

THE
Essentials of Marx

The Communist Manifesto

By KARL MARX and FREDERICK ENGELS

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Wage-Labor and Capital,
Value, Price and Profit,
and Other Selections

By KARL MARX

With Introduction and Notes by
ALGERNON LEE



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ESSENTIALS OF MARX

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

BY ALGERNON LEE

IN the field of social history all beginnings are relative. Back of whatever we may call the date of origin of any institution or movement lie the conditions and tendencies out of which it grew. With this qualification, 1848 may be counted as the birth-year of modern Socialism, and the issuance of the *Communist Manifesto* ■ the first step in the development of a new social force which, challenging all the accepted ideas, assailing all the established institutions, threatening all the vested interests of aristocratic and of capitalist society, boldly set itself the task of putting an end to the exploitation of man by man and of building from the bottom up a free and classless world. Obstructed by the ignorance and self-distrust of the very classes whose cause it champions, beaten down again and again by savage persecution, broken again and again by dissension within its ranks, it has rallied more strongly after each defeat, surer of itself after each schism. Launched by an obscure little group of hunted exiles, at the end of seventy-eight years it counts its adherents by the tens of millions, its organizations spread all over the civilized world, and in ■ number of the leading countries of Europe ■ slight further increase of strength will put the powers of government definitely into its hands. Such ■ movement is worth the trouble of understanding, even in ■ land where it is for the moment at low ebb.

The three little works reprinted in this volume have ■■

importance out of all proportion to their size. Whoever has really mastered their contents—something which cannot be done in a single hasty reading—holds the clue which will guide him in any further study of the Socialist movement and its theories. Some account of their authors and of their historic setting may help the reader to grasp their significance.

* * *

Karl Marx was born at Trier or Treves, not far from the Rhine, in March, 1818. He came of a highly cultured family, Jewish by race though not by religious belief. From his youth on he showed an insatiable thirst for knowledge and an unusual capacity for thorough and critical thinking. His first interests were in literature and languages, which he learned with great ease, but history and philosophy soon won his attention. In several years of study at the universities of Bonn and Berlin he prepared himself first for the practice of law and then, changing his plans, for the life of a teacher of philosophy. Hardly had he taken his doctor's degree, however, when it became clear to him that he could never be servile enough to the ruling powers to hold a professorship in the Germany of those days. He next turned to journalism, both as a means of livelihood and as a channel for self-expression. For a short time in 1842-'43 he edited the *Rheinische Zeitung* (Rhenish Gazette) at Cologne, but resigned when its proprietors decided to soften its opposition to the reactionary policies of the Prussian government. Marx left Germany shortly before the issuance of an order for his arrest. Settling for the time in Paris, he collaborated on the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (German-French Yearbooks), but was expelled by the French government in 1845 and found refuge at Brussels. Here in 1847 he published his *Poverty of Philosophy*, in answer to Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty*. In this book the whole future development of his economic thinking is broadly foreshadowed, and it is important also as beginning to draw the line between what were later to be known as the Socialist and Anarchist movements.

The next year the Belgian government, subservient to that of France, drove him again into exile.

At Paris and Brussels, besides carrying on a tireless literary activity, of which the writings just mentioned represent but a portion, Marx had plunged into a profound study of economic science, had come into contact with refugees from many parts of Europe and with the underground movements of discontent which were then becoming very active, and had also been watching with keen interest the efforts of the British working class on both the industrial and the political field.

It was at Paris in 1844 that he met Frederick Engels, with whom he was for the rest of his life so closely associated, both as personal friend and as fellow thinker, that it is hard to say just how much either of them may have contributed to the other's work. Engels, who was two years younger than Marx, was a native of the industrial city of Barmen, also in the valley of the Rhine. Representing his father in the textile business, he had already spent some years in England, and in that country he resided mostly until his death in 1895. A man of keen and powerful mind, while his interests lay largely in the same field with those of Marx, he was more conversant than was his friend with natural science and anthropology on the one hand, and on the other hand with business and practical affairs. Within a few months after their first meeting he published his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, which was in certain aspects an epoch-making book. Of his later works the one best known to English readers is *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, published in 1880.

It is perhaps significant that both these men were born and reared in the Rhine country. There for centuries the forces of French and of German civilization had met and fought and trafficked, producing a blended culture of a rich and active type. Lying between the old republican strongholds of Switzerland and the Low Countries, and itself in the Middle Ages studded with all but independent free cities, it

had preserved traditions of liberty which the rule of the Hapsburgs, the Bourbons, and the Hohenzollerns had been able to repress, but not altogether to destroy, and which had been quickened into life at the beginning of the century, when Napoleon's arms had brought into Western Germany at least some of the emancipatory results of the French Revolution. Moreover, its great navigable river was the principal thoroughfare by which British travel and trade penetrated Central Europe, and into its valley machine industry, born in England, was transplanted earlier than into almost any other part of the Continent. Altogether, it was a fit nursery for internationalist, democratic, and scientifically forward-looking revolutionists.

* * *

Three powerful intellectual currents, drawn from three great and diverse nations, were assimilated, transformed, and made to produce something greater than themselves in the thought of Marx and Engels.

First there is the influence of the French materialistic philosophers of the later eighteenth century—such men as Diderot, Helvetius, d'Alembert, and Holbach. These had been forerunners of the Great Revolution, spirits of denial, ruthless critics of church and state and social convention, doubters and questioners, unwilling to believe anything on authority, confident of the power of human reason to solve every problem it might take up. Their great contribution was that they looked always to material facts, not to metaphysical abstractions nor to the alleged will of God, for the explanation of the nature of man and of society. Their weakness was that, on the whole, their thought-method was static, dealing with supposed eternal truths, not sufficiently recognizing the fact of continuous change.

The second of these influences was that of the German philosopher Hegel, who died in 1831. Marx and Engels always avowed themselves his disciples, though they turned his system topsy-turvy in using it. To Hegel, abstract ideas

were the sole reality, material things but their fleeting shadow. In this respect, his philosophy was at odds with the whole trend of modern science, and on this point Marxism takes a diametrically opposite view. But Hegel's immense service was that he thought in terms of process or evolution. Instead of saying simply "This is and that is not," he said "In every moment of its being, everything is ceasing to be what it was and becoming what it is not yet." His working-out of this conception—his so-called dialectic thought-method—cannot be explained in further detail here. A good idea of it can be obtained from Engels' *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*. In the hands of Marx, Engels, and their successors, who combined it with reliance on observed fact as the raw material for thought, it became an instrument, not only for exploring the past and explaining the present, but for predicting the general course of future development with a degree of certainty such as no other social thinkers have attained.

To these must be added a third influence—that of the British economists, foremost among whom stood and still stands David Ricardo, author of the *Principles of Political Economy*, published in 1817. Just as Hegel was the accepted philosophical champion of Prussian nationalist monarchy, and Marx, in developing Hegel's system, made it the philosophy of democratic internationalism, so had Ricardo's work been hailed as a complete justification of industrial capitalism, and in like wise did Marx, not destroying but fulfilling it, make it demonstrate the anti-social and ultimately self-destructive nature of the capitalist system, and thus turn it to the service of the revolutionary proletariat.

Ricardo unquestioningly accepted production for sale, private ownership of the means of production, and the relations of landlord to tenant and of employer to wage-worker as things eternal for the future, if not in the past. Taking these for granted, he analyzed with marvelous acuteness the normal inner workings of a system of production and exchange founded upon them. In the light of his demonstration, the economic laws of value, of rent, of wages, and so forth seemed

to have the same validity as the laws of gravitation or of chemical affinity. The processes by which, in the capitalist system, the incomes of wage-worker, landlord, investor, and enterpriser are determined appeared as "natural" and therefore as little to be resisted or found fault with as the motions of the earth and the alternation of the seasons. As for poverty—well, the physical world too had its painful aspects, such as cyclones and earthquakes, which those who suffered from them must bear as best they could.

To this system of thought, so comfortable for the new ruling class, Marx did two things. First, Marx the economist carried Ricardo's analysis a little farther, completed the statement of the law of value and of wages, and thereby exhibited the capitalist pure-and-simple as a parasite pure-and-simple. In other words, he showed that the actual capitalist is a collaborator in production only in so far as he still functions, not as owner of capital, but as director of industry; and that, in proportion as the growth of capital itself divorces these two functions, the capitalist becomes socially useless and harmful. In the second place, for Marx there were no finalities. Marx the historian saw the capitalist form of property as but the latest in a series of property systems, each of which by its own full development destroys itself and at the same time evolves its successor. To the strictly economic analysis he added the social-psychological analysis which brought to light the perfectly normal process by which capitalism "produces its own grave-diggers."

Such, in brief, are the roots of the theoretical system of Marx and Engels, which is the theoretical system of modern Socialism.

But Marx and Engels did not make modern Socialism out of nothing. They probably would not have worked out their theories, and even if they had done so the theories would have remained barren, had there not already existed the vague and unlinked elements of a movement of social discontent, which they were able to understand, to which they devoted themselves, and which their clear thinking greatly

helped to unify, to guide, and to inspire. Here again three main sources are to be noted, with one or two minor ones.

* * *

The speculative radicalism of such men as Rousseau, Condorcet, Priestley, Godwin, and Shelley spent itself mostly in literary effort, and never constituted an actual movement. Yet it did something to break down conservative traditions and to generate moral enthusiasm.

The Utopian socialisms of Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen, Cabet, and other ingenious picturers of society "as it ought to be" had a little more nearly the character of a movement. In so far, however, as the attempt was made to realize their dreams by founding colonies and communities, not only did these fail, but they retarded the movement of the working class as a whole in the same way as a mirage retards the desert traveler by diverting him from his right course. On the other hand, each of these four thinkers rendered a real service by his illuminating criticism of certain aspects of the existing social order.

Of the three really vital tendencies that merged to form modern Socialism, the most general was the striving for political democracy. Even in the United States, manhood suffrage did not become fairly universal till the 1840's. Nowhere in the Old World did it prevail at that time, but in the more advanced nations of Western Europe it was being vigorously demanded. In each country, when the rising capitalist class undertook to wrest power from monarchs and aristocrats, it needed the help of all the lower classes and accordingly made democracy its slogan. In France the democratic movement triumphed in 1789-94, and then the bourgeoisie promptly kicked away the ladder by which it had climbed. Under the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire, the Bourbon Restoration of 1814-30, now broader and now narrower sections of the propertied classes monopolized political power. In the revolution of 1830 the Paris workers bore the brunt of the fighting, but when the old government

had been overthrown, the propertied classes united to seize upon the fruits of victory; and as a result, under the Orleans Monarchy, not only the artisans and wage-workers, but even a large part of the lower middle class, were excluded from political activity. Germany was yet far behind France on the road toward popular self-government. Only in some of its thirty or forty loosely connected states did even the richer bourgeois share power with the aristocrats. It was therefore still possible for the middle classes to hold democratic opinions, except in so far as they were deterred by fear of what the lower classes might do if once the revolution got under way.

As for Great Britain, by the later 1820's there came a powerful protest against the continued political monopoly of a small fraction of the population, composed chiefly of great landowners. The wage-working class, here larger and more self-conscious than in any other country, joined heartily in the movement. Violent revolution was near at hand; but in 1832 the reactionaries gave way—just enough to avert the crisis, not an inch more. The Reform Bill largely increased the representation of the industrial districts and lowered the property qualification for voters enough to take in the upper and most of the lower middle class. This gave the capitalists a dominant influence and left the urban and rural workers voteless and unrepresented. Paralyzed for a moment by the unforeseen treachery of their bourgeois allies, the workers soon rallied and launched an independent movement commonly known as Chartism, from their "People's Charter" or statement of demands, which included manhood suffrage, secret ballot, equal districts, annual elections, and payment of members. The life of this movement was marked by three great waves of activity, with intervals of depression. Its third high tide came in 1848, simultaneously with revolutionary crises all over Western and Central Europe. By 1852 it had ceased to exist. In form, Chartism was only a demand for political democracy; but, being almost exclusively a movement of wage-workers, it inevitably focussed attention on economic questions and was essentially a movement of social

revolution. Not one of its specific aims was achieved till long afterward, yet its efforts were by no means wasted. Through the fear which it put into the hearts of the ruling class it did much to promote labor legislation and other valuable reforms. What is more, it educated the workers, trained them in organized struggle, made them class-conscious.

* * *

Second among the roots of modern Socialism we must name the trade-union movement. In England some unions had existed as early as 1720. Throughout the eighteenth century, however, this kind of organization was confined to a few of the skilled hand trades. The unions were neither large nor numerous, they were locally isolated and often short-lived, and they could hardly be said to constitute a movement. But in the 1760's, 70's, and 80's the invention of the steam engine, the spinning jenny and mule, the power loom, and many other kinds of power-driven machinery brought about a great change known as the Industrial Revolution. Large factories came into existence, whose competition was ruinous to many of the old hand trades. Industrial capital was rapidly increased and concentrated. Its owners became the economically dominant class, while thousands of petty manufacturers went to the wall. Artisans and craftsmen by the tens of thousands, whether self-employers or employed in small shops, lost their custom or their jobs. In place of these old types of workingmen came a new one—the modern proletarian, necessarily a city dweller, unable to own his home, have a garden, or keep a cow, absolutely dependent on daily wages for his daily bread. Women and children could now do what had been men's work. The labor market was glutted, unemployment became chronic, wages went down, and at the very moment when wealth was being piled up as never before, the working people were plunged into unprecedented misery, from which they hardly began to emerge till the middle of the nineteenth century. Their sufferings incited them to revolt, their individual helplessness forced them

to think of united action, their aggregation in mill towns and mining centers made it easier for them to organize, their increased mobility suggested general instead of merely local organization. A real trade-union movement was beginning to be born when, as a part of the general system of reaction to which the British ruling classes resorted in their fear of the effects of the French Revolution, parliament in 1799-1800 passed the Combination Acts, which made mere membership in a union a criminal offense. For twenty-five years these laws were drastically enforced, and the normal growth of trade unionism was held in check. Secret organizations of course were formed, but spies and provocators easily found their way into them, and had much to do with inciting the campaign of machine-breaking and other violence known in history as the Luddite disturbances, for which many workingmen were hanged.

On the repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824-25 there was a hectic outburst of union organization and of strikes, followed by a sharp decline. Next came the attempt to organize the working class as a whole, rather than the various trades and industries, culminating in 1834 in the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, which hoped to make a complete social revolution by means of the general strike. This was a fiasco, at once ridiculous and sublime. In the early 1840's there began a slow but steady growth of labor organization of a very conservative type, chiefly in the more skilled and better paid trades, but consciously revolutionary unionism did not revive in Great Britain for more than fifty years.

The story of unionism in Western and Central Europe down to the middle of the century need not detain us so long. In these regions the factory system arose from thirty to sixty years later than in Great Britain. The workingmen felt the competition of British machine-made goods, which caused great misery among them, and of course stirred them to discontent; but only in a few localities had any considerable proletariat of the modern type come into existence at the

time of which we are speaking. In general, too, the poorer classes had even less of civil rights and political liberty than their British comrades, and were therefore less able to organize on the economic field. As early as 1791 the National Assembly of the new-born French republic enacted a penal statute which forbade "any sort of combination of citizens of the same profession or trade"—a law which was rigorously enforced against labor unions, but not against employers' associations. Legislation such as this prevailed almost without interruption on the Continent until the 1860's, and in some countries much longer. Naturally there were many attempts of workers to unite secretly for economic resistance, but they had little success. It took the genius of a Marx to see in 1848 the vast historical significance of the trade unions.

* * *

And so we come to the third of the main sources of modern Socialism as a movement—that is, to certain of the underground revolutionary societies which inevitably were formed under a regime which gave no open outlet to the discontent of the oppressed classes. There were of course many secret societies which pursued only political aims of a more or less democratic character, and which had no necessary connection with the movement of the working class. But, from the time when it became evident that the French Revolution had only put a new ruling class in the saddle, conspirative organizations among the lower strata of the population, aiming to translate the formula "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," into economic fact, were always on the order of the day. The earliest and most famous was the Society of Equals led by François Noël Babeuf, which in 1795-96 planned to overthrow the French government by armed insurrection, nationalize the land, and reorganize the whole population on a communistic basis. The plot was discovered, Babeuf and one other were guillotined, a number were imprisoned or driven into exile, and the society disappeared. But for more than half a century thereafter, especially in

France, but also in other parts of Europe, groups of a more or less similar sort were forever being formed, unearthed, broken up, and formed again.

This underground communism was in general of a utopian character. That is, to use Plekhanoff's expression, "starting from an abstract principle it sought to devise a perfect society." Like the Saint-Simonians or the Fourierites, each group had its ready-made scheme, which was in general based, not on a study of the actual tendencies of economic development, but on some particular conception of justice or equality or other moral abstraction. But whereas the former expected all "good" people, regardless of class, to accept their proposals as soon as they understood them, these conspirative communists were free from that illusion. They did not imagine that they could persuade the propertied classes to abdicate; they relied, perhaps not specifically on the working class, but at any rate on the "poor and oppressed" in general, who they thought, would rally to them whenever they were ready to raise the standard of revolt and impose the new system by armed force. In a sense, too, their schemes were often backward-looking, in that they aimed to revive local small-scale production by hand labor, rather than to socialize the economies of the now rapidly developing system of great machine industry. In these respects, however, some clarification of ideas went on among the underground communists in the course of the half-century. As, with the growth of modern industry, "the poor" came to be more nearly synonymous with "the wage-working class," this type of communism took on a more definite class character. In any event, it kept alive a seed-fire of social aspiration among masses whose wretchedness might otherwise have reduced them to utter degradation and impotence.

In 1836 there was organized a society which called itself the League of the Just and which had its headquarters for some time in Paris, but afterwards in London. In the beginning its membership was made up almost wholly of Germans and German-speaking Swiss. There were among them few in-

dustrial wage-workers of the modern type. The majority were skilled hand workers—tailors, shoe makers, watch makers, cabinet makers, and so forth—and with these were mingled a good many intellectuals whose ideas had set them at odds with existing institutions and who more or less understandingly sympathized with the working class. Many of them, and those the most prominent, were political refugees. At first a conspirative group of the Babeuvist type, the League of the Just developed rather into a propaganda society, which sought to prepare the way for a mass movement. While not able itself to throw off the veil of secrecy, it organized wherever possible workingmen's educational societies, which held open meetings for the discussion of social questions, and in which its own members naturally played the leading part. This kind of activity reacted upon the mother organization. Utopian creed gradually gave way to critical thinking. At the same time, through the adhesion of a considerable number of Scandinavian, Dutch, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, and other exiles and of some English workingmen, it acquired an international character.

Marx and Engels were in touch with this organization as early as 1844, though they did not join it till 1847. Early in this year it was becoming obvious that another revolutionary crisis was near at hand, and the leaders of the League of the Just felt that it was necessary for that body to define its ideas more clearly and to determine upon a course of action to be pursued when the open struggle should begin. For this purpose two congresses of the League were held in London, one in August, the other at the end of November. Engels was a delegate to both gatherings, Marx only to the second one.

At the August meeting the society was thoroughly reorganized on a more democratic basis, the propaganda of communistic ideas and the organization of the toiling masses for self-directed action were definitely accepted as its purpose, its international character was strongly emphasized, and the passing of its former utopian, sentimental, and conspirative

aspects was symbolized by the adoption of a new name—that of Communist League—and by the substitution for its old motto, “All men are brothers,” of the aggressive slogan, “Proletarians of all countries, Unite!” The November congress, at which English, French, German, Belgian, and Swiss branches were represented, devoted ten full days to a thorough discussion of principles and of the manner in which they were expressed in a manifesto which it had been resolved to put forth. The proposals of Marx and Engels were accepted and by a unanimous vote these two men were commissioned to put them into final shape for publication in the name of the League. Early in February, 1848, they fulfilled this mandate by delivering to the printer the original German text of the *Communist Manifesto*, which was almost immediately translated and published also in the French language.

* * *

In that same month the storm burst in Paris. The monarchy fell, and for a little while the Second Republic seemed to offer a possibility for the realization of the communist ideal of economic freedom and equality. But the upper and lower bourgeoisie joined forces and, with the support of the peasant class, made it clear that the rights of labor must count for nothing as against the interests of profit-making property. In June the proletariat met reaction with revolt, but their rising was drowned in blood. The mutual antagonisms of the propertied classes then broke loose and soon destroyed the republic. In its place, from 1852 till 1870, stood the Second Empire of Louis Napoleon, founded on the consent and promising to serve the interests of the masses of the people, but undemocratic in its very essence, and in practice increasingly dominated by financiers, militarists, priests, and police-spies.

In the year 1848 revolutionary disturbances had broken out also in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, and elsewhere, and were participated in by the most varied elements, some striving only for national independence, some

for more or less complete democratization of government, some looking beyond political to social-economic aims. The Communists fought bravely wherever they saw an opening. But within two years the forces of reaction had triumphed all along the line. On the surface, it looked as though nothing had been gained, and not until the sixties did the revolutionary elements even begin once more to raise their heads. One thing, however, had been gained—a fund of bitter but valuable experience.

Marx himself went back to Germany early in 1848, where he edited the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (New Rhenish Gazette) and threw all his energies into the struggle. When the fight was lost he returned to London, and here he dwelt from that time till his death in 1883. For a number of years he and his family suffered great hardship, his only regular income being the pound a week that Greeley's *New York Tribune* paid for his correspondence on European affairs. Most of his other writing was unremunerative. Engels was able to spare him a small sum from time to time. Later, when Engels became fairly wealthy, Marx's modest wants were amply cared for, and such was the relation between the two friends that this involved no sense of patronage or dependence.

Marx's activities and his writing henceforth fall into two classes—those which have to do directly with current events in the movement, and those which embody the systematic statement of his economic thought. Yet these are by no means unconnected. Marx the publicist was also Marx the theoretician; for him every question of organization or party tactics involved the application of scientific principles, while theoretical study was valuable only as it enabled the movement to understand the world and guide its own conduct.

Under the first head come three works of contemporary history—*Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, which deals with Germany in 1848; *The Class Struggle in France* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, which together cover the rise and fall of the Second Republic. To this group belong

also the statutes of the International Workingmen's Association and several addresses of its General Council, in the period from 1864 to 1873, among them those called forth by the Paris Commune of 1871, generally known under the title *The Civil War in France*.

The lull in revolutionary activity which prevailed for a dozen years after 1850 and again, at least in France, for a long time after 1871, gave Marx more leisure than he had hitherto been able to devote to strictly economic research and thought. In 1859 his studies in this field bore fruit in the publication of a volume entitled *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. This, however, was but the prelude to a greater work. In 1867 appeared the first volume of his monumental work *Capital*, dealing with "The Process of Capitalist Production." Poor health, as well as preoccupation with the affairs of the contemporary movement, hampered Marx in the further prosecution of this work. At his death in 1883 he left a huge mass of manuscript, in various stages of completion, which Engels, now sixty-three years of age, undertook to edit and publish. In 1893 and '94 respectively, he brought out the second and third volumes, which deal with "The Process of the Circulation of Capital" and "The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole." When Engels died in 1895 there remained a considerable manuscript, treating in a critical manner of the history of economic thought, which was subsequently edited by Karl Kautsky, and published under the title *Theories of Surplus Value*.

While performing this vast labor, Marx found time for a very heavy correspondence—the letters exchanged between him and Engels alone fill four large volumes—and for many lectures, besides writing numerous articles for German, French, and English periodicals. Some of these minor works are of inestimable value.

* * *

This introduction makes no pretence either to explain, even in broad outline, the body of economic and historico-philosophical thought known as Marxism, or even hastily to

sketch the development of that indomitable Socialist movement of which Marxism is the theoretical expression. All that has been attempted in the preceding pages is to point out the sources from which both the movement and the theory were derived and the circumstances under which they first took definite form, thus indicating their place in the whole social-political history of the modern world, and to tell so much of the life-story of the two great thinkers and leaders as is necessary to that end. It remains to say a few words which may help to the understanding of the three small Marxian classics contained in this volume, or to forestall certain possible misunderstandings.

The *Communist Manifesto*, whose origin has already been related, is a truly unique work. In form it is the campaign address of a special group issued in a special emergency. But the campaign has proved to be an age-long one, and the group has grown into a world-wide class movement. Moreover, while the writers of this proclamation of course could not foresee just how remote victory might be, nor just what vicissitudes might intervene, they knew well enough that 1848 was to be but one battle in a very prolonged conflict, and that the class struggle then beginning to take definite shape involved issues far more fundamental than had any revolution of the past. They knew also that, while historical events are acts of human will, yet what men will to do is determined by the conditions under which they act, and above all by their economic status and relations. In their view, therefore, all class struggles were explainable and predictable through study of the development of the means of production and exchange and the forms of property. Accordingly, when called upon to write a campaign document, they wrote not only as party leaders and agitators, but also as historians—and again, as historians not of the past only, but of the future as well. Through whole pages of the first section they give in the present tense a vivid account of historical processes which, even in England, the first home of modern industrial capitalism, had at that time hardly more

than well begun. Three-quarters of a century later we can find some error in the details of their prediction, but in its essentials it has been or is being fulfilled.

The reader will note that the *Communist Manifesto* consists of four sections. Of the first section and a large part of the second—to the exclusion, however, of the “immediate program” near its close—it may with some qualification be said that they are as live now as when they were first given to the world. The third and fourth sections deal in the main with movements and tendencies that no longer exist, at least in their old forms. If read without due recognition of this fact, they are in part unintelligible, in part misleading. To the serious student of social history, however, they have their value.

At this point we must take up the question of party names. Marx and his associates in 1848 called themselves Communists and spoke critically, in some cases scornfully, of various species of Socialism and Social-Democracy. To the casual reader this may be confusing. He may conclude that only those who now bear the name of Communists can rightly claim to be Marxians, and that the existing Socialist or Social-Democratic parties deserve all the reproaches Marx heaped upon those who were so called in 1848. This is by no means the case.

It is necessary to remember that words often change their meaning in the course of time. Especially is this true of the names of parties. Many examples might be given, but two must suffice. In the history of France and also of several Latin American republics, the advocates of a decentralized form of government have always been known as Federalists; but when we speak of Federalism in the United States, we mean the party which, during the first thirty years of our national existence, strove to exalt the powers of the central government. In France or in Mexico, Jefferson would have been called a Federalist; in this country it was Hamilton who bore that name. Again, the Jeffersonian opponents of centralization and upholders of “states’ rights” called them-

selves Republicans; but ever since 1856 we have had a Republican party proclaiming and acting upon the principle for which Hamilton stood in his time.

Just such a shifting of names has taken place in the history of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. Within twenty-five years after the *Communist Manifesto* was written, its authors were calling themselves Socialists, while the name of Communist was becoming attached to certain elements with whom they sharply disagreed—especially to those who dreamed of dissolving modern society into innumerable little “communes” or autonomous communities. The conflict between the tendencies represented by Marx and by Michael Bakunin, which culminated in a complete splitting of the International in 1872-73, made it necessary to distinguish more sharply. As the Socialist name might be claimed by either wing, the Marxians often preferred to be designated as Social-Democrats. In the course of time the followers of Bakunin—notable among them Peter Kropotkin—took to calling themselves Communist-Anarchists; moreover, toward the end of the century their movement rapidly declined; thenceforth Socialist and Social-Democratic remained as synonymous appellations, either of which might be applied to such men as Engels, Bebel, Liebknecht, Kautsky, Bernstein, Adler, Plekhanoff, Turati, Guesde, Lafargue, Vaillant, Jaurès, Vandervelde, Hyndman, Hardie. In some countries the party bore one of these names, in some the other; and there were variant titles, such as Labor party, Independent Labor party, Socialist Labor party, Social-Democratic Labor party, while at one period the word “Collectivist” was often used to designate the same ideas and tendencies.

Finally, the problems raised by the World War and the Russian Revolution brought on another great schism in the Socialist movement. By 1919 it was everywhere so definitely split into two distinct camps that it was no longer possible for both to use the same party name. On the one side stood the Bolshevik or majority wing of the old Russian Social Democracy, with Nikolai Lenin as its foremost leader, and

along with its larger or smaller groups in all other countries. These resumed the party designation which had been used by Marx and his associates in the 1848 period. They constitute the Communist parties of the various countries (that of the United States calls itself Workers' party) which are linked together in the Third or Communist International, with headquarters at Moscow. On the other hand, those who reject Bolshevist theory and tactics continue to call themselves Socialists or Social-Democrats, and their national organizations are affiliated with the Socialist and Labor International, whose headquarters are at Zurich. Each of these factions claims for itself and more or less emphatically denies to the other the right to be considered as the legitimate continuation of the movement which first took definite form with the issuance of the *Communist Manifesto*. The plan of this introduction does not permit a discussion here of these conflicting claims.

It has been said a little ways back that "with some qualification" the greater part of the *Communist Manifesto* may be considered as live today as it was in 1848.

One qualification has to do with the tone of the controversial parts. In our day many readers are scandalized at the vehemence with which the spokesmen of the Communist League hurled back the accusations of their adversaries. Let those who are shocked read what pious clergymen and learned professors in this country have written against Paine and Jefferson, against Jackson, against the Abolitionists, against the early advocates of Woman Suffrage—not to mention the utterances of many eminent "hundred-percent Americans" during and since the war—and they will get some idea of the flood of shameless slander which it was necessary for Marx and Engels to repel. Certainly they wrote with passion and sometimes exaggerated for the sake of emphasis. Rhetoric has its place, when there is honest feeling behind it. And after all, what made their most savage taunts rankle so deeply is the fact that in substance they were true.

The second and more important qualification is of a different sort. Of the *Communist Manifesto*, even more than of

most books, it is to be said: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." To be valuable, Marx's writings must be read in a Marxian spirit. That which makes Marxism one of the greatest products of the human intellect is its power of growth through self-criticism. Marx himself had scant patience with those who froze his living thoughts into frigid formulas, who treated a historical analysis as if it were meant to be a sacred code. Superficial or disingenuous opponents of Socialism cannot be prevented from speaking of the *Communist Manifesto* ■ "the Gospel according to Saint Karl" and by their own shallow interpretation making much of it appear false and absurd. The intellectually honest student, not to say the intelligent Socialist, in reading this little book, will say to himself: "This is the way ■ great thinker expressed his thought under such-and-such circumstances at such-and-such a stage in the development of the capitalist system and of the working-class movement. What can I draw from it to help me, not in flooring an opponent nor in 'putting over' some pet project, but in understanding the problems of the movement at this later stage of its development?" To one who uses it thus, the study of the *Communist Manifesto* is worth all the effort it may cost.

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The inclusion in this volume of Engels' elaborate introduction makes it superfluous to say much here about *Wage-Labor and Capital*, which, although it bears Marx's name, may be regarded as ■ joint work, in view of the very thorough editing it underwent at the hands of his surviving friend.

Marxian economic and social theory cannot be fully stated in the space of forty pages; but ■ nearly as that is possible, it is done in this remarkable work. It is more than a statement of economic theory, for it leads up to a conclusion whose importance as ■ rule of working-class tactics can hardly be overestimated. There is no better illustration of Marx's masterly use of dialectic than in his treatment of the paradox that the interests of capitalists and wage-workers as individuals, and likewise those of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat

as classes, are at the same time mutually dependent and diametrically opposed. It follows that the right policy for the working class is not one of opposition pure-and-simple, any more than it is one of collaboration pure-and-simple; that anything which hampers or distorts the normal growth of capitalism retards or perverts the progress of the working class as well; that the emancipation of labor can be achieved only when the full development of capitalism and of the class struggle within it shall have endowed the proletariat with the capacity to "grasp this sorry frame of things entire" and—not

"shatter it to bits and *then*

"Remold it nearer to the heart's desire"—

not just to destroy capitalism and afterward build something else in its place, but to bring it to an end by the positive process of transforming it into that desired something-else. It is at this point that Socialism parts company with Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism, as well as with agrarian and petty-bourgeois movements such as that of our Populists in the 1890's; and at this point, the Socialists hold, Neo-Communism has parted company with Marx.

To set the reader on the right track for understanding *Value, Price, and Profit*, which is much more difficult than the other two works here presented, it is necessary to impress upon him the fact that in writing it Marx was not trying to state his economic theory as a whole, but was dealing with one specific question—a very practical question, which he characteristically treated as one of theory. We have no record of the speeches of Weston, to which this is a reply. It is clear, however, that Weston upheld a thesis which is dear to the hearts of all enemies of the labor movement, but which, alas! is too often accepted in good faith by men of Weston's type—workingmen or honest friends of labor who have begun to think in the field of economics but have not thought far enough—the thesis, namely: That every increase in the workers' wages results in at least an equal increase in their cost of living, and that accordingly it is a waste of

energy for them to struggle for higher wages. If this were true, trade unionism would be a tragic mistake. Marx took up the task of showing that it is not true. Such is the origin of this rather abstruse, but yet fascinating work, which lay in manuscript till some years after its author's death, and was then printed with but slight editing by his daughter Eleanor and her husband Edward Aveling.

In addition to the three works printed in full in this volume there are included at the end small portions of three other books, each of which standing by itself has a certain completeness. First comes the short passage in the preface to Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* in which the materialistic conception of history is tersely summarized. The second is a chapter on "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" which occurs near the end of the first volume of *Capital*. Finally, we include the first page or two of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in which Marx contrasts the proletarian revolution—"the revolution of the nineteenth century," as he too sanguinely calls it—with all the revolutions of the past.

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This introduction has grown far beyond the space originally allotted to it. It may be further extended only so far as is needful to give, not properly speaking a bibliography, but a few suggestions to those who may wish to make a somewhat thorough study of Socialism. Only books available in English are mentioned.

Either Morris Hillquit's *Socialism in Theory and Practice* (1909) or Harry W. Laidler's *Socialism in Thought and Action* (1920) gives a good general treatment. A. S. Sachs' *Basic Principles of Scientific Socialism* (1923) lays more stress than either of these on the theoretical aspects of the subject.

For a narrative account of the Socialist movement, the most convenient source is Thomas Kirkup's *History of Socialism*, which was first published in 1892, but was edited and brought down to date by Edward R. Pease in 1913. It hardly gives

sufficient attention to the struggle on the industrial field. This lack may be made up by reading either C. M. Lloyd's *Trade Unionism* (1919) or *The World of Labor* (1919), by G. D. H. Cole.

To get back to the classics—Engels' *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* ought to prove readable and instructive to anyone who has fairly well mastered the *Communist Manifesto* or *Wage-Labor and Capital*. Plekhanoff's *Anarchism and Socialism* is a small and very valuable book by one of the immediate followers of Marx and Engels, which has an importance far beyond what is suggested by its title.

Of all the attempts to abridge and popularize *Capital*, only one seems to the present editor more than moderately successful. This one is Karl Kautsky's *Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx*, first published in German in 1893, of which a good English translation came out in 1925. In the same year, by the way, appeared a translation of Kautsky's more recent work, *Die Proletarische Revolution* (1922), under the not quite satisfactory title *The Labour Revolution*.

As for *Capital* itself, even the first volume alone is not only a big book, but a difficult one. If the reader is in earnest, however, he will not find the difficulties insuperable. He who would undertake it may be advised to read first, not only the popularization by Kautsky mentioned just above, but also a very little book by A. D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol College at Oxford, entitled *Karl Marx's Capital: An Introductory Essay*, published in 1925. Lindsay understands the Marxian thought-method as have very few English or American writers, and he has an exceptional faculty for making it clear to the unlearned.

One closing word—let no one suppose that he can gain a real knowledge of Socialism as a living movement from the study of books alone. To vitalize what he gets from such study, he should observe the movement itself by following its periodicals and propaganda literature and if possible by attending Socialist mass meetings and lectures.