

# Reaffirm the Communist Manifesto\*

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More than 150 years into the foretold struggle between capital and labor, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the *Communist Manifesto* is here reaffirmed. While the communist goal of abolishing private ownership of the means of production remains unrealized due to the comprehensive orchestration of a state-aided bourgeoisie, the ruling class continues to prosper under the fragmented socialist threat. But as the *Manifesto* declared, the ruling class will not escape the worsening crisis of its own system. The proletariat can only take so much oppression and exploitation which now exists on a global scale. The next revolution wherein the communist would have relearned lessons of past triumphs and failures and taken into full account the evolving world capitalist order, may finally lead to the realization of the socialist dream and the final reaffirmation of the *Manifesto*.

We are still in the historical epoch of class struggle between capital and labor, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Thus, we reaffirm the *Communist Manifesto*.

The general principles laid down in this great document of the proletariat remain valid and urgent until the ultimate goal of communism is reached. The spectre of communism which haunted the bourgeoisie and all reactionaries of Europe at the time of Marx and Engels continues to haunt the monopoly bourgeoisie, the revisionists and all reactionaries throughout the world.

## General Principles of the Communist Manifesto

After the tens of thousands of years of prehistory encompassing the primitive communal society, the history of mankind in thousands of years has been a history of class struggles.

Slave, feudal and capitalist societies have come into history. In each form of society, the material conditions of production and of social relations determine the superstructure, the intellectual and cultural life of the oppressors and oppressed.

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One lower form of society yields to a higher one only through class struggle by which the rising progressive class, representing a higher mode of production, overthrows the reactionary ruling class.

Since the overthrow of the feudal system, the modern bourgeoisie has ruled capitalist society. It has used science and technology and exploited the proletariat. In the process it has surpassed and dwarfed the achievements of all pre-capitalist societies put together.

To make itself the ruling class, it has ceaselessly developed the means of production, increased and ceaselessly exploited the proletariat in order to extract profits from labor power and accumulate capital. But the advance of capitalism is not unilinear.

The history of capitalism has been characterized by spasms of expansion and contraction. There were the commercial crises of the 19th century. And there have been far graver crises and far more terrible inter-imperialist wars and wars of aggression brought about by monopoly capitalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

There is a fundamental contradiction between the social character of large-scale commodity production and the private mode of appropriation. The bourgeoisie accumulates capital by extracting surplus labor from the proletariat. Exactly when production rises and the competition among the capitalists intensifies, the capitalists push down the wage and living conditions of the proletariat in order to counter the falling rate of profit. Thus, the market contracts and the crisis of overproduction leads to the massive destruction of productive forces.

Capitalism has reduced society into two great camps, the few who own the means of production and the many who do not and are obliged to sell their labor power in order to subsist. The bourgeoisie consolidates its national market but ceaselessly seeks in the name of free trade to expand the global market, acquire colonies and dominate other people in order to counter crisis and unwittingly or objectively prepare the conditions for a graver crisis.

At first, the proletariat comes into being and expands at the bidding of the capitalist class but eventually learns to organize trade unions to defend its own economic and social interest and ultimately form political

parties to seek political power. In the final analysis, the capitalist class creates its own gravedigger, the revolutionary proletariat.

Communists constitute the advanced detachment of the proletariat. By all means, they link themselves with the entire proletariat. They are needed to fulfill the leading revolutionary role and historic mission of the proletariat, to understand the course of history and to set the line of march for the entire proletariat.

The communists and the proletariat seek to abolish bourgeois property (i.e., the private ownership of the means of production by the bourgeoisie) and replace it with common ownership. Bourgeois property is the most complete and final form of private ownership. To abolish it is to make a radical rupture from the institution of private ownership of the means of production.

For the first time in the history of mankind, the proletariat is an exploited class that is capable of becoming the ruling class. It is also a class that emancipates itself from bourgeois rule only by emancipating all other oppressed and exploited sections of the people. For the proletariat to emancipate itself and win political power is to win the battle for democracy and consequently to make a radical rupture from the millennia of exploitative society by ultimately ending all class oppression and exploitation.

The proletariat is an internationalist force that disdains and combats nationalism as well as the cosmopolitanism of the bourgeoisie. But it can overthrow the bourgeoisie only by forcibly and violently overthrowing the bourgeois state in each country. As Marx and Engels emphatically pointed out in their 1872 preface to the Manifesto, the proletariat cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes. It must smash the bourgeois bureaucratic and military machinery in order to establish the proletarian state.

It does not suffice for communists to recognize and lead all the forms of class struggle of the proletariat. The revolutionary essence of the Communist Manifesto is to seek the overthrow of the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and install the class dictatorship of the proletariat through the class struggle.

The struggle for socialism and communism goes through stages. In the Manifesto itself, Marx and Engels expected the German proletariat to lead the democratic revolution and immediately thereafter the proletarian revolution and they also observed in several other countries that the struggle of the proletariat and people for national independence and agrarian revolution are necessary prerequisites to proletarian revolution.

The communists and the proletariat fight for immediate aims as well as for the ultimate aim of communism by which the oppression and exploitation of one class by another and one country by another is finally ended.

### **The Achievements of Communists Since 1848**

In large historical terms, so short a period of time—only 150 years—has passed since the publication of the Communist Manifesto in February 1848. This great programmatic document has inspired and guided great revolutionary achievements of communists and the proletariat from one stretch of 50 years to another.

Marx and Engels were commissioned by a small international organization of workers called the Communist League in November 1847 to write the manifesto as a program. They wrote it from December 1847 to January 1848. It was submitted for publication in February 1848 before the outbreak of the February revolution in France.

The Communist Manifesto set forth the general principles of scientific communism. It contended with the bourgeois and other reactionary forces in Europe trying to frighten the public with nursery tales about the “spectre of communism.” It also contended with the various brands of unscientific socialism, those deceptive versions pushed by the feudalists, the petty-bourgeois and the German idealists, the unabashedly conservative or bourgeois and the naive and kindhearted ones of critical-utopian socialism and communism.

The Manifesto was first published in German prior to the workers’ uprisings of 1848 in Europe. But in fact, it had scarce influence. After the June 1848 workers’ uprising in Paris, the cause of proletarian revolution looked ill-fated and destined to be a mere footstool of the

bourgeoisie against the landed aristocracy. The Communist League dissolved in 1852 after the Cologne Communist trial.

But Marx and Engels persevered in their communist theoretical and practical work among the workers. In 1864 they led the formation of the First International, the International Workingmen's Association. In 1871, the workers of Paris rose up and established the Paris Commune. This was shortlived but it demonstrated that the proletariat could seize power from the bourgeoisie and served as the prototype of the class dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the wake of the defeat of the Paris Commune, once more it looked as if the cause of proletarian revolution would come to naught. The First International was allowed to fade away in 1872. But Marx and Engels and their communist followers in the working class persevered in their revolutionary work.

By the time that the Second International was founded through the International Socialist Workers' Party in Paris in 1889, the Marxist parties under the inspiration and guidance of the Communist Manifesto were dominant. The first 50 years of the Manifesto ended in 1898, with Marxism becoming unquestionably the main trend in the working class movement.

Free competition capitalism of the 19th century developed into monopoly capitalism or modern imperialism as the dominant force of the 20th century. Lenin inherited, extended and further developed Marxism. He contended with the revisionism, social chauvinism and social pacifism of the social-democratic parties in the Second International.

Adhering to the revolutionary essence of Marxism as enunciated in the Communist Manifesto and learning lessons from the Paris Commune, the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin were able to use the dire conditions of the first inter-imperialist war to bring about the Great October Socialist Revolution and establish the first socialist state. They fulfilled the hope expressed by Marx and Engels in the 1882 preface to the Russian edition of the Manifesto that the proletarian revolution would succeed in a two-stage revolution on the basis of the common ownership of land.

In the spirit of proletarian internationalism, Lenin proceeded to establish the Third International in 1919. This broadcast the Communist Manifesto and the anti-imperialist line in both the imperialist countries and the dominated countries, the colonies and semicolonies.

The Bolsheviks defeated the imperialists and all local class enemies in the civil war and the interventionist war and surmounted economic blockade, military encirclement and all kinds of provocations in order to build the Soviet Union.

Stalin pursued the line of socialist revolution and construction. Under his leadership, the Soviet state and people created a powerful industrial foundation and a collectivized and mechanized agriculture. The educational and cultural system was expanded and it produced within a short period of time the largest contingent of professionals and technicians for socialist construction.

The Soviet Union thrived with a population which was one-sixth of the world's while the imperialists were stricken with the Great Depression and were driven by their contradictions to the second inter-imperialist war. The Soviet proletariat and people overcame the Nazi German aggression at great cost and proceeded to lead the great counterattack against the fascist forces of monopoly capitalism.

In the course of the second interimperialist war, communists in so many countries in the world excelled in fighting and defeating the forces of fascism and laid the basis of people's democracies and socialist states. Thus, before the 100th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto, communist and workers' parties were in the process of coming to power and consolidating it in several countries. More than one-third of the world's population would be free from the imperialists and the local reactionaries.

The last 50 years began in 1948 with the desperate declaration of the Cold War by the imperialists against the rising combination of socialist countries and national liberation movements. The peak of communist strength was reached on the basis of the great unity of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

But alas the new bourgeoisie through the Khrushchov revisionist clique overthrew the proletariat in the Soviet Union in 1956. So did the revisionist cliques in Eastern Europe. For a certain period Mao and Hoxha stood up together for Marxism-Leninism and combated modern revisionism.

With China's one-quarter of humanity, Mao pursued the line of socialist revolution and construction, striving to avoid the pitfalls of Soviet development and surpass its achievements. From 1966 to 1976, he put forward the theory and practice of continuing revolution by combating revisionism, preventing the restoration of capitalism and consolidating socialism under the dictatorship of the proletariat through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

In 1975, US imperialism was categorically defeated in its war of aggression against the Vietnamese and other Indochinese peoples. For the United States, defeat in this war was far worse than that in the Korean war, which had ended in a stalemate. The US was stricken by a deepening economic crisis which signaled a strategic decline.

But in the latter half of the 1970s, the line of Mao was reversed in China. Soviet bureaucrat monopoly capitalism went into stagnation. And the imperialist alliance headed by the United States had succeeded in entrapping most countries in the third world in the web of neocolonialism.

In the entire '80s, the dogma of free trade was anachronistically touted by monopoly capitalism. The restoration of capitalism was speeded up in all the revisionist-ruled countries, including the Soviet Union and China, under the slogan of reforms. From 1989 to 1991, the revisionist rulers were toppled, public assets were brazenly privatized and social turmoil occurred in the former Soviet-bloc countries. The Soviet Union itself disintegrated.

Until the middle of 1997, it would seem as if the imperialist powers and their client-states would continue to rule without serious danger from the ever worsening crisis of the world capitalist system and as if the imperialists would never again face any serious challenge from the proletariat and the people.

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto, we recognize more clearly than ever before that the monopoly bourgeoisie and all its camp followers cannot escape the worsening crisis of their own system. The retrogression of monopoly capitalism to the most naked forms of oppression and exploitation, using the antiquated slogans of liberalism and “free market” has led to an unprecedentedly grave new world disorder.

The revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the people against imperialism and for socialism is beginning to surge forward once again. Communists are preparing for greater battles and greater victories ahead.

### **Continuing Struggle of the Proletariat**

On the 150th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto, the proletariat and the rest of the people of the world confront the monopoly bourgeoisie and the reactionaries. All the basic class contradictions are intensifying. We are certain that in the next 50 years there shall be more widespread disorder, more acute class struggles and greater revolutionary victories of the proletariat and the people.

The restoration of capitalism in socialist countries and the neocolonial redirection of newly independent countries and national liberation movements have only meant far more intolerable oppression and exploitation. The proletariat and people of the world are impelled to struggle for national liberation, democracy and socialism.

In the temporary defeat and decline of the working class movement, which became clear as a trend in the last two decades, the imperialist powers headed by the United States have accelerated their exploitation of the working people and have forced them into lower depths of poverty and misery worldwide. It is clearer than ever that we are still in the era of imperialism and that the need is urgent for new democratic and socialist revolutions led by the proletariat.

Within the imperialist countries, the basic contradictions between capital and labor, between the monopoly bourgeoisie and the proletariat, is becoming acute. The rise of productivity through higher technology has

accelerated the accumulation and concentration of capital and the drive for higher profits.

The most profitable monopoly firms excel at downsizing their labor force in order to maximize their profits. They have the easiest access to finance capital generated by the state, private finance monopolies and multilateral finance agencies.

Unemployment and reduction of real wage levels have led to the contraction of the domestic market of the imperialist countries and in an ever worsening crisis of overproduction. Thus, only the successful monopoly firms register extremely high profits, while many others are unsuccessful and go bankrupt or are absorbed by other firms. There is the general tendency for growth and profit rates of entire national economies to fall.

The entire monopoly bourgeoisie has the illusion that it can solve its problems by accelerating the privatization of public assets, deregulation against public interest and trade and investment liberalization. It has run amuck in trying to dismantle the social measures and social pretenses of its own state and to blame the proletariat for the ravages of the system of monopoly capitalism. The injury and insult being heaped upon the proletariat are an outrage. This is the prelude to revolutionary resistance.

Coming from the balance of forces resulting from the last inter-imperialist war and further compelled to band together in the Cold War in the last 50 years, the imperialist powers continue to unite under the chieftainship of the United States against the proletariat in their homegrounds and against the oppressed peoples and nations of the world.

But the shrinkage of the domestic and foreign markets drive the imperialist powers to compete against each other, despite the interweaving combinations of monopoly interests through multinational firms and banks. The greatest shrinkage of the market has occurred in the overwhelming majority of countries which have remained dependent on raw-material production for export. They have been stricken with the crisis of overproduction in this line of production since the 1970s. They have been crushed by the deteriorating terms of trade and foreign debt and forced to go into austerity and abject misery.

After being touted as “emergent markets,” exceptional countries to which the imperialist powers have conceded low value-added manufacturing of consumer goods for export, have sunk because of the global overproduction of the type of goods that they produce and because of overborrowing from the imperialist countries to finance the superprofit-taking of the foreign monopoly firms and the consumerism of the local exploiting classes. Even the rarer economies like those of South Korea and Taiwan, previously given the concession to build basic industries and export higher value-added goods, are now sinking.

At first, the revisionist-ruled countries that have rapidly pushed the privatization of public assets appeared to be new fields of investment for the global expansion of capital. But China has undermined its own industrial foundation and has become dependent on the export of low value-added products of which there is now global overproduction. The former Soviet- bloc countries have destroyed most of their industries and have become dumping grounds of surplus product and speculative capital from the West on top of a smaller amount of productive capital to exploit local cheap labor. Their economies continue to break down.

Where socialism has been betrayed by the revisionist renegades for several decades, the bureaucrat and private capitalists tend to assume the role of the comprador big bourgeoisie, make the economy regress to pre-socialist conditions and consign the working people to a life of unemployment and misery. The most rapid destruction of productive forces has occurred in the former Soviet-bloc countries in the current decade.

The strategic plan of the imperialist powers is to prevent the development of large countries such as Russia, China, India and Brazil into powerful industrial capitalist rivals and keep them down as captive markets, sources of raw materials and fields of anti-industrial investments. The United States, Japan and the European Union know too well that the world has become too small to accommodate more industrial capitalist countries.

As a consequence of the ravages of neocolonialism, social strife has been flaring up in the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and in the former revisionist-ruled countries, particularly in the former Yugoslavia and parts of the former Soviet Union. In the current

period, there are more armed conflicts resulting from the rivalries of bureaucratic cliques raising the slogans of nationalism and religion against each other. The long-term misrepresentation of socialism by the imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries have pushed down the level of political debate and struggle.

But some armed revolutionary movements of the toiling masses of workers and peasants in certain countries are led by communist and workers' parties. These parties are significant because they hold high the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism and are inspirational examples in the current transition from a period of global defeat for the toiling people to a new period of revolutions led by the proletariat on an unprecedented scale.

In the countries where socialism was betrayed by revisionists and which are on a ceaseless course of social and economic degradation, new communist and workers' parties are arising to reassert the revolutionary legacy of the proletariat and to respond to the challenge of armed revolution against the big bourgeoisie.

In all the major and minor industrial capitalist countries, there is social unrest due to the rising mass unemployment and deterioration of wage and living conditions. General strikes and other mass protest actions have surged against the worsening social conditions and against the political currents of nationalism, racism and fascism. Genuine communists and workers' parties are striving to emerge and grow in strength against tremendous odds.

Contradictions among the imperialist powers are increasingly conspicuous in the field of economic competition, despite the existence of multinational firms and banks and the multilateral agencies. The danger of an inter-imperialist war approaches upon conditions of global depression, the rise of fascist forces within the imperialist countries and collisions of interest among the imperialist powers in the dominated countries.

Both private and state monopoly capitalism exist together, even as the monopoly bourgeoisie has shifted the stress of its policy from Keynesian to neoliberal. The monopoly bourgeoisie always uses its own state as the instrument of its class dictatorship to oppress and exploit the

proletariat and the people within national boundaries. Farther afield, the imperialist states and the business corporations that they serve dictate upon the client states and impose conditions that escalate the oppression and exploitation of the people.

When monopoly capitalism anachronistically uses the myth and language of liberalism and refurbishes this as “globalization,” it is to stress the dominance of the private monopoly bourgeoisie over the entire society and to use both imperialist and client states in accelerating the delivery of public funds and resources to the private monopoly corporations at the expense of any social pretense or actual social spending.

From the 1930s to the 1970s, the imperialist powers used the state in economic activity in order to counter economic crises, wage global war, reconstruct war-ravaged economies, conduct the Cold War and arms race, launch wars of aggression and undertake pseudodevelopment programs in the former colonies. But since the 1980s, they have shifted to a so-called neoliberal policy of “free trade.” In so short a time, the fear of stagflation in the ‘70s has transmuted into a fear of global deflation and depression in current times.

As soon as the wreckage of the lives of the toiling masses by the unbridled greed of monopoly capitalism causes economic depression, the monopoly bourgeoisie will certainly use the state more conspicuously for pump priming the economy, accelerating the arms race and suppressing the people and the revolutionary mass movement. On its homegrounds, the monopoly bourgeoisie and its states will swing back to making social pretenses.

In the backwash of the social turmoil in China in 1989 and the disintegration of the Soviet-bloc revisionist regimes and the Soviet Union itself from 1989 to 1991, the conservative bourgeoisie and rabidly anti-communist elements of the petty bourgeoisie have made a strident chorus about the futility of socialism and the class struggle of the proletariat.

They have touted as the happiest arrangement the trilateral alliance of the existing bourgeois states, big business and the so-called civil society of non-governmental organizations and institutions. In unison, they have decreed as intrinsically uncivil and evil any plan or attempt to

overthrow the existing bourgeois states. They have considered as superior to the revolutionary class struggle for socialism any movement which they describe as beyond class.

They obscure the long record of communists in fighting for the right of nations to self-determination, for civil and political rights, a sound economic development against the plunder and pollution of the environment by the imperialists, for the right of women to equality with men, and so on.

But no matter how strident or subtle is the anti-communist propaganda and no matter how powerful the anti-communist influence of the high-tech mass media, the schools, churches and the like, the proletariat and the masses of the people are confronted with the intolerable conditions of oppression and exploitation and the ever worsening crisis of the capitalist system and are driven by their own interest to wage revolutionary class struggle against monopoly capitalism and aim for socialism.

Surely, when the revolutionary movements against imperialism and for socialism become strong again, the imperialists and their bourgeois, petty bourgeois and even feudal and clerical propagandists will once more pick up the slogan of socialism in order to misrepresent it and try to outflank the advocates of scientific socialism.

Right now, certain parties and organizations persistently specialize in misrepresenting themselves as socialist and communist and in opposing the revolutionary essence of the Communist Manifesto and the teachings of the great communist thinkers and leaders. They continue as part of the political variety show of the monopoly bourgeoisie and they stand guard to block the resurgence of the revolutionary movement led by genuine communist and workers' parties.

But the genuine communists and the proletariat learn their lessons well from both positive and negative experiences. They know that the communist movement has moved from peak to peak, the Paris Commune of 1871, the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, the Chinese Revolution of 1949 and other socialist revolutions after World War II and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. They also know the troughs that the movement has gone through before each peak is reached.

Communists have a wealth of experience to avail of in overthrowing the class enemy, building socialism, combating classical and modern revisionism and striving to prevent the restoration of capitalism. The next upsurge of the world proletarian revolution will entail learning well the lessons of the past and taking full account of new conditions.

The process of raising the level of theory and practice of communists to a new and higher one is an endless process, within the historical epoch when communists are needed to arouse, organize and mobilize the proletariat and the oppressed peoples and nations in fulfilling its historic mission of building socialism until the ultimate goal of communism is reached. ❁