrated to the United States where he continued his socialist agitation.

ing society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles.

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

From our joint preface to the German edition of 1872, I quote:

However much the state of things may have altered during the last 25 years, the general principles laid down in this *Manifesto* are, on the whole, as correct today as ever. Here and there some detail might be improved. The practical application of the principles will depend, as the *Manifesto* itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II. That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded today. In view of the gigantic strides of modern industry since 1848, and of the accompanying improved and extended 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,¹¹ where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, this program has in some details become antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." (See *The Civil War in France; Address by the General Council of the International Workingmen'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

¹¹ The insurrectionary government which took possession of Paris at the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871

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, guildmaster³ 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.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost every-

¹In French *bourgeois* means a town-dweller. "Proletarian" comes from the Latin, *proletarius*, which meant a person whose sole wealth was his offspring (*proles*).

[Note by Engels] By "bourgeoisie" is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labor; by "proletariat," the class of modern wage-laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor power in order to live.

²[Note by Engels] That is, all *written* history. In 1837, the prehistory of society, the social organization existing previous to recorded history, was all but unknown. Since then Haxthausen [August von, 1792-1866] discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Maurer [Georg Ludwig von] proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and, by and by, village communities were found to be, or to have been, the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. The inner organization of this primitive communistic society was laid bare, in its typical form, by Morgan's [Lewis H., 1818-1881] crowning discovery of the true nature of the *gens* and its relation to the *tribe*. With the dissolution of these primeval communities, society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes. I have attempted to retrace this process of dissolution in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

³[Note by Engels] Guild-master, that is a full member of a guild, a master within, not a head of a guild

MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

By KARL MARX and FRIEDRICH ENGELS



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,¹ French Radicals² and German police spies.

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

Two things result from this fact:

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

II. It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the 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.

¹Prince von Metternich (1773-1859), chancellor of the Austrian empire. François Pierre Guizot (1787-1874), French historian and statesman, prime minister at the time of the revolution of 1848

²French Radicals, radical republicans

where 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, journey-men, 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 distinctive feature: It has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat.

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

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization 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 monopolized 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 aside by the manufacturing middle class; division of labor between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labor in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture⁴ no longer sufficed. There-

⁴ By manufacture Marx meant the system of production which succeeded the guild system but which still relied mainly upon direct human labor for power. He distinguished it from modern

is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie has played a most revolutionary role in history.

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 no other bond between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, 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 honored 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-laborers.

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 vigor 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 migrations of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing 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 revolutionizing 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 whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of reactionaries, 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 civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means

of communication, draws all nations, even the most barbarian, into civilization. The cheap prices of its 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 civilization into their midst, *i.e.*, to become bourgeois themselves. In a 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 semibarbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

More and more the bourgeoisie keeps doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralized means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralization. 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, canalization 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 labor?

We see then that the means of production and of exchange, which served as the foundation for the growth of the bourgeoisie, 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 organization of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in a word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the 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 bourgeoisie 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 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 overproduction. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed. And why? Because there is too much civilization, 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 no sooner do they overcome these fetters than 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 laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital. These laborers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labor, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labor, is equal to

its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the pulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labor increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time, or by increased speed of the machinery, etc.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized 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 overseer, 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 labor, in other words, the more modern industry develops, the more is the labor 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 labor, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner has the laborer received his wages in cash, for the moment escaping exploitation by the manufacturer, 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 tradesmen⁶ 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 specialized skill is rendered

⁶The word in the German original, *Rentier*, in this passage refers to a small property-owner living on unearned income from invested capital

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 laborers, then by the work people of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labor, they smash machinery to pieces, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage the laborers 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 still able to do so for a time. 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 nonindustrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeoisie. Thus the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie.

But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalized, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labor and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the

collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (trade unions) against the bourgeoisie; 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 results, but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is furthered by the improved means of communication which are created by modern industry, and which place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralize 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 proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organization 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-hour bill⁷ in England was carried.

Altogether, collisions between the classes of the old society further the course of development of the proletariat in many ways. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all times with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat,

⁷ The Ten Hours Act, which was passed by Parliament in 1847, in effect limited the working day of all factory workers to ten hours.

to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.

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

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

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

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

The "dangerous class," the social scum (*Lumpenprole-*

The part of the proletariat), that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of 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.

The social conditions of the old society no longer exist for the proletariat. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with bourgeois family relations; modern industrial labor, 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 feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern laborer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential condition for the existence and sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labor. Wage-labor rests exclusively on competition between the laborers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by their 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 gravediggers. 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 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 mold 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 the other proletarian parties: Formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of 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 favor 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 labor, which property is alleged to be the groundwork of all personal freedom, activity and independence.

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

Or do you mean modern bourgeois private property?

But does wage-labor create any property for the laborer? Not a bit. It creates capital, *i.e.*, that kind of property which exploits wage-labor, and which cannot increase except upon condition of begetting a new supply of wage-labor for fresh exploitation. Property, in its present form, is based on the antagonism of capital and wage-labor. 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,

may, in the last resort, only by the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion.

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

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

Let us now take wage-labor.

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

In bourgeois society, living labor is but a means to increase accumulated labor. In Communist society, accumulated labor is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the laborer.

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 bourgeoisie 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 Communist 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 nonexistence of any property for the immense majority of society.

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

From the moment when labor can no longer be converted into capital, money, or rent, into a social power capable of being monopolized, *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 labor of others by means of such appropriation.

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: There can no longer be any wage-labor when there is no longer any capital.

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

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

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

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

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

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the

bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among 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 will say, we destroy the most hallowed of relations, when we replace home education by social.

And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention of society, direct or indirect, 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 parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of modern industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labor.

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

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

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

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

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

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalized 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 workingmen 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 antagonisms between peoples are vanishing gradually from day to day, 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 civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

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

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

Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views, and conceptions, in one word, man's con-

sciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?

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

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

When the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the eighteenth 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, "religion, 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 involves 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 establish democracy.

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

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

These measures will of course be different in different countries.

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

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralization of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with state capital and an exclusive monopoly.

6. Centralization 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 obligation of all to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.

10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of child factory labor in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize 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 agitation, 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 period¹ had become impossible.

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

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

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

¹ [Note by Engels] Not the English Restoration 1660 to 1689, but the French Restoration 1814 to 1830

based on the continued existence of these relations; reforms, therefore, that in no respect affect the relations between capital and labor, 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. These are the last words and the only seriously meant words of bourgeois socialism.

It is summed up in the phrase: the bourgeois are 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 Babeuf⁸ 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 leveling in its crudest form.

The socialist and communist systems properly so called, those of St. Simon,⁹ Fourier, Owen and others, spring into

⁸ François Noel Babeuf (1760-1797), one of the first Socialist leaders of modern times, was guillotined after the suppression of his "Conspiracy of Equals" in 1796

⁹ Claude Henri de Rouvroy, Count de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) advocated an industrial society directed by men of science and organized for the benefit of the poor

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 such Socialists 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 organization of the proletariat to an organization of society specially 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 went to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favored. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without distinction of class; nay, by preference, to the ruling class. For how can people, when once they understand their system, fail to see in it the best possible plan of the best possible state of society?

Hence, they reject all political, and especially all revo-

lutionary action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavor, by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social gospel.

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

But these socialist and communist writings 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; abolition of the family, of private gain and of the wage-system; the proclamation of social harmony; the conversion of the functions of the state into a mere superintendence of production—all these proposals point solely to the disappearance of class antagonisms which were, at that time, only just cropping up, and which, in these publications, are recognized 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, endeavor, and that consistently, to deaden the class struggle and to reconcile the class antagonisms. They still dream of experimental realization of their social utopias, of founding isolated *phalanstères*, of establishing "Home

England in the 17th and in France in the 18th century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.

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

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

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

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

Workingmen of all countries, unite!