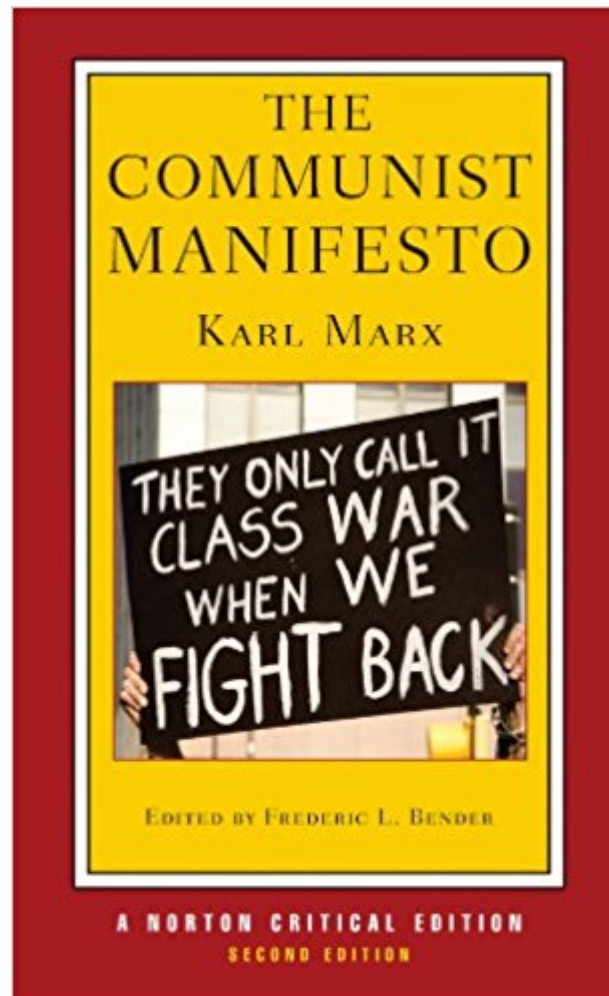




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The Communist Manifesto (Second Edition) (Norton Critical Editions)



Synopsis

Karl Marx's 1848 text is reframed in this revised Norton Critical Edition in the context of twenty-first-century theoretical debates, capitalist globalization, the information technology revolution, and contemporary struggles up to and including the 2011 Arab Spring. Simultaneously extolled in its day as truth incarnate and the inspiration for a life-and-death struggle for humankind's liberation and condemned as the vilest of propaganda on behalf of despotism, the Communist Manifesto continues to be the most potent literary symbol of the struggle over the form and content of freedom. This revised Norton Critical Edition provides students with the best documentation and scholarship with which to appreciate the Communist Manifesto's complexities, context, and legacy of controversy. The Second Edition interprets the Manifesto in relation to the dominance of globalized financial capital, socialist feminist critique, postmodernism, and the fragmentation/transformation of the global working class in the twenty-first century. The volume includes a carefully annotated text of the Communist Manifesto, the editor's historical and philosophical introduction, and a chronology of historical events surrounding publication of the Manifesto. Fifteen seminal interpretations—eight of them new to the Second Edition—have been collected. New contributions include Lucien Laurat on the Manifesto's sociological standpoint as adapted to the modernization of the mid-twentieth century; Wendy Lynne Lee's assessment of the Manifesto's key concepts, metaphors, and arguments from a radical-feminist perspective; the article that served as the basis for *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's important postmodernist adaptation of the Manifesto for twenty-first century conditions; and noteworthy responses to Hardt and Negri's arguments by Slavoj Žižek and by Taki Fotopoulos and Alexandros Gezerlis. A Selected Bibliography and Index are also included.

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Customer Reviews

Karl Marx studied law and philosophy at the universities of Bonn and Berlin, completing his doctorate in 1841. Expelled from Prussia in 1844, he took up residence first in Paris and then in London where, in 1867, he published his magnum opus *Capital*. A co-founder of the International Workingmen's Association in 1864, Marx died in London in 1883. Frederic L. Bender is Professor of Philosophy and Chairman of the Philosophy Department at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. He is the author of *The Betrayal of Marx*, and editor of *Karl Marx: The Essential Writings*.

Great

The word "Communism" strikes a chord with many in the United States. Especially during the Cold War, labeling an individual as a communist was a promise of political repression. Such labeling accused an individual of treason, child beating, or worse (Ackerman). More recently, Senator Bernie Sanders has been branded a communist by many who were trying to undercut him as a candidate for presidency (Ackerman). But what actually is communism? Society's current perception of communism tends to be simplified and inaccurate. The Norton Second Edition of the *Communist Manifesto* shows us that although communism is difficult to implement and may be outdated, there is a lot to be learned from the different ways people interpret Marx's ideas. In the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, Marx attacks the bourgeoisie and the power and reach of capitalism as the source of class antagonism: "The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonism. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, and new forms of struggle in place of the old ones." (Marx 61) The term bourgeoisie refers to the wealthy class that benefitted from industrialization, while proletariat defines the urban and rural working class exploited by the bourgeoisies ("The Communist Manifesto"). Marx then calls for the proletariat to overthrow the bourgeoisie and eliminate private capital in order to restore equality and humanness. He claims that the resulting society will no longer be enslaved by social classes, money, and the state (Engels). The manner in which Marx conveys his message

is truly astounding. From the first sentence about the "spectre of Communism" to the last, his writing is flourishing with powerful metaphors and imagery (Marx 59). Through such powerful writing, Marx attempts to appeal to as many people as possible. For example, the manifesto continuously repeats the idea of the "exploitation of the working class" (Marx 63). Such exploitation is "veiled by religious and political illusions" and is "naked, shameless, direct, [and] brutal" (Marx 63). Through such repetition, Marx attempts to build a rapport with all his readers, as anybody who feels that any aspect of society is unfair can now resonate with Marx's words. The manifesto attempts to reach out further, to women and children, when it claims that the capitalistic society has destroyed the concept of family and that "all [people] are instruments of labor, according to their age and sex" (Marx 68). Marx's tactical writing indicates why the world was impacted so heavily by communism and why the manifesto is a must-read. As a prior review of this book states, the manifesto is "a dated work" and communism is heavily linked to a failed government system. Some of Marx's core principles, such as the "Labor Theory of Value," are fundamentally flawed and inapplicable to today's society (Prychitko). So why is this book still relevant? The Norton Second Edition of the Communist Manifesto answers the question beautifully. This version of the book contains prefaces for different versions of the manifesto throughout place and time. Marx's and Engel's unique appreciation of the manifesto is reflected by the prefaces. The authors admit how ideas of the manifesto may not be valid anymore, but that the manifesto itself cannot be altered as it is part of the past. The authors' emphasis on the impact the potentially outdated manifesto can make draws attention to how the manifesto affects contemporary issues. There are many supplementary essays included in the latter pages of the book that entice discussion and debate. Of the many essays included in this book, I select the one regarding "Marxist Feminism" by Wendy Lynne Lee as my favorite. In the article, Lee discusses the strengths and weaknesses of Alison Jaggar's claim: "Capitalism, male dominance, racism, and imperialism are intertwined so inextricably that they are inseparable; consequently, the abolition of any of these systems of domination requires the end of all of them" (Marx 199). Sexism and women's rights have resurfaced very recently as a vital issue, as demonstrated by the Women's March. To observe how someone uses communist principles to tackle more modern societal problems, points to how Marx's powerful words still resonate with people and will continue to do so in the future. In retrospect, the ideal version of communism Marx described in the Communist Manifesto never became a reality. However, Marx's words compared to its different implementations reflect greatly upon

human nature, and begin to explain why society is like it is. It is important to ask why communist nations in history did not carry out the lessons in the manifesto exactly as they were written, and what we can learn from these discrepancies. I strongly urge anyone who is reading this to pick up the book and enjoy. Sources

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Had to get this for class. Long and slightly confusing, but I like a challenge :) Lots of background history, which is a plus.

A dated work, soon after its publication on February 21, 1848. "The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as ∞ an immense accumulation of commodities," its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity.

∞ - Karl Marx (1867), Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I, Chapter 1: Commodities.

Let's rewrite that first paragraph from Capital, correcting the errors...

"The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as ∞ an immense accumulation of capital," its unit being the rate of interest. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of interest rates.

∞ It should be stressed for the novice to this subject, all three volumes of Capital provide, as Marx put it, a scientific explanation (a scientific explanation not to be confused for the scientific method) of how the Capitalist system works from the perspective that labor is the underlying essence of all value. If one accepts the basic assumptions made early in Chapter 1 of Capital, Volume 1--that abstract labor is the source of value(1)--Marx's logic flows well, not only through Volume 1, but all the way through Volume 3. If one is looking to fault Marx's economics based on the works of Capital, one will come up empty not only because Marx's logic is flawless, but as economist and former Marxist Thomas Sowell says, " ...Marx considered the idea of proving a concept to be ridiculous. Moreover,

Engels had asserted...that one only proves one's ignorance of dialectics by thinking of it as a means by which things can be proved."(2)However, there was one instance where Marx let his dialectical guard down, allowing for an empirical objection that would consign all of Marx's works for naught. Sowell himself touches upon the specific passage where Marx cornered himself, but doesn't appreciate the full ramifications of Marx's observation. In the "The Poverty of Philosophy" (1847) Marx says, "In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The handmill [a productive force] gives you society with the feudal lord, the steam-mill [a productive force], society with the industrial capitalist."(3)Sowell argues regarding Marx's handmill/steam-mill analogy, "If read literally, these words suggest a one-way causation and explanation of given states of being rather than of transformation. But that is clearly inconsistent both with Marx's and Engels' own treatment of history and with the dialectical conception of reciprocal interaction. These words are perhaps best read as epigrams-and of the dangers of misunderstanding inherent in that writing style."(4)Is Sowell correct? Was Marx merely being terse with his handmill/steam-mill analogy?While Sowell is indeed correct that Marx and Engels viewed the unfolding of history as a "dialectical conception of reciprocal interaction", that observation does not answer the question: What comes first? The machinery, or new social relations, derived from machines, that interacts with the old social relations to produce the new hybrid social relations? Marx was emphatic that machines came first, then all else followed them. In his retort to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's observation that the use of machines was a consequence of the division of labor,(5) Marx writes:"Thus it is slapping history in the face to want to begin by the division of labor in general, in order to get subsequently to a specific instrument of production, machinery.Machinery is no more an economic category than the bullock that drags the plough. Machinery is merely a productive force. The modern workshop, which depends on the application of machinery, is a social production relation, an economic category."(6)The problem with this empirical observation is that before there was a steam mill there already existed an industrial capitalist society that not only contained the requisite industrial capitalist mode of production that manufactured the necessary constituent parts that went into the creation of the steam mill (there were many companies involved in the problem-solving for and manufacture of components that went into a steam engine), but this pre-steam mill society also contained an already sophisticated industrial capitalist labor force that made the constituent parts for the steam mill, not to mention built the steam mill itself. Contemporaneous with the industrial capitalist production of steam engines, there existed the production of the machines that the steam engines would power. In other words, the

steam mill presupposes an already functioning industrial capitalist society! Marx's rebuke to Proudhon is a tautological response that also fails to recognize that a steam engine is made up of independently manufactured parts that predates the manufacture of a steam engine with those independently manufactured parts! Marx fails to mention this double inconsistency with his material "productive forces" empirical observation. Simplified, Marx is speaking of the root cause for industrial Capitalism...the steam engine, but that beginning of industrial Capitalism only exists to the extent of (1) the already existing industrial Capitalist division of labor that manufactured the component parts for the steam engine; (2) the already existing industrial Capitalist capital goods/intermediate goods industries that manufactured the constituent parts that went into the construction of the steam engine; (3) the already existing industrial Capitalist capital goods/intermediate goods industries that manufactured the machines that the steam engine powers; and (4) an already existing industrial Capitalist division of labor that manufactures those machines powered by the steam engine! When the first steam-mill was completed supposedly, according to Marx, 'giving' a society with industrial Capitalism, in fact industrial Capitalism, and an industrial Capitalist division of labor, already existed, and would have to already be in existence otherwise there could be no steam-mills and the machines they were created to power! Marx behaves like a child throwing a tantrum: Machines come first, then all else follows. Why? Because Marx said so, even though the historical record says otherwise! In fact, and unknown to Ricardian economists or Marx, industrial Capitalism couldn't have emerged without the conscious decision of nations to allow for the rise of interest rates to free market heights, abandoning low interest rates policies, such low interest rates policies making possible the Mercantilist pre-industrial Capitalist era. Only with higher, market-based, interest rates is it possible to accumulate the necessary large quantities of capital for industrial enterprise. During the Mercantilist era low interest rates ensured that only consumption-based investments could take place, such investments requiring relatively little capital expenditures, such low capital expenditures being a function of the expected return on the investment, which return is based on the low interest rate policy being followed by Mercantilist nations. Industrial ventures, on the other hand, require large expenditures of capital, such amounts only made possible by a higher rate of return that can recoup the larger capital outlay, a higher rate of return that is made possible only with higher, market-based, interest rates. We therefore see that not only was it necessary to already have an existing industrial Capitalist division of labor before machines made their appearance, there also needed to be in existence the requisite financing for the new machines to come into existence, meaning a new industrial Capitalist financial setup (where market-based, higher, interest rates are the norm) was a necessary precursor for the emergence of

industrial Capitalism. As I mentioned at the beginning of this review, Marx's logic flows well, and therefore his peculiar analysis of industrial capitalist production is consistent throughout. However, Marx's logic flows well because he begins his analysis with an already existing industrial capitalist economy in existence. When we move back a step, back just before the new industrial capitalist economy comes into existence, the logical foundation upon which Marx's peculiar analysis of industrial capitalist production stands implodes upon itself. Marx's definition of capital is surplus value (surplus value, says Marx, being peculiar to capitalist production: "Hitherto we have investigated how surplus-value emanates from capital; we have now to see how capital arises from surplus-value." But this production of surplus-value completes but the first act of the capitalist process of production (surplus value merely equaling a company's profits, a company's profits equaling the portion of wages Marx said labor isn't paid. Of course, before there existed the capitalist economy, there was no surplus value that capitalist production could operate on for its capital base, meaning Marx's labor surplus-based capitalist economy couldn't have come into existence, proving that there first existed a non-surplus value based capitalist financial system that set in motion capitalist production! Marx's writings on economics places the mule before the cart!----- (see first comment for available links to titles cited) 1. Capital, Karl Marx, p.27. 2. Marxism: Philosophy and Economics, Thomas Sowell, p.109. 3. The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 122 (takes into account the changes and corrections introduced by Marx into the copy presented to N. Utina in 1876). 4. Marxism: Philosophy and Economics, Thomas Sowell, p.56. 5. "Division of labor, then, is the first phase of economic evolution as well as of intellectual development: our point of departure is true as regards both man and things, and the progress of our exposition is in no wise arbitrary." The Philosophy of Poverty, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1847). 6. The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 149 (takes into account the changes and corrections introduced by Marx into the copy presented to N. Utina in 1876).----- Revised Addendum: Formulated on February 25, 2014, 10:30 AM EST Proof that Marx's Law of Value (which posits that labor is the sole source of value, imputing that value into commodities) is in error: If all the machines created throughout the history of man were to have been kept within the confines of the minds of their creators, that is never manufactured, would such machines be imputed with value in a Marxist sense? Yes, they should equal the POTENTIAL value of their labor. Now, since actual labor is required for there to be potential value, and there is no actual labor to speak of, then the potential imputation of labor value into machines/commodities is zero, and therefore Marx's Law of Value is in error. In fact, the proof

affirms that imputation of a commodity's value can't be anything physical, it must be subjective...that is in the mind of the observer.-----Addendum (July 18, 2014):The following nicely illustrates how net (new) investment (productivity increases) took place before medium of exchange, while (1) also illustrating how such net (new) investments spurred trade between separated communities; and (2) clarifying Marx's confusion as to what came first to alter social relations, (i) machines; or (ii) something else preceding machines...Tribe A saved more by looking for food less, placing that saved time into creating a net that would increase the catch of fish. We can say that Tribe A has a greater productive edge than does Tribe B, whose members are still using sharpened sticks to catch fish--very laborious and relatively unproductive.Now Tribe A decides, due to its higher productivity/wealth, it can afford to save more time, adding this saved time to the saved time it used for making fishing nets, and build a boat that will allow their nets to catch even more fish. Being busy building boats, Tribe A allows Tribe B to build the nets--a less productive venture than the new boat-building venture is. Tribe A's greater productivity thanks to fishing boats (and greater wealth thanks to fishing boats) allows for more children, increasing the tribe's population, allowing for a larger labor supply in the near future that will be available for procuring other innovative, labor-saving inventions.In the modern economy the money we save is the "saved time" that Tribe A used to construct nets/boats, but since the rate of interest is being intentionally kept low by the Federal Reserve, the Bank of England, the European Central Bank and the Bank of Japan, there can be no new capital formation (money that's used for new long-term productive investments) in Western economies (nor Japan) for new productive ventures, because the lure for such new investments--the higher rate of return that higher, market-based, interest rates offer--is non-existent; the central bank mandated low interest rate policy won't cover the loan on the massive outlay of capital that net (new) productive projects require.By the way, notice what comes first in the above illustration, contradicting Marx's claim that the "material productive forces" (machines) are the INITIAL venue by which societies alter their values/relationships...people had to "save time" FIRST by curtailing their quest for food.* Now in the modern economy, where money is used, FIRST comes the necessity of market-based interest rates that allows for the accumulation of capital that THEN produces the labor-saving machines! The higher the market-based interest rate, the better for capital accumulation.-----*Incredibly, Marx was unaware (or more likely, deluded himself into unawareness) of this critical sequence.

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