

**THE COMMUNIST  
MANIFESTO** *and Other Writings*  
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels



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CLASSICS**

Introduction and Notes by Martin Puchner

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# From the Pages of The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings

A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of Communism.

(from *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, page 5)

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

(from *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, page 7)

Society as a whole is splitting up more and more into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

(from *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, page 8)

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, railway 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?

(from *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, page 12)

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.

(from *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, page 14)

The theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.

(from *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, page 21)

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.

(from *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, page 41)

WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

(from *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, page 41)

Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, if it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.

(from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, page 63)

The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future.

(from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, page 66)

In the first French Revolution the rule of the *Constitutionalists* is followed by the rule of the *Girondists* and the rule of the *Girondists* by the rule of the *Jacobins*. Each of these parties relies on the more progressive party for support. As soon as it has brought the revolution far enough to be unable to follow it further, still less to go ahead of it, it is thrust aside by the bolder ally that stands behind and sent to the guillotine. The revolution thus moves along an ascending line.

(from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, page 87)

By now stigmatizing as “*socialistic*” what it had previously extolled as “*liberal*,” the bourgeoisie confesses that its own interests dictate that it should be delivered from the danger of its *own rule*.

(from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, page 108)

This extra-parliamentary bourgeoisie, which had already rebelled against the purely parliamentary and literary struggle for the rule of its own class and betrayed the leaders of this struggle, now dares after the event to indict the proletariat for not having risen in a bloody struggle, a life-and-death struggle on its behalf!

(from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, page 143)

If ever an event has, well in advance of its coming, cast its shadow before, it was Bonaparte's coup d'état.

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(from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, pages 146-147)

The revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still journeying through purgatory. It does its work methodically.

(from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, page 156)

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Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

*With an Introduction and Notes  
by Martin Puchner*

George Stade  
Consulting Editorial Director



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## *Karl Marx*

Philosopher, historian, economist, social scientist, and revolutionary, Karl Marx was born on May 5, 1818, in Trier, Prussia (now Germany). His family were middle-class Jews who had converted to Lutheranism; Karl's father expected his son, who was gifted in many subjects, to follow in his footsteps and become a lawyer. But when his father sent Karl to study law in Bonn, the young man preferred to carouse, smoke, compose poetry, and fall in love. After becoming engaged to Jenny von Westphalen, Marx transferred to the law faculty of the University of Berlin, though the degree he eventually earned was a doctorate in philosophy.

Marx turned to journalism to earn his living. The fiery polemicist edited and wrote for the liberal newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung*; his deeply critical articles provoked the ire of the Prussian government, which dissolved the paper in 1843. Karl and Jenny then married and moved to Paris. Marx studied political economy and French socialism that year and, as a result, became a communist, though he was still working out the precise tenets of that political philosophy. His legendary intellect roused much support, but his revolutionary writings resulted in his expulsion by the French government, later by the Belgian government, and eventually by Prussia, his native country. England was the last outpost for Marx, and he lived there, working tirelessly on behalf of workers, until the end of his life.

Despite the fact that he suffered periods of poor health and poverty, Marx created an extremely influential body of thought. He mastered many foreign languages and spent years in the library learning philosophy, history, and economics. His writings helped change the way the world views the relationship between labor and capital, and his works, foremost among them *The Communist Manifesto* and *Capital*, are widely read to this day. Karl Marx died in London on March 14, 1883.

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## *Friedrich Engels*

Remembered as Karl Marx's collaborator and the co-founder of communism, Friedrich Engels was born on November 28, 1820, in Barmen, Prussia (now Wuppertal, Germany). His father, a wealthy textile manufacturer, groomed his son for a career in the family trade. Young Friedrich fulfilled this obligation, but not without nurturing his own intellectual and political interests. He spent many years at the family's Manchester factory, where he observed capitalism firsthand, observations that no doubt affected his important work *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.

The family business allowed Engels to support the impoverished Marx family. Together, Engels and Marx organized revolutionary groups of workers in France, Germany, and Belgium. They also produced the famous *The Communist Manifesto* and developed their ideas on historical materialism in *The German Ideology*. Many underestimate Engels's contributions to the partnership, but works like his *Anti-Duhring* (a defense of Marx), and others, enjoyed great popularity in their time, and it was only through Engels's dedicated labor that Marx's unfinished works, including the last two volumes of *Capital*, were published. Friedrich Engels died on August 5, 1895, in London.

- 1818 Karl Marx is born on May 5 to Heinrich and Henriette Marx in Trier, Prussia (now Germany). His father, a lawyer who had converted from Judaism to Lutheranism in order to be allowed to practice his profession in the Prussian Empire, expects Karl to become an attorney as well.
- 1820 Friedrich Engels is born on November 28 in Barmen, Prussia (now Wuppertal, Germany), to a wealthy textile manufacturer with interests in both Barmen and Manchester, England. Friedrich's father grooms him from an early age to join the family business.
- 1835 Marx enters Bonn University as a law student. To his father's dismay, the young man is more interested in writing poetry, falling in love, and drinking and smoking late into the night with his friends.
- 1836 During the summer, Marx becomes engaged to Jenny von Westphalen, a beautiful girl from a respected Trier family. In October, Marx transfers to Berlin University to study first law, then philosophy; he joins the Young Hegelian Doctors' Club.
- 1837 Engels leaves school to join the family textile business.
- 1838 Engels goes to Bremen for business training; he also writes for the press.
- 1841 Marx is awarded his doctorate. Engels returns home to Barmen but soon enlists in the military for a one-year term and goes to Berlin, where he attends lectures in his free time and joins the Young Hegelians.
- 1842 Marx begins contributing to the liberal newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung*, published in Cologne. His first article carries the headline "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction." In October, Marx is named editor of the newspaper. Engels contributes to the paper on a number of political and social issues. Engels travels to Manchester, England, to work in the family's factory there. Marx and Engels meet for the first time in November, in the *Rheinische Zeitung* office in Cologne.
- 1843 Because of Marx's radical critiques of its policies, the Prussian government orders the closing of *Rheinische Zeitung*. Marx and Jenny marry and move to Paris.
- 1844 Marx and Jenny's first child, Jenny, is born. Engels contributes two articles to the *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher (German-French Yearbook)*, which Marx is editing. Engels visits Marx in Paris in September; they begin their first joint work, *Die Heilige Familie (The Holy Family)*, a critique of the Young Hegelians.
- Under pressure from Prussia, the French government ousts Marx for his revolutionary activities. Marx moves to Brussels. In the spring, he writes *Theses on Feuerbach*. Engels soon joins him there, and the two men work on *The German Ideology*, which contains their

- 1845 ideas on historical materialism. Engels publishes *Lage der Arbeitenden Klasse in England* (*The Condition of the Working Class in England*). Marx and Engels go to England to study new English works on economics. In London, they meet with the leaders of the Chartists. Marx and Jenny's second daughter, Laura, is born.
- 1847 Karl and Jenny Marx's son Edgar is born. Marx and Engels accept a proposal from the London committee of the League of the Just to help it reorganize and write its new agenda; later in the year the organization changes its name to the Communist League. Marx and Engels help found a German Workers' Society in Brussels; most members are working class German refugees. Marx publishes *Misère de la Philosophie* (*The Poverty of Philosophy*), which attacks the socialist ideas of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon.
- 1848 *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (*The Communist Manifesto*) is published, and Marx is expelled from Belgium. Revolutions occur throughout Europe. Marx and Engels return to Cologne and in June start a daily newspaper, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.
- 1849 After a counter-revolution in Prussia, Marx and Engels, as editors of *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, are tried for insulting the authorities; a jury finds them not guilty, but soon afterward the government orders Marx to leave the country. He goes to Paris but is soon expelled by the authorities. He seeks asylum in London, where his fourth child, Heinrich, is born in November. Engels arrives in London a few days later. Marx spends many hours in the library of the British Museum, researching and writing articles and essays.
- 1850 Marx's *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich, 1848 bis 1850* (*The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850*) is published. The infant Heinrich Marx dies. Engels takes a job in the family firm in Manchester and begins financially supporting Marx.
- 1851 Franziska Marx, a daughter, is born to Karl and Jenny Marx.
- 1852 Franziska Marx dies. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is published in New York.
- 1855 Marx and Jenny's daughter Eleanor is born in January; in April, their son Edgar dies.
- 1857 Marx begins work on his *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* (*Fundamentals of a Critique of Political Economy*), a series of notebooks aimed at pulling together all his theoretical economic ideas; they will not be published until the next century.
- 1859 Marx's *Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* (*Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*) is published.
- 1864 The International Workingmen's Association (the First International) is founded in London. Marx is elected a member of its Provisional Committee and drafts both the Provisional Rules and the Inaugural Address.
- 1867 The first volume of *Das Kapital* (*Capital*) is published. Engels publishes a brief biography of Marx.

- 1869 Engels sells his partnership in the family business and retires. Marx learns Russian in order to study Russian economic writings.
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- 1870 Marx is invited to become corresponding secretary of the General Council for Russia, part of the First International. Engels moves from Manchester to London; he is elected to the General Council of the First International and made corresponding secretary for Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Denmark.
- 1871 Marx writes and publishes *The Civil War in France*.
- 1872 Marx and Engels participate in the London Congress of the First International.
- 1877 Engels begins serializing *Anti-Diihring*, a response to the ideas of Eugen Duhring, a critic of Marx; it will be published in book form the following year, in Leipzig. Marx corresponds with radicals throughout the United States and Europe.
- 1881 Marx's wife, Jenny, dies, leaving him devastated.
- 1883 Marx's eldest daughter, Jenny, dies in January. Marx dies in his armchair in London on March 14. Although only eleven people attend Marx's funeral in Highgate Cemetery, Engels's eulogy will prove true: "In every single field which Marx investigated ... he made independent discoveries.... His name will endure through the ages, and so also will his work!"
- 1884 Engels publishes a monograph, *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats (The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State)*. Throughout the remaining years of his life, Engels will edit the voluminous body of unpublished work Marx left behind at his death, including volumes two and three of *Capital*, published in 1885 and 1894, respectively.
- 1888 Engels publishes *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*.
- 1889 Engels participates in the founding of the Second International.
- 1895 Engels dies in London on August 5, 1895.

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# Introduction

Written within less than five years of each other, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) are the bookends to the most revolutionary period of the nineteenth century. With the exception of Great Britain, most countries in western and central Europe experienced some kind of revolutionary upheaval around the year 1848. (Two generations earlier, the French Revolution had broken the old aristocratic order in France, but the effects of that revolution had been contained by the restoration of the monarchy in 1814.) Now, Europe's disenfranchised classes—the peasants, parts of the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat—once more articulated their demands through strikes, mass demonstrations, and acts of resistance. This was the context in which Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels composed the *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*, mostly known as *The Communist Manifesto*) in 1847. It was published in London in February 1848, only weeks before the outbreak of the first phase of the 1848 revolution in France, the so-called February Revolution. The primary purpose of the *Manifesto* was to announce and publicize that the communists had given up on the conspiratorial activities of the past and were now entering the scene of politics through an open declaration of principle. The preamble states this goal unequivocally: “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” (p. 5). Instead of being confined to secret societies and intrigues, communism had acquired a public face.

Even though the publication of the *Manifesto* had no material impact on France's February Revolution, its enthusiastic tone makes it clear that it was written in anticipation of a social revolution that it perceived to be imminent. The two authors knew that such a revolution would encounter opposition from those intent on preserving the status quo, but they had seen the proletariat grow stronger and more self-confident by the day and therefore hoped that once united, it would be capable of breaking its chains. The famous first sentence speaks of communism as a “specter” that is haunting Europe. But the *Manifesto* is certain that communism is about to cease being a mere specter and start becoming the real thing.

If the *Manifesto* is overly confident with regard to the incipient revolution, *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte* (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*) is the analysis of its failure. Following his earlier call for action, Marx issued a call for analysis. It was an analysis born out of disappointment. The text was commissioned by a German publisher in New York City asking Marx to explain what went wrong in France, why the revolution had, within the course of a few years, gradually lost ground only to be entirely undone by the coup d'état of Louis Bonaparte, a figure who had hitherto attracted only ridicule. Marx did not content himself with poking fun at Louis Bonaparte's hapless policies and inarticulate pronouncements. Rather, he sought to explain the root causes for the initial success and the eventual failure of the revolution. The result is a brilliant example of social analysis, bringing into relation the values and interests of different groups and classes, their policies, shifting alliances, mistakes, and lies. While the *Manifesto* is a text for times of revolutionary upheaval, the *Eighteenth Brumaire* is a text for times of reaction.

The *Manifesto* and the *Eighteenth Brumaire* were thus intimately tied to one event, the Revolution

of 1848. At the same time, they both radiated far beyond this original context. The *Manifesto*, particular, became an international success story, one of the texts that influenced world history more directly and lastingly than most. Few texts have been translated into more languages and been printed in more editions, few have inspired more fear and hope than this one, whose significance puts it on par with foundational texts such as the Bible and the Koran. The *Manifesto* was read, translated, adopted, transformed, updated, and critiqued by politicians and activists, by scholars and organizers around the world. But the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, too, has left its mark. When revolutionary hopes inspired by texts modeled on the *Manifesto* waned, disappointed activists turned to this latter work for guidance and inspiration, and then modeled their own analyses of failed revolutions on the failure of the revolution of 1848.

Despite the undeniable influence and success of both texts, the question remains how we should read them today, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, and after the fall of most socialist regimes in 1989. It has been tempting to assume that with the fall of socialism in the late twentieth century, the writer who inspired socialism has fallen as well. The two texts written around 1848 thus seem to be proven wrong by the events that took place 141 years later. Even though such a historical conclusion is ultimately misguided, the two texts collected here are nevertheless intertwined with the history of socialism in the twentieth century. Indeed, the *Manifesto*'s influence on the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and the establishment of a socialist society in the Soviet Union and elsewhere helped this text acquire its status of world historical importance, even though it said little about the transition from a socialist society to a truly communist one, in which private property, and the state would have withered away. And it was in the Soviet Union that the *Manifesto* was studied most systematically, printed and reprinted, and integrated into the official discipline called Marxism-Leninism. But while the Bolshevik Revolution helped the *Manifesto* gain its significance, it also limited the ways in which it was read and interpreted. Neither the *Manifesto* nor the *Eighteenth Brumaire* were written to justify the particular form of social, economic, or political organization established in the Soviet Union, nor indeed any other type of state. For this reason, the fact that history has swept away these regimes opens these texts, and all of Marx's writings, to new readings—readings that can help in our understanding of our own moment in history.

Perhaps the *Manifesto* is most relevant to us today in terms of what we call globalization. Some of Marx's most passionate paragraphs describe what he identified, more than 150 years ago, as a process by which national independence was giving way to interdependence, an internationalism brought about by the immense unleashing of productive forces through capitalism. It is important to recognize here that Marx was not simply hostile to capitalism and its globalizing effects. Indeed, he credits the bourgeoisie, the capitalist class as such, with an immensely revolutionary role in history, one that did away with older feudal relations. And just as bourgeois capitalism destroyed feudalism, so it destroyed national autonomy and created instead a world market characterized by an increasingly frenzied exchange of natural resources, products, and populations. Here is one of the most gripping paragraphs of the *Manifesto*:

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 Reactionists, 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 ra-

material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production 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 (pp. 10-11)

At a time such as the present, when some groups agitating against global capitalism call for a return to older, more local forms of living, it is worth remembering the example of Marx, who attacked the injustices created by the world market by calling not for an end to globalization but rather for its transformation.

In reaction to a brutal and destructive global capitalism, which left whole populations impoverished, land devastated, and once-flourishing ecologies destroyed, Marx demanded a new internationalism that would not try to turn back the wheel of history but rather seize it and steer it in a new and better direction. Marx's answer, the creation of a socialist international organization that would not only coordinate the different national socialist parties but also become the unified organ of the international proletariat, proved in the end ineffective. The First International soon gave way to the so-called Second International, which lasted until World War I, after which point the Third International was born; it lasted until World War II. During the Cold War, the internationalist rhetoric of socialism was replaced by the creation of the Cominform (the Communist Information Bureau established in 1947 to promote international communist solidarity, it became a Soviet propaganda mechanism), though Leon Trotsky had founded an alternative Fourth International, independent from Moscow, in the 1930s. The era of the Internationals has now ended. What still remains is the task of responding to the increasing interdependence of nations with a new internationalism, of addressing everything from ecological crises and natural catastrophes to humanitarian crises in a responsible, and therefore international, manner. What we can learn from Marx today is that we need not react to the violence of globalization with a call for a return to a state before globalization. We might instead call for a new and different form of globalization, an internationalism driven not by the putatively natural laws of the market but by the responsible actions of humans.

The internationalism of the *Manifesto* was also due to Marx's own experience, his life of exile. After studying philosophy and writing a dissertation on pre-Socratic philosophy, Marx became increasingly politicized and involved with a radical newspaper called *Rheinische Zeitung*, based in Cologne. His articles attracted the attention of the Prussian police, which closed down the newspaper and forced Marx to flee to Paris in 1843. Soon he was expelled from Paris as well, and after some time spent in Brussels, he returned to Paris and then to Germany during the revolutionary upheavals around 1848. In 1849, with the help of Friedrich Engels, he finally immigrated to London, where he remained until the end of his life. Marx's life was thus spent moving among different languages and cultures. Perhaps through the experience of exile, Marx came to recognize the peculiar force of globalization that was transforming the world. However, rather than simply fantasizing about a return to his native land, he imagined a new international world in which national boundaries would become less significant.

Globalization was such a central concern for Marx and Engels that it shaped the very writing of the

*Manifesto*. The paragraph celebrating bourgeois globalization cited above culminates in the phrase “world literature”: “National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature.” At the time when Marx and Engels wrote the *Manifesto*, the notion that there existed something called “world literature” was relatively new. The term had been coined a few decades earlier by the German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who wanted to expand the canon of literature to include lesser-known literatures produced either on the periphery of Europe or outside Europe. Goethe recognized that the world was becoming more interdependent not only in material matters but also with respect to literature. Marx and Engels took this notion of “world literature” and adopted it to their own purpose. Their own *Manifesto* was to become world literature too. More than any other text, it was written for a globalized world and more than any other text it addressed itself not to a particular, local, or national readership, but to a worldwide one. Its final, resounding slogan was: “Working men of all countries unite!” (p. 41).

How can a text become world literature? The key, Marx and Engels recognized, was translation. The preamble of the *Manifesto* announced that “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” (p. 5). Marx and Engels do not even mention that the *Manifesto* was originally written in German, so concerned are they that it be published, simultaneously, in the six languages listed. This demand certainly registers their global aspirations and it also indicates how little they were concerned with the notion of an original language. The only thing that counts is translation, publication, and distribution.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the sentence quoted above mentions as authors not Marx and Engels, but “Communists of various nationalities” who have putatively “sketched” the *Manifesto*. The *Manifesto* presents itself as a text written by many authors, coming from many countries and speaking many languages, a text that therefore seeks to be published in as many countries and languages.

The claim that the *Manifesto* had been written by an international collective of authors and published in six languages registers this text’s desire to be world literature, but it does not describe the actual history of its composition and publication. True, the Communist League commissioned Marx and Engels to collaborate on a foundational text, and this function certainly influenced the two authors: They were writing not for themselves, but on behalf of a group, a party. Nevertheless, Marx and Engels alone wrote the actual text. Engels had composed a short first draft in the form of a credo consisting of questions and answers. The final text of the *Manifesto* still bears traces for this earlier draft, especially in part II, which begins with the question “In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?” (p. 20), which is followed by the correct answer: “The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.” In the process of writing his credo, however, Engels himself began to have doubts about this form. In February 1847, he therefore writes to Marx: “Think a little about the confession of faith. I believe that the best thing is to do away with the catechism form and give the thing the title: Communist *Manifesto*. We have to bring in a certain amount of history, and the present form does not lend itself to this very well. I take with me from Paris what I have written; it is a simple narrative, but miserably composed, in an awful hurry.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, Engels recognized that the question and answer form, reminiscent of a catechism, may be good at distinguishing correct claims about communism from false ones, but not synthesizing the entire history of capitalism into a compelling narrative. One need only compare the passages rooted in the credo with the energy, the forward drive, the suspenseful account of class

struggles presented in other parts of this text to appreciate how fundamental the change from credo manifesto really was. Engels later credited Marx with having written most of the final text of the *Manifesto*. However, the credit for having recognized the inefficiency of the credo form belongs to Engels.

Just as the claim about collective authorship was exaggerated, so was the project of the *Manifesto* simultaneous publication in six languages. The first publication was in German, first as a pamphlet and then in serialized form in a German-language newspaper called *Deutsch-Londoner Zeitung*. Translations into other languages happened only slowly, however, and intermittently. The only other language in which the *Manifesto* appeared in 1848 was Swedish. It took two years for the first English translation to appear; the next complete translation, into Russian, did not appear until 1869, followed by one into Serbian one year later and by the first complete French edition in 1872. For a Danish edition, also promised in the preamble, one had to wait until 1885, for the Italian one until 1890, and the Flemish one until 1892. But if the first decades of the *Manifesto* were less than successful, things changed in the last decade of the nineteenth century, when there was a steep increase in the number of editions and translations. In the early twentieth century, the number of editions increased exponentially, and after the Russian Revolution of 1917, which seemingly validated the *Manifesto*'s predictions and demands, the *Manifesto* was catapulted into world history. Now it also enjoyed increasing distribution outside Europe, where it contributed to the freedom struggles of colonized peoples around the globe. The *Manifesto*'s worldwide success thus occurred only after a significant delay of many decades, but when it finally occurred, it did so with an overwhelming force that no one, including its authors, would have dared to predict. One lesson to be learned from this publication history is that texts should not be dismissed as ineffective just because they fail to leave their mark immediately after their composition. Some texts, such as the *Manifesto*, go underground and work in secret, only to reappear when no one would have expected it. Just as it was premature to declare the *Manifesto* dead after the failure of the Revolutions of 1848, it may be premature to declare it dead after the collapse of communism in 1989.

The history of the *Manifesto* in the nineteenth century is registered in the different prefaces written by Marx and Engels, and, after Marx's death, by Engels alone. In the prefaces, the authors count and list eagerly all attempted and successful editions and translations of their text and report, with increasing pride, its increasing visibility and influence. While willing to admit to certain omissions and mistakes, however, they held onto their basic theses, and given the *Manifesto*'s belated success in the twentieth century, we can say that they were right to leave the text as it was even when history seemed to bypass it during its first few decades.

What were the features that enabled the *Manifesto* to survive its first bleak period and to thrive many decades after its composition? The first was undoubtedly Marx's gift as a writer. The *Manifesto* presents a suspenseful narrative that is structured around imaginary scenes in which different protagonists meet and combat one another. In the opening pages, communism makes a first appearance as a specter in a formulation that surely belongs to one of the most often quoted lines in literature: "A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of Communism" (p. 5). Indeed, Marx often quoted from the history of drama, in particular from Shakespeare, thus enriching his text and interweaving it with the history of literature.<sup>4</sup> After the haunted opening scene, Marx abruptly switches his mode from theater to history, but this history, too, he presents as a high-stakes drama leading up to a single showdown. Marx manages to summarize thousands of years of political and

social history by reducing it to a history of class struggle that gets increasingly fierce but also increasingly simple. While earlier societies were organized in hierarchies determined by inherited privileges, industrial societies increasingly do away with class distinctions based on guilds, land gentry, and feudal overlords. What remains are only two main classes, the laboring poor—the proletariat—who own nothing but their own labor power, which they are forced to sell for increasingly small sums to the second class, the bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie, for Marx, is the capitalist class—such, the class that is able, through its possession of the means of production, to extract a profit from the labor performed by the proletariat. Nevertheless, for much of the history outlined by Marx, the bourgeoisie is the main protagonist, a veritable hero who manages to beat into submission all the other classes, including the aristocracy, the clergy, and the landowners, all those who cling to their inherited privileges and powers. They are struck down one by one by the bourgeoisie, which turns the world upside down and becomes its true ruler.

Then, however, there is a second shift, an unexpected turn in the plot. In order to accomplish its breathtaking feats, the bourgeoisie has created a helper—namely, the proletariat. At first nothing but a weak lackey, this creature now begins to threaten its creator and can no longer be controlled. It is at this point that the *Manifesto* stops its historical account. We have arrived in the present. The proletariat is still in chains but is flexing its muscles. It has grown strong and already outnumbers the bourgeoisie, which realizes that it must now control a waking giant. Having read about the fate of the aristocracy at the hands of the bourgeoisie, we know what will happen next. The proletariat will break its chains: It will break the brutal rule of the bourgeoisie and deal with its oppressor exactly the way the bourgeoisie had dealt with its own. History thus prefigures the future.

This future, however, will not come about by itself. If the proletariat is going to win this final and all-encompassing battle, it needs to unite. To be sure, the bourgeoisie is divided, namely into different nation states that fight against one another indirectly in the colonies and directly in Europe. But one force unites the bourgeoisie, and that is capitalism. No matter how many battles and wars are fought among bourgeois countries, capitalism will always form a common front against the proletariat on whose exploitation the bourgeois way of life is premised. Capitalism, however, unites not only the bourgeoisie but also the proletariat, which finds itself in the same exploited position everywhere. The unification, however, is merely negative. The whole point of communism and of the *Manifesto* is to turn this negative unity into a positive one, to endow the proletariat with a clear knowledge of the mechanism of its exploitation. To bring about this knowledge, the condition for unification, the *Manifesto* must do more than simply tell the history of different classes and the battles among them. It must convince the proletariat that it forms but one single class, a class furthermore that will fulfill the history of class struggles.

When we read the *Manifesto* today, we should also read it as a compelling and original model of political writing. Marx and Engels effectively invented a new form of political articulation, a mixture of grand history and passionate prose. The *Manifesto* includes practical suggestions, a course of action for communists in the immediate future. But if that were all it did, we would not be reading this text today. It has remained a vital document because it connected particular demands and problems to a larger vision; it risked going beyond the present, reaching back into the distant past in order to create a trajectory into the future. Marx and Engels were thus both shrewd and bold; they created a new form that managed to combine tactical advice and a grand vision for the future.

This new form of writing was used as a model by some of the twentieth century's most influential

writers, from Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky to Franz Fanon. Inspired by Marx, political activists and theorists forged new and timely modes of writing. But not only in politics did the *Manifesto* make itself felt. Artists, too, recognized the new and compelling mode of writing that characterized the *Manifesto* and therefore began to import this mode into the sphere of art. Beginning with the late nineteenth century, more and more artistic programs, foundational documents of artistic schools, and texts demanding a new fusion of art and politics were written and labeled “manifesto.” The history of twentieth-century art is marked by countless “isms,” from futurism and dadaism to surrealism and abstractionism, and they came into existence through different forms of art manifestos.<sup>5</sup> A broad view of twentieth-century art reveals different periods of manifesto writing, which coincide with periods of revolutionary activity, first in the late 1910s and early 1920s and then again in the late 1960s. Even in recent history, manifestos have shaped the production of art; one example is the “Dogma 95” manifesto (1995), which inspired the production of dozens of films, some major international successes, according to the doctrine set out in its pages. Art manifestos and political manifestos are thus still being written today, even though we are clearly experiencing a moment in history when new forms of political and artistic articulation, new forms of manifestos, need to be invented. For such reinvention, however, we can return to Marx and Engels’s original *Manifesto* in order to experience its original force.

The *Manifesto* also distinguished itself from its competitors through the rigor of Marx’s analysis. While earlier socialist literature, which Marx and Engels critique in the third part of their *Manifesto*, were based on fond hopes and utopian ideals, Marx and Engels sought to identify the forces that shaped history in order to calculate the best way to intervene in them. Only real knowledge of historical processes would allow communism to avoid wasting its energy with premature or belated action. The superiority of Marx’s method of analysis, however, made itself felt with greatest clarity not in the optimistic *Manifesto*, but in the text devoted to the painful work of analyzing what went wrong with the Revolution of 1848: the *Eighteenth Brumaire*. While we should turn to the *Manifesto* to learn impassioned political rhetoric, we can learn from the *Eighteenth Brumaire* Marx’s rigorous, meticulous, and compelling mode of political analysis.

The *Eighteenth Brumaire* is much more difficult to read than the *Manifesto*. While the *Manifesto* is wide-ranging in its scope, presenting history as a battle among a handful of protagonists, the *Eighteenth Brumaire* offers an in-depth analysis of a period spanning less than three years. It presumes a basic knowledge of this period, from France’s February Revolution in 1848 to the coup d’état of Louis Bonaparte in 1851. The sheer number of dates and names Marx refers to are confusing, but they gradually become intelligible as Marx connects them to form a comprehensible narrative and integrates them into his explanatory framework. What makes this wealth of detail even more confusing is that Marx uses as a point of comparison the events of the French Revolution (1789-1799) and its aftermath. We thus have to deal with two sets of names, two sets of dates, two sets of events that are constantly being related to one another.

But the extra effort required is worth it. For Marx’s decision to use the French Revolution as a foil for the Revolution of 1848 becomes a point of departure for a whole theory of revolution. The *Eighteenth Brumaire* is a study in repetition, beginning with its title, which derives from the calendar instituted by the French Revolution. Marx goes further and claims that all revolutions have turned back, all have derived their models from the past. This may seem to be a surprising claim, since we now think of revolutions in the opposite way, namely as breaks with the past, as attempts to create

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