

MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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1st Edition

Proletarians of all countries, unite!

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Preface to the German Edition of 1872¹

The Communist League, an international association of workers, which could of course be only a secret one under the conditions obtaining at the time, commissioned the undersigned, at the Congress held in London in November 1847, to draw up for publication a detailed theoretical and practical program of the Party. Such was the origin of the following *Manifesto*, the manuscript of which travelled to London, to be printed, a few weeks before the February Revolution.² First published in German, it has been republished in that language in at least twelve different editions in Germany, England, and America. It was published in English for the first time in 1850 in the *Red Republican*,³ London, translated by Miss Helen Macfarlane, and in 1871 in at least three different translations in America. A French version first appeared in Paris shortly before the June insurrection of 1848 and recently in *Le Socialiste*⁴ of New York. A new translation is in the course of preparation.

¹On the initiative of the editorial board of *Der Volksstaat*, a new German edition of the *Manifesto* was published in 1872, with a preface by Marx and Engels and some minor changes in the text. It bore the title *The Communist Manifesto*, as did the later German editions of 1883 and 1890.

²The February Revolution in France, 1848.

³The *Red Republican* was a Chartist weekly published from June to November 1850 by George Harney. In its Nos. 21–24, November 1850, the first English translation of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* appeared under the title, *Manifesto of the German Communist Party*.

⁴*Le Socialiste*, organ of the French Section of the International, was a weekly in French published in New York from October 1871 to May 1873. It supported the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements in the North American Federation of the International. After the Hague Congress (September 1872) it severed connections with the International. The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was published in the weekly in January and February 1872.

A Polish version appeared in London shortly after it was first published in German. A Russian translation was published in Geneva in the sixties. Into Danish, too, it was translated shortly after its first appearance.

However much the state of things may have altered during the last twenty-five 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 in the last twenty-five years, and of the accompanying improved and extended party organization of the working class, in view of the practical experience gained, first in the February Revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, this 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.”⁵ Further, it is self-evident that the criticism of socialist literature is deficient in relation to the present time, because it comes

⁵See Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*, “Address of the General Council of the International Working Men’s Association,” London, Truelove, 1871, p. 15, where this point is further developed.

down only to 1847; also, that the remarks on the relation of the Communists to the various opposition parties (Section IV), although in principle still correct, yet in practice are antiquated, because the political situation has been entirely changed, and the progress of history has swept from off the earth the greater portion of the political parties there enumerated.

But, then, the *Manifesto* has become a historical document which we have no longer any right to alter. A subsequent edition may perhaps appear with an introduction bridging the gap from 1847 to the present day; this reprint was too unexpected to leave us time for that.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

London, June 24, 1872

Preface to the Russian Edition of 1882⁶

The first Russian edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, translated by Bakunin, was published early in the sixties⁷ by the printing office of the *Kolokol*.⁸ Then the West could see in it (the *Russian* edition of the *Manifesto*) only a literary curiosity. Such a view would be impossible today.

What a limited field the proletarian movement still occupied at that time (December 1847) is most clearly shown by the last section of the *Manifesto*: the position of the Communists in relation to the various opposition parties in the various countries. Precisely Russia and the United States are missing here. It was the time when Russia constituted the last great reserve of all European reaction, when the United States absorbed the surplus proletarian forces of Europe through immigration. Both countries provided Europe with raw materials and were at the same

⁶This refers to the second Russian edition of the *Manifesto* which appeared in 1882 in Geneva. In the postscript to the article "On Social Relations in Russia," Engels named G.V. Plekhanov as the translator. In the Russian edition of 1900 Plekhanov also indicated that he had done the translation. For the Russian edition of 1882 Marx and Engels wrote a preface which appeared in Russian in *Narodnaya Volya* (*The Will of the People*) on February 5, 1882. This preface appeared in German on April 13, 1882, in No. 16 of *Der Sozialdemokrat*, organ of the German Social-Democratic Party. Engels included this preface in the German edition of the *Manifesto* of 1890.

⁷This edition appeared in 1869. In Engels's preface to the English edition of 1888, the publication date of this Russian translation of the *Manifesto* was also incorrectly given.

⁸*Kolokol* (*The Bell*), Russian revolutionary democratic journal, published by A.I. Herzen and N.P. Ogaryov in London from 1857 to 1865 and afterwards in Geneva. It was published in Russian from 1857 to 1867 and in French with a Russian supplement from 1868 to 1869.

time markets for the sale of its industrial products. At that time both were, therefore, in one way or another, pillars of the existing European order. How very different today! Precisely European immigration fitted North America for a gigantic agricultural production, whose competition is shaking the very foundations of European landed property — large and small. In addition it enabled the United States to exploit its tremendous industrial resources with an energy and on a scale that must shortly break the industrial monopoly of Western Europe, and especially of England, existing up to now. Both circumstances react in revolutionary manner upon America itself. Step by step the small and middle land ownership of the farmers, the basis of the whole political constitution, is succumbing to the competition of giant farms; simultaneously, a mass proletariat and a fabulous concentration of capital are developing for the first time in the industrial regions.

And now Russia! During the Revolution of 1848–49 not only the European princes, but the European bourgeois as well, found their only salvation from the proletariat, just beginning to awaken, in Russian intervention. The tsar was proclaimed the chief of European reaction. Today he is a prisoner of war of the revolution, in Gatchina,⁹ and Russia forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe.

⁹This is a reference to the situation following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II by members of the *Narodnaya Volya* on March 13, 1881, when Alexander III, fearful of fresh acts of terrorism by the secret executive committee of the *Narodnaya Volya*, hid himself in Gatchina, a place to the southwest of present-day Leningrad.

The *Communist Manifesto* had as its object the proclamation of the inevitably impending dissolution of modern bourgeois property. But in Russia we find, face to face with the rapidly developing capitalist swindle and bourgeois landed property, just beginning to develop, more than half the land owned in common by the peasants. Now the question is: can the Russian *obshchina*,¹⁰ though greatly undermined, yet a form of the primeval common ownership of land, pass directly to the higher form of communist common ownership? Or on the contrary, must it first pass through the same process of dissolution as constitutes the historical evolution of the West?

The only answer to that possible today is this: If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for a communist development.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

London, January 21, 1882

¹⁰*Obshchina*: Village community.

Preface to the German Edition of 1883¹¹

The preface to the present edition I must, alas, sign alone. Marx, the man to whom the whole working class of Europe and America owes more than to anyone else, rests at Highgate Cemetery and over his grave the first grass is already growing. Since his death, there can be even less thought of revising or supplementing the *Manifesto*. All the more do I consider it necessary again to state here the following expressly:

The basic thought running through the *Manifesto* — that economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently (ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development; that this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression, and class struggles — this basic

¹¹This refers to the third German edition of the *Manifesto*, the first edition collated by Engels after Marx's death.