

10-1-1946

The Communist Manifesto

Paul M. Bretscher

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bretscher, Paul M. (1946) "The Communist Manifesto," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 17 , Article 59.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol17/iss1/59>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

for saying that the Canaanites ever settled in Africa, except possibly the Phoenicians who settled Carthage and were conquered by the Romans.

Only Shem and Japheth are mentioned in Noah's blessing; and it came to them as a reward for the high esteem in which they held their father as shown by their deed of covering their father's shame without permitting themselves to look upon it. They received the promise of the Fourth Commandment. Ham was careless in this matter, and he was not included in the blessing. But this does not justify the position that Ham was cursed. Neither Ham nor his three older sons were cursed. They and their descendants also joined the nations that forsook the true God. But they are comforted, too, by the promise of the Psalmist: "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God" (Ps. 68:31).

We must conclude, then, that no one is justified in teaching that the curse upon Canaan is a curse upon Ham and his African descendants, or that "history has marked the African races as the descendants of Canaan" (*On Sandals of Peace*, page 7).

High Point, N. C.

The Communist Manifesto*

By PAUL M. BRETSCHER

In June of this year, Jacques Duclos, secretary of the Communist party of France, wrote the following:

In a general fashion, the war with which the world has just been afflicted has led to profound disturbances in our ancient Europe. The ruling classes which appeared in the past as highly—not to say exclusively—representative of national feeling presented the sad spectacle of a group defending their selfish class interests and betraying, in the main, the cause of their country.

On the other hand, it was in the working class that those patriotic and progressive traditions were found which, at the great moments of history, are always expressed by the rising class in society.

In this way, the brilliant prediction of Marx, in his immortal "*Communist Manifesto*" of 1848, was proved to be true. After

* This essay was read and discussed in a small study group. It is here submitted in the hope that, in view of present-day trends and debates, our readers will welcome the historical material it contains.—Ed.

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

743

pointing out that the proletarians, who possessed nothing, had no country—excluded as they were from the community of the nation by the ruling classes—he attributed to them the historic mission of “becoming a class of national leadership and becoming themselves the nation.” (Italics my own.)

For Communists *The Communist Manifesto*, joint product of Karl Marx (1818—1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820—1895), is, indeed, an “immortal” document. In the whole realm of communistic literature no other publication has exerted so potent and far-reaching an influence as the *Manifesto*. In *A Handbook of Marxism*, the official manual of orthodox Communism, the *Manifesto* occupies the first place. The last document in the *Handbook*, “A Programme of the Communist International” (1928), is, as the “Programme” itself declares, “in a sense a restatement of *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848 in relation to the imperialist stage of capitalism.”¹ The “Programme” repeats verbatim sentences of the *Manifesto*, reiterates its fundamental philosophic premises, and while it lags far behind the *Manifesto* in inflammatory eloquence, it closes on the same threatening note:

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their aims can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all the existing social conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at a Communistic revolution. The Proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workingmen of all countries, Unite!

A few quotations will suffice to suggest the importance attached to the *Manifesto* by both Communists and non-Communists. The editor of *A Handbook of Marxism* writes:

The *Manifesto* became undoubtedly the most widespread, the most international production of all socialist literature, the common platform accepted by millions of workingmen from Siberia to California. . . . The *Manifesto* has inspired all revolutionary socialism; it is the most concise statement and the most important single document of Marxism.²

In the Foreword of his interpretation of the *Manifesto*, Ryanoff declares:

There is no document of the working-class movement that has so clearly marked the beginning of a new phase in its development or has had so much influence on that movement as *The Communist Manifesto*. No other document has had so wide a circulation in so many languages. No serious student of the modern development of society can ignore it. It is doubtful if any book or pamphlet published at the same time still commands a

¹ *A Handbook of Marxism*, 963.

² *Op. cit.*, 21—22.

sale of some thousands per annum in a single country as is the case with the *Manifesto*.³

Theodore B. H. Brameld comments:

An example of the diversity of creeds recognizing the *Communist Manifesto* is the Menshevik party of prerevolutionary Russia, a party against which Lenin, a Bolshevik, fought vigorously.⁴

Harold J. Laski declares in his analysis of the *Manifesto*:

It is not easy to overestimate the significance of the *Manifesto*. It gave direction and a philosophy to what had been before little more than an inchoate protest against injustice. It began the long process of welding together the scattered groups of the disinherited into an organized and influential party. It freed Socialism from its earlier situation of a doctrine cherished by conspirators in defiance of government and gave to it at once a purpose and an historic background. It almost created a proletarian consciousness by giving, and for the first time, to the workers at once a high sense of their historic mission and realization of the dignity implicit in their task. . . . No description can do justice to the brilliant vigor of the whole. Every phrase of it is a challenge, and much of it has the same moving passion that distinguishes the exordium of the *Social Contract* or, in a very different type of polemic, the *Paroles d'un Croyant* of Lamennais. It is the book of men who have viewed the whole process of history from an eminence and discovered therein an inescapable lesson. It is at once an epilogue and a prophecy: an epilogue to the deception from which the workers suffered in the Revolution of 1789 and a prophecy of the land of promise they may still hope to enter.⁵

A final quotation from Otto Ruehle:

The *Manifesto* was at one and the same time a historical demonstration, a critical analysis, a program, and a prophecy. It was a masterpiece . . . Marx's amazing talent for lifting himself above the narrow confines of his actual surroundings and, as if from the zenith, looking down upon the course of evolution into a distant future, so that the law of the movement and its trend, the ensemble and the details, were equally plain to him—this marvelous faculty is here brilliantly displayed. Marx foresees all the struggles and defeats, all the stages and vacillations, all the dangers and victories, of this evolution. He watches the mechanism of the advance, numbers the steps of social ascent, feels the pulse of the bourgeoisie, hears the tread of the advancing proletariat, sees the victorious banner of the social revolution. Everything decades before the materialization of the facts, generations before their onset; everything, though seen almost as if in a vision, described with minute particularity and accurate conformability to the real.⁶

³ *The Communist Manifesto*. With an Introduction and Explanatory Notes, 3.

⁴ *A Philosophic Approach to Communism*, footnote, 3.

⁵ *Karl Marx*. An Essay. With *Communist Manifesto*, 17—18.

⁶ *Karl Marx, His Life and Work*, 130—31.

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

745

The *Manifesto* provoked an endless amount of discussion in the form of commentaries and critical analyses. Every significant idea has been exhaustively treated. Even the hardly audible overtones of the argument have been carefully recorded. In this brief paper I am presenting only what I believe to be of first importance for an appraisal of the *Manifesto*. In order that the reader may be able to judge Marx and Engels out of their own mouths, I have included many quotations from their writings. I am submitting my remarks under the following heads:

- I. The Life of Karl Marx
- II. The Wider and Immediate Background of the *Manifesto*
- III. The Argument in the *Manifesto*
- IV. The Metaphysics of the *Manifesto*

Conclusion

I. THE LIFE OF KARL MARX

Heinrich Karl Marx, a Jew, was born in 1818 at Treves (Trier), Germany. His father was converted to Christianity and baptized, but remained a thoroughgoing liberal and rationalist of the school of Diderot, Rousseau, and Voltaire.

Karl was a lad of great ability and promise. He was graduated from the *Gymnasium* in Treves in 1835. Already at that time he wrote:

We should take account in choosing our career of our intellectual and physical aptitudes, that we may not prove unequal to our task, and consider before all the possibility, greater or less, which a career offers us of working for the happiness of humanity. They should turn us from the professions which make a man a mere passive instrument or which remove him from practical activity, for, in doing useful work, one must not separate the ideal from the real, thought from practical activity.⁷

In 1836 Marx studied law at the University of Berlin. Here he became acquainted with the "Young Hegelians," a group of brilliant rebels, among whom were Ludwig Feuerbach, devastating critic of Hegel; Bruno Bauer, one of the first negative higher critics of the New Testament; David Friedrich Strauss, author of the infamous *Life of Jesus*; Arnold Ruge, philosopher and political writer; Moses Hess, one of the first Communists; Max Stirner, anarchist; and other image breakers.

⁷ Quoted by Le Rossignol in *From Marx to Stalin*, 71—72.

At Berlin Marx was much interested in the philosophy of Hegel (1770—1831), especially in Hegel's dialectics. But like other "Young Hegelians," he reacted sharply to the conservatism in Hegel's system and to Hegel's theory of the Absolute, the universal reason, or God as the primary factor of social evolution. He came to regard not the ideal, but the material aspect of nature and history to be primary. In this he was confirmed by Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* (1841), in which Feuerbach rejected all the idealism of Hegel and declared for thoroughgoing materialism. Some years later, however, Marx discarded Feuerbach's brand of materialism, which made of man and human thought mere *passive* products of the material world. Marx made them *active* forces.

Marx wrote his dissertation for the doctor's degree on "The Differences Between the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and Epicurus." He received the degree from the University of Jena in 1841 *in absentia*. In 1842 he became contributor to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, of which he soon became editor in chief. Because of the radical articles which it contained this newspaper was suppressed and ceased publication in 1843.

We next find Marx in Paris, studying socialism and participating in plans for the coming revolution. In June, 1843, he married Johanna, the beautiful and gifted daughter of Baron von Westphalen. The marriage was, in the main, a happy marriage, in spite of exile, chronic debt, ill health, and, at times, dire poverty. Marx's next journalistic venture was his contributions to *Deutsch-Franzoesische Jahrbuecher*, intended to be an international organ of Liberalism. Only one number of this journal appeared, but that number contains significant articles by Marx on Hegel's philosophy of law and the Jewish question. It also contains Marx's opinion of religion in the often quoted words:

Man makes religion; religion does not make man. Religion, indeed, is the self-consciousness and the self-feeling of the man who either has not yet found himself, or else (having found himself) has lost himself once more. But man is not an abstract being, squatting down somewhere outside the world. Man is the world of men, the State, the Society. The State, this society, produce religion, produce a perverted world consciousness, because they are a perverted world. Religion is the generalized theory of this world, its encyclopaedic compend, its logic in the popular form. . . . The fight against religion is, therefore, a direct campaign against the world whose spiritual aroma is religion. Re-

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

747

ligion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feelings of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the opium of the people.

The people cannot be really happy until it has been deprived of illusory happiness by the abolition of religion. The demand that the people should shake itself free of illusion as to its own condition, is the demand that it should abandon a condition which needs religion.

Thus it is the mission of history, after the otherworldly truth has disappeared, to establish the truth of this world. In the next place, it is the mission of philosophy, having entered into the service of history after the true nature of the reputed saint-hood of human self-estrangement has been disclosed, to disclose all the unsaintliness of this self-estrangement. Thus the criticism of heaven is transformed into a criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into a criticism of law, the criticism of theology into a criticism of politics. (*Italics my own.*)

In Paris, Marx met the leaders of French utopian socialism as well as the anarchists Proudhon and Bakunin. Here began also his lifelong friendship with Friedrich Engels, who was his good angel to the end of his life and his literary executor and interpreter in later years. In 1844 Marx and Engels collaborated in preparing *The Holy Family*, a venomous attack on Marx's former friend Bruno Bauer. This book also contains the first clear outline of their materialistic conception of history. While this book was in process, Marx found time to write articles for *Vorwaerts*, another German radical paper. The publication of this paper resulted in the expulsion of Marx, Bakunin, and other revolutionists from Paris.

Marx moved on to Brussels. Here he collaborated with a group of other political exiles who made that city a center of communistic propaganda in eager anticipation of a social revolution. In fact, revolution was in the air in almost every country of western Europe. Writing to Marx from Barmen in 1844, Engels said: "You may turn whithersoever you please, you will stumble over Communists."

Of all protests, Chartism, a working-class movement in England, made the greatest impression on Engels and Marx and led them to think that Communism would come first in England. In the summer of 1845 Marx and Engels went to England and got in touch with the leading Chartists. After his return to Brussels, Marx wrote his *Misere de la Philosophie*, a demolishing criticism of Proudhon's *Philosophie de la Misere* (1846). That same year (1847) he also published a booklet entitled *Wage, Labor, and Capital*. Both publications

gave evidence of Marx's extensive study of political economy. Marx gave most of his time, however, to Communist propaganda. From Brussels there issued to every country of the world strong and persistent currents to incitement, call to arms, clarification, and influence. Here were centered countless threads of communication with all revolutionary foci; with representatives of the Communist ideology; with kindred movements in France, England, Germany, Poland and Switzerland.

To the last period of Marx's stay in Brussels belongs his relationship with the central committee of the Federation of the Just, with headquarters in London. In January, 1847, a member of this central committee came to Brussels empowered to ask Marx and Engels to join the federation. This group was organizing a congress at which those who held other views were either to be won over or to be cleared out. At this congress, too, the process of clarification was to be completed, and the distillate was to be formulated for propaganda purposes as a manifesto. Marx had no objection, for he had thought well of the Federation of the Just already in his Paris days and had seen no reason since to change his opinion.

The congress took place in London in the summer of 1847. Marx was unable to attend, but Engels was present. At the congress new rules and regulations were drafted, and a new name was given to the organization, but no final decisions were reached, for no decision could be valid until it had been submitted to the various local groups (communes) represented at the congress.

A second congress was summoned for December of the same year (1847). Late in November, Marx met Engels at Ostend, and the two went together to London, primarily as commissioned by the Democratic League of Brussels to participate in the meeting which the Fraternal Democrats were to hold on November 29 to commemorate the Polish revolution. Immediately after the meeting the second congress of the Federation of the Just, now known as the Communist League, was opened. This congress lasted about ten days. It definitely repudiated the old doctrines of utopian socialism. It disavowed conspiratorial tactics, inaugurated a new method of organization, and announced a new program. Among the

items of this program were: the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the dominion of the proletariat, the abolition of a class society, and the introduction of an economic and social order without private property and without classes — all in accordance with Marx's views. At the close of the congress, Marx and Engels were commissioned to draft a manifesto embodying Communist principles of the newly constructed revolutionary platform.

Marx and Engels returned to Brussels. Engels set to work promptly and wrote a draft in the form of a catechism, comprising twenty-five points, phrased in popular language, as basic constituents of the program. Marx waited a while and then decided upon a different method of presentation. Though he was guided to some extent by existing manifestoes (the *Manifesto* has close affinities with Victor Considerant's *Principe de Socialisme* not only in ideas but also in linguistic expression) which formed part of the stock in trade of every political group and club of those days, his *Manifesto* without a doubt has the imprint of his outstanding genius, original in content and in its general train of thought. It was drawn up in German a few weeks before the French Revolution of February 24, 1848. The first English translation appeared in London, 1850, with a note saying that it was the most revolutionary document ever given to the world.

When the news of the February Revolution reached Brussels, the police took speedy action, arrested Marx and his wife, kept them in jail for one night, and deported them the next day. They went to Paris to join their comrades and there, if possible, to give the movement a Communistic turn. Finding no suitable field of activity in Paris, Marx and Engels went to Germany, began the publication in Cologne of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, red flag of revolution. But already the Communist cause was hopeless, and the democratic movement itself was losing ground. In February, 1849, Marx and Engels were prosecuted for advocating armed resistance to the authorities, but, overawed by Marx's brilliant defense of himself and his cause, the jury acquitted them. But the paper was suppressed, and Marx, editor in chief, was ordered to leave the country within twenty-four hours.

Marx returned to Paris. He was expelled also from here. He now settled with his family in London, where, apart from a

few visits to the Continent, he spent the rest of his life very largely in poverty, misery, and illness. While giving considerable time to the organization and promotion of the First International, he spent most of his efforts in indefatigable research in the British Museum and in writing articles and books, especially *Capital*, the Bible of Communism. He died in March, 1883. In his funeral address for his friend and companion in arms, Engels said:

Marx was above all a revolutionary, and his great aim in life was to co-operate in this or that fashion in the overthrow of capitalist society and the State institutions which it has created, to co-operate in the emancipation of the modern proletariat, to whom he was the first to give a consciousness of its class position and its class needs, a knowledge of the conditions necessary for its emancipation. In this struggle he was in his element, and he fought with a passion, tenacity, and success granted to few.

II. THE WIDER AND IMMEDIATE BACKGROUND OF THE MANIFESTO

In order to appreciate the fundamental ideas in the *Manifesto*, one must take into consideration the background which is directly or indirectly reflected in the *Manifesto*. There had been the political and industrial revolutions. On the political horizon one notes in particular such significant individuals as Voltaire, Rousseau, the French Encyclopaedists, Thomas Paine, Danton, Marat, and Robespierre. One must bear in mind also factors leading up to, and the results of, the American Revolution and the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror, and the restoration of the Bourbons. The slogan of the French Revolution "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" still resounded in the hearts and minds of those who saw themselves disappointed and disillusioned after the fall of Napoleon. Particularly in Germany, Austria, and France liberals were smarting under the despotic rule of Metternich. In the twenties and thirties censorship had become unbearably oppressive. There was in the political atmosphere an uncontrollable restlessness and decided opposition to every form of absolute control. Marx was perhaps not far from the truth when he said in the first paragraph of the *Manifesto*: "All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter [Communism]: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies."

It was the time of great industrial changes: Kay's flying

shuttle, Watt's steam engine, Hargreave's spinning jenny, Crompton's power loom, Stephenson's locomotive engine, and many other inventions. These, together with co-operating forces, ruined old and established handicrafts, created the factory system, built great manufacturing and mercantile cities, brought together large numbers of wage earners. This situation ushered in the modern labor movement and aroused the working classes to a consciousness of their interests, their power, and their destiny.

Furthermore, long before the days of Marx, the right of private property had been questioned. Abbé Morelly had in his *Code de la Nature* (1755) condemned private property, demanded the common ownership of all wealth, and agitated that all industries should be publicly controlled. Noël Babeuf (1760—1797), a French revolutionist agitator and journalist, had ardently proclaimed the views of Morelly and popularized the slogan: "Happiness Consists in Equality." Babeuf organized the "Society of Equals," engaged in a communistic conspiracy against the Directorate, and was guillotined in 1797. Socialists refer to the conspiracy of Babeuf as the classic example of premature and futile attempts to establish Communism before the time was ripe.

Among Englishmen who in their writings had expressed extreme communistic tendencies were William Godwin (1756 to 1836) and William Thompson (1783—1833). Godwin published in 1793 *Enquiry Concerning Human Justice*. He writes: "What is misnamed wealth is merely a power vested in certain individuals by the institution of society to compel others to labor for their benefit." This is, in a nutshell, the doctrine of surplus value, elaborated by Marx in *Capital*. Thompson published in 1824 "*An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth Most Conducive to Human Happiness.*" He assumes that all value in exchange is derived from labor alone; anticipating Marx, he infers that the whole product of labor should belong to the sole producers. However, inasmuch as the laborers receive not what they produce, but mere subsistence, the landowners and capitalists receive the rest in the form of rent and interest. Here again is the theory of surplus value tersely expressed twenty-four years before the appearance of the *Manifesto*.

Marx and Engels were very much interested in Chartism.

This is the first labor movement in England. It derives its name from the "People's Charter," a petition signed by great numbers of people in England, chiefly the working class, and presented to the House of Commons on May 2, 1842, and again on April 10, 1848. The famous "Six Points" of the Charter—universal manhood suffrage, annual parliaments, vote by ballot, no property qualifications for members, payment of members, and equal voting districts—were all political demands. But back of these demands was widespread discontent, with economic conditions and the determination of the Chartist leaders to use the political power, when gained, for the uplift of the masses, if not for the realization of socialism.

In Europe there were current various forms of socialism ranging all the way from vague utopian socialism to ultrared anarchistic Communism or communistic anarchism. Mention should be made especially of the type of socialism promoted by Robert Owen (1771—1855) and Francois Charles Fourier (1772—1837). Both proposed gradual socialization by the creation of small experimental communities which, if successful, would multiply, federate, and ultimately bring about national and even international socialism—the "federation of the world." Owen was interested in several of these ventures, the most notable of which was the New Harmony Community of Equality, in Indiana, an experiment that failed after three years of struggle (1824—1827). Several other Owenite settlements were started in the United States, but all shared the fate of New Harmony. Fourier had similar plans for small communities, or "phalanges," which he hoped would be established through the generosity of wealthy men. During twelve years he remained at home at noon every day waiting for a millionaire to come along and lay down the necessary capital. Fourierism made slight progress in France, but there was a veritable wave of it in the United States under the leadership of such men as Albert Brisbane and Horace Greeley. Some thirty-three settlements were founded, of which the longest-lived was the Wisconsin Phalanx (1844 to 1850), and the most famous was the Brook Farm (1841—1846). More successful than any of the Fourieristic communities, and directly connected with them, was Etienne Cabet's (1788 to 1856) Icaria, first established in Texas in 1848, which survived, with numerous changes and removals, until the year

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

753

1898. Marx and Engels took note of these various forms of socialism in the third part of the *Manifesto* but found fault with all of them because from their point of view they represented a compromising attitude. They disposed of them as follows:

Utopians reject all political and especially all revolutionary action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means and endeavor, by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by force of example, to pave the way for the new social gospel. . . . They still dream of experimental realization of their social Utopias, of founding isolated "phalansteres," of establishing "Home Colonies," of setting up a "Little Icaria" — duodecimo editions of the New Jerusalem, and to realize all these castles in the air, they are compelled to appeal to the feelings and purses of the bourgeois.⁸

In addition to the above considerations there were other factors which played into the thinking of Marx and Engels in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century. Such were the prison reforms in England, the emancipation of slaves, the beginnings of factory legislation, the Reform Bill of 1832, the prestige enjoyed by the great English economists Malthus and Ricardo. In Germany, poets like Freiligrath, Herwegh, Prutz, and others who were more or less in sympathy with the "Young Germany" movement used their talents to foment revolution. In Paris the archenemy of Prussianism, the Jew Heinrich Heine, a friend of Karl Marx, was dipping his pen into red ink and dashing off poems like this:

Ein neues Lied, ein bess'res Lied,
Ihr Freunde, will ich euch dichten,
Wir wollen hier auf Erden schon
Das Himmelreich errichten.

Wir wollen auf Erden gluecklich sein
Und wollen nicht mehr darben,
Verschlemmen soll nicht der faule Bauch,
Was fleiss'ge Haende erwarben.

Es waechst auf Erden Brot genug
Fuer alle Menschenkinder,
Und Rosen und Myrten, Glueck und Lust
Und Zuckererbsen nicht minder.

Ja, Zuckererbsen fuer jedermann,
Sobald die Schoten platzen;
Den Himmel ueberlassen wir
Den Engeln und den Spatzen.

⁸ *A Handbook of Marxism*, 54—56.

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

In England thousands listened eagerly to the orations of Feargus O'Connor, Bronterre O'Brien, and other agitators, and vociferously applauded such utterance as these:

Wages should form the price of goods;
Yes, wages should be all.
Then those who work to make the goods
Should justly have them all.

But if their price be made of rent,
Tithes, taxes, profits, all,
Then we who work to make the goods
Shall have — just none at all.

III. THE ARGUMENT IN THE MANIFESTO

The *Manifesto* covers only thirty-seven pages in the *Handbook* (22—59). It begins with a brief introduction, in which the authors state the occasion for the publication of the *Manifesto* as well as its purpose. The chief paragraph reads:

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.

The body of the *Manifesto* is divided into four parts. They are:

- I. Bourgeois and Proletarians
- II. Proletarians and Communists
- III. Socialist and Communist Literature
- IV. Position of the Communists in Relation to the Various Existing Opposition Parties

In Part One, "Bourgeois and Proletarians," the authors aim to show historically that the time has come when the bourgeoisie must be overthrown and be replaced by a new society, the communistic commonwealth. The premise on which the argument rests is stated in the first sentence: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Proceeding from this premise, the authors aim to show that modern society represented by the two classes bourgeoisie and proletariat is the historical product of feudal society with its lords and serfs. Responsible for this evolution are the instruments of production and the relations of production developed in feudal society. These economic forces in course of time broke the fetters of the feudal system, destroyed it, and inaugurated the present form of society.

But also this form of society is doomed. It is even now fast disintegrating, due to the same factors which brought about the dissolution of feudalism, viz., the instruments and relations of production. The bourgeoisie (capitalism) is becoming more and more powerful, more and more oppressive, and the lot of the proletariat is becoming more and more miserable and intolerable. Economic forces are going out of bounds, can no longer be controlled by the bourgeoisie, and are compelling society to surrender, not, however, to a new dichotomy of classes, but to a classless society, the communistic commonwealth. When the dictatorship of the proletariat has crushed the bourgeoisie, has firmly established itself, there will not be another class struggle, but there will be liberty and equality for all. This new status is not achieved by compromise with the bourgeoisie. It is achieved only by force, by a revolution. It is bound to come. "What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own gravediggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable."⁹

In Part Two, "Proletarians and Communists," the authors seek to establish the relation of the existing Communist party to the proletarians not connected with the party. They say that the party has no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They are merely the leaders in the class, "the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties in every country." The authors then define and try to justify the specific aims of the Communist party. Toward the close they list the ten demands of the Communist party:

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralization of credit in the hands of the State by means of a national bank with the State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralization of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of waste lands and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, 36.

8. Equal obligation of all to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.
10. Free education of all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labor in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc.

In Part Three the authors examine and criticize various forms of socialism. They are: feudal socialism; petty bourgeois socialism; German, or "true," socialism; conservative, or bourgeois, socialism; critical-utopian socialism and Communism. Regarding Christian Socialism, they say:

As the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord, so has Clerical Socialism with Feudal Socialism. Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the State? Has it not preached, in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat.¹⁰

In Part Four the authors urge Communists in France, Switzerland, Poland, and Germany with whom and with whom not they are to align themselves in carrying out the revolution. Marx and Engels believed that the revolution would begin in Germany. The paragraph reads:

The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution which is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilization and with a much more developed proletariat than that of England was in the seventeenth, and of France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.¹¹

Other significant paragraphs in the final section are:

Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.¹²

In all these movements, Communists bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time.¹³

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, 49.

¹² *Ibid.*, 59.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, 59.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 59.

IV. THE METAPHYSICS OF THE *MANIFESTO*

The *Manifesto* was intended to incite a revolution. It is a call to arms. But it is more than that. It is also a declaration of the grounds which, in the opinion of Marx and Engels, justify the proletariat revolution. It is a rationale designed to kindle in the minds of proletarians the heroic faith that they were about to engage in a great crusade, in a holy war, which would result in an emancipation never before achieved in history and which would lead them into the promised land of complete social equality and security.

It is customary to speak of four basic suppositions which underlie the *Manifesto*. They are commonly referred to as the Marxian dialectics, the class struggle, economic determinism (or historical materialism), and the labor theory of value and surplus value. With the exception of the last, which Marx worked out in great detail after 1848 and to which he gave classic expression in *Capital* (1867), the first three suppositions are so closely interrelated already in the early writings of Marx and Engels that it is difficult to tell which originated first in their minds. So much seems certain that Marx was never interested in any one of these three suppositions *per se*; that is to say, Marx never discusses them with the cold objectivity and impartiality of a true scientist or mathematician. Rather he uses them exclusively in support of his program of revolution. This is not to say, however, that Marx and Engels may not have been thoroughly persuaded in their own minds of the truth of their suppositions. If there is anything in the writings of Marx and Engels which impresses the reader, it is the assurance and persistence with which both Marx and Engels present their ideas. Perhaps it was this profound belief not only in the righteousness of their cause but also in the rightness of their philosophy which more than all other factors accounted for the almost immediate success of the *Manifesto* and which to this day continues to gain converts. As will be noted in the following pages, these suppositions are subject to grave considerations. On the other hand, the implicit faith placed in them by orthodox Communists seems another indication that humanity at large is swayed not by sound and cogent reasonings and by scientifically established evidence, but rather by faith in a great cause.

A. MARXIAN DIALECTICS

Marx had come under the influence of the Hegelian system as a student at Berlin. Though he, in course of time, rebelled against Hegel's idealism and conservatism, he never gave up his faith in the dialectic process. There is no need to develop in detail the oftentimes abstruse and inane deliveries of Hegel. It is enough to recall that Hegel had applied the triad of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis to logic, nature, and history. What fascinated Marx in this interpretation was the moving power manifest in history and the conflict of opposing forces. Just as Hegel believed that the thesis brings about not only opposition, but also contradiction and conflict, resulting in a higher synthesis, so Marx believed that there is evident in the world of phenomena, especially in history, change and conflict. *The Communist Manifesto*, since it was written for proletarians, makes no attempt anywhere to define in philosophical terms Hegel's strange metaphysics. But one acquainted with Hegel's system soon detects in the *Manifesto* a bright reflection of the Hegelian dialectic process. It operates in the *Manifesto* thus: the bourgeoisie is the synthesis of medieval burghers and serfs. It is at the same time a new thesis negating itself and calling into being the proletariat. The conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie culminates for Marx in a new synthesis, the communistic commonwealth. The dialectic process is evident also in the economic forces which from Marx's point of view bring about the class struggle. One stage in the economic process constitutes for Marx the thesis. This thesis negates itself, resulting in an antithetic economic development. The conflict between the two results in an economic synthesis which in its turn becomes a new thesis.

It should be noted however that whereas Hegel believed the dialectic process to go on endlessly, Marx was persuaded that it would come to an end in the establishment of the communistic commonwealth. There are other differences between Marx and Hegel. For Hegel, the dialectic process was one through which reason, by the merger of opposites, advances in self-development to the perfection of the absolute Spirit; for Marx the dialectic process meant the interpretation of the conflict of opposing classes. For Hegel, dialectic was primarily a philosophic concept; for Marx it was a social

dynamic. For Hegel, the dialectic process meant the sublime contemplation of an otherworldly spiritual Idea; Marx was passionately concerned with the material conditions which would emancipate the toiling helots of history. Hegel attempted to write a philosophy of history; Marx attempted to change it. Hegel says: "When we see a new phenomenon in history, we need do nothing about it." Marx says: "When we see a new phenomenon in history, as Communism, we must do something about it—we must promote it." Hegel says: "Preserve the State!" Marx says, "Smash the State."

B. THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Part One of the *Manifesto* begins:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending class. . . . The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. . . . Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat.¹⁴

Here we have a clear formulation by Marx and Engels of the doctrine of the class struggle. Marx and Engels never relinquished this doctrine. In 1879 they wrote:

For almost forty years we have stressed the class struggle as the immediate driving force of history and in particular the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as the great lever of the modern social revolution.¹⁵

In the 1888 preface to the *Manifesto* Engels wrote:

The whole history of mankind, since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership, has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes.

Unfortunately, Marx and Engels never defined in detail what they meant by "class." At the end of the third volume of *Capital*, Marx's last work, he asks the question: "What con-

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, 22—23.

¹⁵ Quoted by Le Rossignol from *Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence*, 376.

stitutes a class?" but the question remains unanswered, except that three great social classes are mentioned—wage laborers, capitalists, and landlords—each of which has its characteristic income, giving its members a common economic interest, and at the same time an opposition to the interests of the other two, which leads to antagonism and conflict. Marx goes on to explain that there are other social groups, such as physicians and officials, and subgroups as well, as when "landlords are divided into the owners of vineyards, farms, forests, mines, fisheries." These may have been the last written words of Karl Marx, to which the editor, Friedrich Engels, his friend for so many years, added the laconic finale: "Here the manuscript ends."

The question arises: "Why did primitive Communism pass away?" To this question Engels replies in substance: This was due to the domestication of animals, the use of iron and tools and weapons, improvements in agriculture, the division of labor, the exchange of commodities, and the getting of captives in war. These were among the productive forces which became incompatible with the communistic organization, broke it up, and created a new social system based on private property in persons and things.¹⁶

Following primitive Communism, so Marx and Engels tell us, came civilization—ancient, medieval, modern, with three forms of servitude: slavery, serfdom, and wage labor. Just as slavery and serfdom rose up in judgment against their oppressors, so also modern wage labor is rising up against its oppressor, the bourgeoisie or capitalism. Marx and Engels admit:

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. . . . It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former exoduses of nations and crusades.¹⁷

Yet whatever good it may have done, the bourgeoisie has become guilty of crimes that cry to high heaven:

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has piti-

¹⁶ Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State," *Handbook*, 301 ff.

¹⁷ *A Handbook of Marxism*, 26, 28.

lessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors" and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasms, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms has set up the single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation veiled by religious and political illusions it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.¹⁸

As a result of this exploitation by the bourgeoisie, proletarians are sinking deeper and deeper into misery. But their day of salvation is coming. Most of the petty bourgeoisie are being driven to the wall and are joining the proletariat. Thus the proletariat is rapidly growing in number. It is also organizing and forming unions. Besides, capitalism will inevitably collapse under its own weight. Financial crises are increasing because too much capital and surplus value is invested in overproduction and too little is being paid as wages to furnish purchasing power. Surplus stocks will close plants, increase unemployment, create depressions. The worse the situation becomes for the proletariat, the more conscious will the latter become of their true destiny and the closer will they become knit together in a common brotherhood. Indeed, as Marx and Engels wrote in later years, the State as the agency of the interests of capitalism will cultivate the propaganda that the State is above all classes and that all are one, with identical or harmonious interests. Strikes will be broken by the force of the government which always stands in defense of the *status quo*. But at the opportune time the proletariat will dare the revolution, overthrow the bourgeoisie, establish itself firmly in power, and establish the communistic commonwealth.

A brief examination of the premise that "all history is the history of class struggles and that society was originally communistic" yields these results:

1. The assumption that society began its course as a communistic society is an unproved theory.
2. The assumption that class opposition is necessarily identical with class struggle and conflict is a theory. Opposites oftentimes attract each other. M. J. Adler puts it

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, 25.

this way: "Even Marx failed to make this fine distinction: he confuses opposition, which suggests compromise, with contradiction or complete negation. Certainly, the unity of opposites involves co-operation."¹⁹

3. Marx's statement that "society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat,"²⁰ is hardly factual. It is a case of the wish being father to the thought. Even now, almost a hundred years after the publication of the *Manifesto*, society is not split into two antagonistic groups. Society, at least in our country, is a network of numerous groups, occupational, political, social, religious, educational—whose connections and interests are so interwoven that they cannot and will not divide according to the formula of the class struggle and the wishful thinking of Marx. To speak of the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, the privileged and the underprivileged, is legitimate only within limitations. One glance at the Federal income-tax table impresses one with the sober truth that American society is divided into a wide range of categories. The middle class (Marx's petty bourgeoisie) is not disappearing, but rather increasing in number, income, wealth, and power, and, if our interpretation of recent events is correct, by no means intends to abdicate in favor of a revolutionary proletariat. In his analysis of American society, Kirby Page reaches the conclusion:

The evidence is inescapable that this nation is overwhelmingly middle class, or bourgeois, in composition. Genuine proletarians do not constitute more than one third of the population, while the entire body of completely disinherited—those who "have only their chains to lose"—probably does not exceed twenty per cent.²¹

4. One cannot prove that all societies must exhibit a uniform, even if uneven, social development from primitive Communism to slavery, from slavery to feudalism, from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to socialism.²²

In view of the above grave considerations, one understands why Sidney Hook is compelled to admit:

¹⁹ *Dialectic*, quoted by Le Rossignol, 118.

²⁰ *A Handbook of Marxism*, 23.

²¹ Quoted by Le Rossignol, 223.

²² John Dewey, in *Why I am Not a Communist*, in Sidney Hook's *The Meaning of Marx*.

If the facts of the class struggle can be successfully called in question, the whole theoretical construction of Marx crashes to the ground.²³

C. ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

If one asks: "What is the propelling force in history? What is the factor which exclusively or at least predominantly determines and shapes the progress of society?" one must expect a great variety of answers. Marx and Engels were much interested in this question, and both arrived, each in his own way, at the same answer. That answer was: Not the ideas of great leaders, not social institutions, not prevailing ideologies, not geographic environment, not biological factors, but economic conditions, especially the method of production of the time. If, for instance, in different periods we have slave labor, then the feudal windmill, and later the industrial steam mill or factory, these will not only affect the lives of the owners and workers, but also the institutions of the period, and even the ideas.

In the following, C. S. Lewis gives a graphic account of a Communist steeped in economic determinism:

I was not left very long at the mercy of the Touse-Headed Poet, because another passenger interrupted our conversation: but before that happened, I had learned a good deal about him. He appeared to be a singularly ill-used man. His parents had never appreciated him, and none of the five schools at which he had been educated seemed to have made any provision for a talent and temperament such as his. To make matters worse, he had been exactly the sort of boy in whose case the examination system works out with the maximum unfairness and absurdity. It was not until he reached the university that he began to recognize that all these injustices did not come by chance, but were the inevitable results of our economic system. Capitalism did not merely enslave the workers, it also vitiated taste and vulgarized intellect: hence our educational system and hence the lack of "Recognition" for new genius. This discovery had made him a Communist. But when the war came along and he saw Russia in alliance with the capitalist governments, he had found himself once more isolated and had to become a conscientious objector. The indignities he suffered at this stage of his career had, he confessed, embittered him. He decided that he could serve the cause best by going to America: but then America came into the war too. It was at this point that he suddenly saw Sweden as the home of a really new and radical art, but the various oppressors had given him no facilities for going to Sweden. There were money troubles. His father, who had never progressed beyond the most atrocious mental complacency and smugness of the Victorian epoch, was giving him a ludicrously inadequate allowance. And he had

²³ Quoted by Le Rossignol, 228.

been very badly treated by a girl too. He had thought her a really civilized and adult personality, and then she had unexpectedly revealed that she was a mass of bourgeois prejudices and monogamic instincts. Jealousy, possessiveness, was a quality he particularly disliked. She had even shown herself, at the end, to be mean about money. That was the last straw. He had jumped under a train. . . .²⁴

The above explanation of economic determinism (often called historical materialism) may be an oversimplification. But it comes reasonably near to what Marx and Engels had in mind whenever they wrote about the propelling factor in history. Reasonably near. Because Marx and Engels do not define clearly what they mean by such oft-recurring phrases as "modes of production, conditions of production, relations of production, property relations, productive forces," and the like. There is furthermore the consideration that in one of his letters to Marx, Engels made the admission:

According to the materialist conception of history, the determining element in history is *ultimately* the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If therefore somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract, and absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure . . . also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*. . . . We make our own history, but in the first place under very definite presuppositions and conditions. Among these the economic ones are finally decisive. But the political, etc., ones, and indeed even the traditions which haunt human minds, also play a part, though not the decisive one.²⁵

In view of the above explanation by Engels, it may not be fair to make out of Marx and Engels thoroughgoing economic determinists. On the other hand, they themselves are to blame if interpreters, even orthodox Communists, have classified them as such. In his oration at the funeral of Marx, March 17, 1883, Engels said:

Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history. He discovered the simple fact that human beings must have food and drink, clothing and shelter, *first of all*, before they can interest themselves in political science, art, religion, and the like. This implies that the production of the immediately requisite material means of subsistence, and therewith the extant economic developmental phase of a nation or an epoch, constitute the foundation

²⁴ C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, 6—7.

²⁵ Quoted by Le Rossignol, 139, from *Marx-Engels, Selected Correspondence*.

upon which the state institutions, the legal outlook, the artistic and even the religious ideas of those concerned have been built up. It implies that these latter must be explained out of the former, whereas usually the former have been explained as issuing from the latter.

In 1888, in his preface to the English translation of the *Manifesto*, Engels wrote:

The *Manifesto* being our joint production, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition which forms the nucleus belongs to Marx. That proposition is: that in every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange and the social organization necessarily following from it form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of the epoch. Finally, in 1893, two years before his death, Engels declared:

The materialistic concept of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life, and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history the manner in which wealth is distributed and society is divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the philosophy, but in the economics of each particular epoch.²⁶

The *Manifesto* is replete with passages which reflect the author's profound faith in economic determinism. Here are a few:

The modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.²⁷

Your [the bourgeoisie] very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class. The selfish misconception that induces you to transform into eternal laws of nature and of reason the social forms springing from your present mode of production and form of property — historical relations that rise and disappear in the progress of production — this misconception you share with every ruling class that has preceded you.²⁸

And your education! Is not that also social and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, of society, by means of schools, etc.? ²⁹

²⁶ Quoted by Le Rossignol, 127, from *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

²⁷ *A Handbook of Marxism*, 24.

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, 41.

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, 42.

The charges against Communism made from a religious, a philosophical, and, generally, from an ideological standpoint are not deserving of serious examination. Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views, and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations, and in his social life?³⁰

To the charge against Communism that there are eternal truths, such as freedom, justice, etc., that are common to all states of society and that Communism, by abolishing eternal truths, abolishes all religion and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis, Marx and Engels reply:

One fact is common to all past ages, viz., the exploitation of one part of society by the other. No wonder, then, that the social consciousness of past ages, despite all the multiplicity and variety it displays, moves within certain common forms or general ideas, which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms.

What else does the history of ideas prove than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.³¹

In attempting to evaluate the theory of economic determinism as expressed by Marx and Engels, one arrives at conclusions such as the following:

1. One can hardly deny that the largely monopolistic ownership of the means of production by the property-owning class, on the one hand, and the economic dependence of the vast army of wage workers and the unemployed, on the other, does affect and, to some extent, mold the institutions, the laws, the economic and political organization of society, the ideas of men and the history of our time.

2. No one will deny that there have been conflicts among men motivated largely, if not altogether, by economic consideration.

3. But, as Laski observes:

The insistence upon an economic background as the whole explanation [of social phenomena and development] is radically false. No economic conditions can explain the suicidal nationalism of the Balkans. The war of 1914 may have been largely due to conflicting commercial imperialisms; but there was also a competition of national ideas which was in no point economic. Historically, too, the part played by religion in the determination of social outlook was, until at least the Peace of Westphalia, as important as that played by material conditions. Luther repre-

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, 44.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, 44—45.

sents something more than a protest against the financial exactions of Rome. The impulses of men, in fact, are never referable to any single source. The love of power, herd instinct, rivalry, the desire of display, all these are hardly less vital than the acquisitiveness which explains the strength of material environment.³²

Similarly, Le Rossignol:

Marx omits consideration of the biological factor. Both the *biological* and the *economic* factors are important. The relations of sex, the growth of population, the family, the tribe, and the closely connected phenomena of race, nationality, government, morality, law, and other institutions are driving forces in human evolution as much as any modes of production and exchange. *Human* nature plays a part, with its native urge toward physical and mental activity; his love of liberty, adventure, play, struggle, conquest, power; his creative activity in literature, music, dancing, building, and art; his wonder, fear, hope, love, insatiable curiosity, and the expression of them in religion, philosophy, and devotion to science. Then there are relatively obscure forces of which the historian must take account, such as chance, caprice, irrational behavior, abnormal mentality, and the achievements of great men, all of which contribute toward the resultant of many forces which is the march of history.

In short, one can thus see the futility of any monistic explanation of history. War, frequently, is a sort of game rather than a struggle for land or plunder. The Crusades were largely the result of religious enthusiasm. The family is not a mere unit of economic activity and division of labor. The State, which Marx believed to be the result of economic determinism ("the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the affairs of the whole bourgeoisie," *Manifesto*, p. 25), is, at its worst, something more than an instrument of exploitation; at its best it is the servant of the people as a whole. There are moral standards that have to do with personal rights rather than property. Law is not altogether made by the ruling classes for their own benefit. Great men may be the product of their times, but whether for good or ill, they add something unique to the course of events (Paul, Mahomet, Marx, etc.). The spirit of Protestantism, which Marx believed to be a bourgeoisie development, is far more than he saw in it. In short, ideology itself, whether true or false, beneficial or harmful, has been a great force in social evolution.³³

And certainly, the Christian religion has in a tremendous degree helped to shape and determine the course of history from the beginnings of the Christian era.

Closely related to the theory of economic determinism is Marx's labor theory of value and surplus value. The *Manifesto* contains a number of passages in which the authors express their theory. Chief among them are:

³² *An Essay. With the Communist "Manifesto,"* 36.

³³ Le Rossignol, *Op. cit.*, 122-140.

The cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labor, is equal to its cost of production.³⁴

The average price of wage labor is the minimum wage, i. e., that quantum of the means of subsistence which is absolutely requisite to keep the laborer in bare existence as a laborer.³⁵

Does wage labor create any property for the laborer? Not a bit. It creates capital, i. e., that kind of property which exploits wage labor and which cannot increase except upon condition of begetting a new supply of wage labor for fresh exploitation.³⁶

Inasmuch, however, as Marx and Engels did not develop their labor theory of value and of surplus value in the *Manifesto*, but merely posit it without further analysis, I am not discussing it in this paper.

CONCLUSION

In closing this investigation of *The Communist Manifesto*, I again call attention to its fundamental aim and purpose: to tell the world what Communism is and wants, and to incite a proletarian revolution. However doubtful or false its metaphysics are, the *Manifesto* has, as a revolutionary document, been eminently successful. After all, revolutions are not motivated and brought about by philosophical considerations. They are the passionate outburst of pent-up and deep-seated grievances. As in Locke's *Treatises*, so in the *Manifesto*, the metaphysics are largely an afterthought, designed to justify, in Locke's case, a past revolution; in Marx's case, a revolution still to come.

The question is in order: "To what extent, if any, does the Soviet Union carry out the program and metaphysics laid down by Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto*?" It is impossible to answer this question with any degree of finality, since there is too little reliable news leaking out of Russia. So much is certain. The communistic commonwealth has not yet arrived in Russia, and the dictatorship of the proletariat is actually the dictatorship of the thirteen members of the Politburo of the Communist party. Judging by the difficulties which American and British statesmen are encountering in their dealings with the Soviet Union, it seems evident that the Politburo has returned, since the Moscow conference of last

³⁴ *A Handbook of Marxism*, 30.

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, 39.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, 38.

December, to the *status quo ante bellum* and therefore regards foreign nations with a capitalist economy as inevitable enemies of the Soviet Union. Readers interested in what may be going on behind the "iron curtain" will do well to read carefully the last document in *A Handbook of Marxism*, "The Programme of the Communist International," and the two outstanding articles recently contributed to *Life Magazine* by John Foster Dulles (June 3 and 10).

I did not include in this study a discussion of such important items referred to in the *Manifesto* as the means of subsistence, the nature of capital, the status of woman in bourgeois society, and the ten demands of the Communist party, especially the first, "Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes." For Marx and Engels the attainment of this objective was absolutely essential and prerequisite for the establishment of the communistic commonwealth. Therefore they wrote: "In all these movements [revolutionary] they [Communists] bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time."³⁷

All the aforementioned items are of such significance that they require careful and extensive treatment in another chapter.

Bibliography

- Bowden, Witt, and Others. *An Economic History of Europe since 1750*. New York, American Book Company, 1937.
- Brameld, Theodore B. H. *A Philosophic Approach to Communism*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1933.
- Ensor, R. C. K. *Modern Socialism*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907.
- A Handbook of Marxism*. Being a Collection of Extracts from the Writings of Marx, Engels, and the Greatest of Their Followers. New York, International Publishers, 1935.
- Hook, Sidney, and Others. *The Meaning of Marx*. A Symposium. New York, Farrar and Rinehart, 1934.
- Laski, Harold J. *Karl Marx*. An Essay. With *Communist Manifesto*. London, Geo. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1925.
- Le Rossignol, James Edward. *From Marx to Stalin*. New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1940.
- Marx, Karl. *The Communist Manifesto, and Other Writings*. New York, The Modern Library, 1932.
- Rühle, Otto. *Karl Marx. His Life and Work*. New York, The Viking Press, 1929.
- Ryazanoff, D. *The Communist Manifesto*. With an Introduction and Explanatory Notes. London, Martin Lawrence, 1930.
- Walther, C. F. W. *Communismus und Socialismus*. St. Louis, Mo., 1878.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, 59.