

The Communist Manifesto (1848) as translated by Samuel Moore in cooperation with Friedrich Engels

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a
 5 revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have
 10 patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations. The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

15 Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. (...)

20 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
 25 proletariat, the modern working class, developed — a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market. (...)

30 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. (...)

The essential conditions for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour
 35 rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces,
 40 above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable. (...)

The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involved the most radical rupture with traditional ideas. (...)

45 The first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class to win the battle of democracy.

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

50 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,
55 and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production.

These measures will, of course, be different in different countries.

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

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
- 60 3. Abolition of all rights of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
- 65 7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of waste-lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
8. Equal liability of all to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of all the
70 distinction between town and country by a more equable distribution of the populace over the country.
10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, &c, &c.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production
75 has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the
80 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. (...)

85 The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation and with a much more developed proletariat than that of England was in the seventeenth, and France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.

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

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

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

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

Source: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.html>

Annotations:

hitherto (adv.)	<i>bislang, bisher</i>	antagonism (n.)	<i>Gegensatz</i>
patrician (n.)	<i>Stadtvater, (adeliges) Mitglied des röm. Senats</i>	proletariat (n.)	<i>(Industrie-) Arbeiterschaft</i>
plebeian (n.)	<i>Mitglied des einfachen Volkes von Rom</i>	wield (v.)	<i>handhaben</i>
(feudal) lord (n.)	<i>Grundherr</i>	commodity (n.)	<i>Gut, Ware</i>
serf (n.)	<i>Leibeigener</i>	vicissitude (n.)	<i>Wechselhaftigkeit, Unbeständigkeit</i>
guild-master (n.)	<i>Handwerksmeister (und Zunftmitglied)</i>	sway (n.)	<i>Macht, Einfluss</i>
journeyman (n.)	<i>Geselle (der für einen Meister arbeitet und immer wieder zu einer neuen Anstellung weiterzieht)</i>	augmentation (n.)	<i>Erhöhung</i>
reconstitution (n.)	<i>Umbildung, Umformung</i>	rupture (n.)	<i>Bruch</i>
contend (v.)	<i>streiten, im Wettstreit liegen</i>	supremacy (n.)	<i>Überlegenheit, Vorherrschaft</i>
manifold (adj.)	<i>vielfältig</i>	wrest (v.)	<i>entreißen, abringen</i>
gradation (n.)	<i>Abstufung</i>	despotic (adj.)	<i>tyrannisch, diktatorisch</i>
vassal (n.)	<i>Vasall</i>	liability (n.)	<i>Verpflichtung</i>
apprentice (n.)	<i>Lehrling</i>	populace (n.)	<i>Volk</i>
bourgeois (n., adj.)	<i>(Besitz-) Bürger; bürgerlich</i>	prelude (n.)	<i>Vorspiel</i>
sprout (v.)	<i>sprießen</i>	disdain (v.)	<i>geringschätzen</i>

Tasks:

- On the basis of the source text, outline Marxist communism graphically (e.g. in the form of a flow chart).
- Compare communism to Chartism.
- Imagine this to be the year 1848 and your class is a meeting of factory workers. Organise a debate between working class supporters of Chartism and of communism.
- On the basis of what you have learned about communism in previous years of history tuition, assess the historical significance of this ideology.