

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

In 1847, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published the *Communist Manifesto* as a platform for the Communist League, a small German workers' party. In the excerpt below, they present their view of "bourgeois society."

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster 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 classes. . . .

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.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: It has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two hostile camps, into two classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat. . . .

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left no other bond between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, 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 [in-capable of being annulled] chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science into its paid wage-laborers.

1. According to Marx and Engels, on what struggle is the history of society based? _____

2. Who is the oppressed in each of the following relationships? (a) patrician and plebeian (b) guildmaster and journeyman (c) bourgeoisie and proletariat

3. According to Marx and Engels, there has always been oppression. Why, then, do they feel that their epoch is worse than previous epochs?

4. (a) According to Marx and Engels, what ties bound the lord to his serfs?

(b) What ties now bind the bourgeoisie to the proletariat?

(c) Why do Marx and Engels believe that the ties between a lord and his serfs were more acceptable than those between the bourgeoisie and proletariat?

Marxist Theory

CAPITALISM

- Private Ownership of Industry
- The Freedom of Competition
- Results in Unequal Economic Classes



CLASS STRUGGLE

- Rich Class and Working Class Struggle Over Wealth



WORKERS REVOLT

- Working Class Carries Out Plan to Over take Upper Class



SOCIALISM

- Government Ownership of Industry
- Goal is to Bring Economic Equality
- And Have a Classless Society



COMMUNISM

- Goal of classless society achieved
- No Government needed