THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

of

KARL MARX and FRIEDRICH ENGELS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY NOTES BY

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The text of the Manifesto is a new translation from the German, made in 1928 for Martin Lawrence. The rest of the work is translated from the revised (1922) edition of Ryazanoff's *The Communist Manifesto* (in Russian). Translations by EDEN and CEDAR PAUL.

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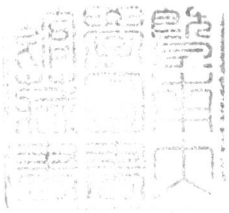

Foreword

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

Naturally, the *Manifesto* "dates," although to a surprisingly small extent. There are names, movements, and circumstances, unknown or unfamiliar to the present-day reader, which are referred to in the *Manifesto*, and which must be taken into account if the book is to be understood. Therefore it was necessary that a commentary should be written, and this has been done by Professor Ryazanoff—although he himself protests that it is not the commentary that is necessary.

Be that as it may, the book here produced in English for the first time is the best we have so far. In addition to the extensive explanatory notes on the *Manifesto*, there are prefaces that have appeared in various editions (historically important in themselves), a translation of Engels' *Principles of Communism*, a full translation of the trial number of the *Communist Journal*, an account of the revolutionary movement of 1847, by Engels, the constitution of the Communist League, and the demands of the Communist Party in Germany.

Edited and annotated with the care and knowledge characteristic of Professor Ryazanoff, the present book will be a necessity to all students of Socialism until the greater commentary spoken of in the Preface to the original Russian edition has made its appearance.

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PART THREE

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Introduction

THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

1847—1852

THE Communist League, that first international organisation of proletarians whose program was a communist one, came into being during the year 1847. Marx (1818-1883) and Engels (1810-1895) played an active part in its foundation. The German revolutionists, with the help of British and French sympathisers, had already made several attempts to found a revolutionary organisation on an international scale. In 1885, nearly forty years after the foundation of the League, Engels wrote an outline history of the German revolutionary movement which had ultimately given birth to the Communist League. This sketch appeared as the introduction to a reprint of Marx's pamphlet concerning the trial of the Cologne communists, and has been ever since the main source of information, not only to Mehring but likewise to all the writers who have dealt with the history of the League. I shall, therefore, let Engels speak for himself.

"In the year 1834, a group of German refugees in Paris founded a secret society known as the Exiles' League. The organisation was democratic and republican in spirit. During the year 1836, the extremists broke away and constituted themselves into the Federation of the Just, a body whose members were mainly proletarian. The parent organisation, to which only such sleepy-heads as Jakobus Venedey remained faithful, soon fell into a profound slumber; by the year 1840, when the police routed out a few sections, it was the merest shadow of its former self. The Federation, however, developed quickly. Originally it was a German outlyer of French working-class communism which owed its theoretical opinions mainly to the Babouvist tradition, and which was taking definite shape and form about this time in Paris. Among these circles, community of goods was demanded as the natural outcome of "equality." The aims of

the Federation of the Just were the same as those of other Parisian secret societies of the period. Its activities were about evenly divided between propaganda and conspiratorial work. Paris was still regarded as the focal point of revolutionary action, although the preparation of revolutionary upheavals in Germany, should occasion arise, was not excluded from the program. Since, however, Paris was looked upon as the place where the decisive battle would occur, the Federation was in reality not much more than a German branch of the French secret societies, and in especial of the Société des Saisons which was under the leadership of Blanqui (1805-1881) and Barbès (1809-1870). Indeed, the Federation was in such close touch with the Société des Saisons that, when the French rose in revolt on May 12, 1839, the members of the Federation of the Just fought shoulder to shoulder with their French brothers and together they all suffered a common defeat.

"Karl Schapper and Heinrich Bauer were arrested. The government of Louis Philippe was content to expel them from France after they had undergone a lengthy imprisonment while awaiting trial. Both men came to London. Schapper had been a student of forestry at Giessen University, and had, in 1832, participated in Georg Büchner's (1813-1857) conspiracy. On April 3, 1833 he took part in the storming of the police station in Frankfort-on-the-Main. After this exploit he went abroad and in February, 1834, joined Mazzini's forces in Savoy. Built on a heroic scale, resolute and energetic by temperament, ever ready to risk life and limb, Schapper was the prototype of the professional revolutionist of the eighteen-thirties. His steady development from demagogue to communist proves that, though his mind was somewhat obtuse, he was nevertheless receptive of new ideas. Once convinced, he held tenaciously to his opinions, and precisely because of this his passion for the cause often overwhelmed his better judgment. After the event he was always ready to acknowledge himself in the wrong. He was a man of genuine metal all through, and his services to the German working-class movement will never be forgotten.

"Heinrich Bauer came from Franconia. He was a shoemaker by trade, a little man of lively humour, alert and active. His diminutive frame held a fund of shrewdness and determination.

"Once established in London, Schapper who had been earning his living as compositor in Paris, now tried to blossom out as a teacher of languages. He and Bauer gathered up the broken threads of the Federation and made London the centre of its activities. Joseph Moll (died 1849) joined their company (he may already have done so in Paris). His trade was that of watchmaker; he came from Cologne; was a Hercules of moderate stature—how often have I seen him and Schapper triumphantly defend the entrance to a hall against hundreds of assailants!—; a man no less energetic and resolute than his two comrades, but far outstripping them in intelligence. Not only was he a born diplomatist, as the success of his innumerable missions amply testifies; he also had a mind better fitted than either Schapper or Bauer for the understanding of theoretical issues. I made their acquaintance in London during 1843. They were the first proletarian revolutionists I had ever met, and although our outlooks differed in certain details in those early days (for what they had in the way of narrow-minded equalitarian communism* was amply compensated in me by a no less narrow-minded philosophical arrogance!), I can never forget the profound impression these three men made upon me, a youngster at the time, just entering upon manhood.

"In London, as to a lesser degree in Switzerland, freedom of association and of public meeting was of inestimable advantage to them in their activities. On February 7, 1840, the German Workers' Educational Society was founded. This was not an underground organisation but functioned in the full light of day. At the time of writing [1885] it is still in existence. The society served as a recruiting ground for the Federation; and, since the communists were the most active and the most intelligent members of the Society, as

* By "equalitarian communism" I mean a theory of communism which is exclusively or mainly founded upon a demand for equality.

always, they took it as a matter of course that the leadership of the Society should be in the hands of the Federation. Very soon the Federation could boast of several 'communes,' or as they were then called 'huts,' in London. Here, as in Switzerland and elsewhere, tactics were dictated by circumstances. Wherever workers' associations could be formed they were made use of in much the same way. Where legal prohibitions prevented such methods, the organisations took the form of choral societies, gymnastic societies, and the like. Communications were kept up mainly by a continuous flow of travelling members going to and fro among the groups. Where necessary, these travelling members functioned as emissaries. In either case the activity of the Federation was greatly furthered by the governments of the day, which in their wisdom, by exiling every workman who had earned their disfavour—and in nine cases out of ten such a worker was a member of the Federation—converted him into an emissary.

"The reconstituted Federation grew apace. In Switzerland this growth was particularly noticeable. Here such men as Weitling (1808-1870), August Becker (1814-1875, an extremely gifted man, but one whose temperamental instability brought him to grief, just as similar infirmity of purpose had doomed so many other Germans), and others formed a strong organisation whose principles were more or less adapted from Weitling's communistic system. This is not the place to discuss Weitling's communism. But, in order to show the importance of Weitling's system as the first stirring of an independent philosophy of the German proletariat, I cannot do better than quote Marx's own words. Here is what he wrote in the Paris 'Vorwärts' of 1844: 'Where could the German bourgeoisie, including its philosophers and divines, point to a work championing bourgeois political emancipation which could in any way compare with Weitling's *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit* [Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom]? One who compares the jejune and faint-hearted mediocrity of German political literature with this tremendous and brilliant debut of the

German working class, one who compares the huge baby-shoes of the proletariat with the dwarfed and down-at-heel political shoes of the bourgeoisie, cannot but prophesy that Cinderella will grow to giant stature.' The colossus stands before us to-day, and he has many years yet to grow before he will have attained his full proportions.

"Many groups were formed in Germany which from their very nature could not be expected to persist. But those that perished were replaced by fresh groups which outnumbered the losses among the more transient ones. Not until 1846, seven years after the first groups had come into existence, did the German police discover in Berlin (Mentel, born 1812) and in Magdeburg (Beck) vestiges of the Federation. But the authorities were not in a position to follow up their discoveries.

"Before leaving Paris and fleeing to Switzerland, Weitling had, in 1840, gathered the scattered elements of the Federation together.

"The nucleus of the Federation was composed of tailors. Germans practising tailoring business were to be found everywhere: in Switzerland, London, Paris. In the latter town, German was so much the speech of the trade that in 1846 I knew a Norwegian tailor who had journeyed by sea from Drontheim to France, and who had, during eighteen months, hardly spoken a word of French, although he had learned to speak German excellently. In 1847, there were two 'communes' of the Federation in Paris. One was mainly composed of tailors, the other of furniture makers,

"No sooner was the centre of gravity transferred from Paris to London than a new phenomenon came to the fore. The Federation, from being a German organisation, gradually became transformed into an international affair. In addition to German and Swiss, persons of other nationalities to whom the German language could serve as a medium of communication were to be found in the Federation: there were Scandinavians, Dutch, Hungarians, Bohemians, southern Slavs; also there were Russians and Alsatians. In 1847, a British grenadier in full uniform was a regular attendant at the meetings. Soon the Federation was re-

christened Communist Workers' Educational Society. On the membership cards we find the following slogan: 'All men are brothers' in at least twenty languages, although some of the translations might have been bettered! Besides this society which functioned in the open, there was also a secret organisation. This, too, soon assumed an international character. At first the international aspect was limited in scope; it was forced upon the Federation by the mixed nationalities of its members, and by the gradual realisation that, for the revolution to be effective, it needs must take place on a European scale. Thus far, but no further. Nevertheless the foundations of internationalism were laid.

"Those who had fought in the insurrectionary movement of May, 1839, and had sought refuge in London, formed a link between the members of the Federation and the French revolutionists. Similarly in the case of the Polish radicals. The more conspicuous Polish refugees, however, people in the public eye, were of course—like Mazzini (1805-1872) among the Italian refugees—hostile rather than friendly to the communists. The Chartists, because of the specifically British nature of their movement, were ignored by the Federation as unrevolutionary. At a later date I was able to bring them into touch with the leaders of the Federation in London.

"Circumstances led to yet other alterations in the character of the Federation. As was meet in those days, Paris was still looked upon as the birthplace of the revolution. But the movement had now cut loose from the Parisian conspirators. As the Federation grew in size so, likewise, did it grow in the consciousness of its own functions. More and more did its members come to feel that the principles advocated by the Federation were taking root among the German working class, and that the German workers were destined to be the standard-bearers of the European workers as a whole, whether they hailed from the north or from the east. Weitling was a theoretician of communism, who could rank with his French rivals as an equal. The experience of May 12, 1839, had at last taught the lesson that the policy of abortive risings was useless. Although every event was still

looked upon as the possible starting-point of a revolutionary outbreak, although the old, semi-conspiratorial rules were kept in their integrity, this was no more than a remnant of revolutionary defiance which was already coming into collision with wiser and better outlooks.

"The social theories of the Federation, in so far as they existed at all, were wrong-headed. This was due to the conditions of the time. The proletarian part of the membership consisted entirely of manual workers. They were exploited by men who, even in the great metropolis, were nearly always small masters. The exploitation of large-scale tailoring, so-called 'confection,' the transformation of the work into domestic industry on behalf of a great capitalist, was still in its infancy in the London of that epoch. The exploiter was a small master, and the workers in the trade lived in hopes of themselves becoming small masters. In addition, vestiges of the guild spirit still adhered to the German craftsmen. They were not as yet fully fledged proletarians, were only on the way to becoming members of the modern proletariat, were still hangers-on of the petty bourgeoisie, had not at that date become the direct opponents of the bourgeoisie, the large-scale capitalists. These craftsmen, to their eternal honour, instinctively foresaw the future development of their class, and, though not fully conscious of the fact, were pressing forward toward organising themselves as the party of the proletariat. Yet it was impossible to expect that their ingrained craft prejudices should not occasionally trip them up, especially when it came to a detailed criticism of extant society, that is to say, when the investigation of economic facts was demanded of them. I do not believe that one single member of the Federation had ever read a book on political economy. No matter! 'Equality,' 'Brotherhood,' 'Justice,' gave them a leg over every theoretical stile!

"Alongside the communist theory devised by the Federation and by Weitling, another, and very different, theory of communism was emerging. While living in Manchester, I was made painfully aware that economic factors, hitherto assigned an insignificant role or no role at all by historians,