

## **Communist Manifesto (1848)**

*The Communist Manifesto* is an 1848 political pamphlet by German philosophers and political activists Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. It was published in conjunction with the 1848 revolutions in a number of European countries. In the manifesto Marx and Engels provide a critique of capitalism and bourgeois society, not a description of possible future life after class struggle and the liberation of the proletariat. The bourgeois are capitalists, businessmen, bankers, and their wealthy supporters that control industry and government. The proletarians are ordinary people who work for a living and are employed by the bourgeois. Marx and Engels believed the history of all societies up until that point was the story of conflict between the rich ruling class and everyone else. They thought these conflicts would end once communism was established and brought total economic and social equality.

### **Questions**

1. What are Marx and Engel's views of capitalism?
2. Which ideas presented here do you agree with? Explain.
3. Which ideas presented here do you disagree with? Explain.
4. In your opinion, what is the historical impact of the ideas contained in the Communist Manifesto?
  1. A specter [monster] is haunting Europe, the specter of Communism.
  2. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise (drive out) this specter; Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.
  3. Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as communistic by its opponents in power?
  4. The history of all hitherto [already] existing society is the history of class struggles [battles between social groups]. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight.
  5. A fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.
  6. The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces [factories] than have all preceding generations together.
  7. Modern bourgeois society is like the sorcerer [magician], who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world [hell] whom he has called up by his spells.
  8. The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself. It has called into existence the men who are to wield these weapons, the modern working-class, the proletarians.
  9. Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class.
  10. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries unite!