Editors' Introduction

Terrell Carver and James Farr

Even among the world's classics – in any field and of any genre – there are few texts that have been reprinted so many times in so many editions, and translated into so many languages (repeatedly), as the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. It is both revered and reviled, which has something to do with its phenomenal circulation. A text that inspires such disparate reactions is certainly intriguing. Whether the ideas are loved or hated, the *Manifesto* is a standard work both in popular political circulation and on academic reading lists. The hagiographical and debunking literatures on Marx (and his self-styled "second fiddle," Engels) are enormous, as are the rather more considered academic commentaries and – since the global financial crises of 2008 – respectable journalistic notices. Marx is back! And so is the *Manifesto*. There is an audio book, an illustrated comic and various animations on YouTube, including the incomparable "Communist Manifestoon."[1]

But while there are more readers than ever for the thirty-or-so pages that this short text usually occupies, there is surprisingly little commentary focused specifically on it, other than introductory essays, biographical run-throughs and bibliographical histories. The purpose of this collection, therefore, is to remedy this state of affairs, and to put the most famous and widely read work of the two iconic authors front-and-center throughout in a critical *Companion*.

As with many, indeed most other manifestos, this one could easily have disappeared into the archive (and in this case, the police archive) and have had little influence or readership beyond its initial publication in the revolutionary years of 1848–1849. Its main public notice in that period was in the counter-revolutionary trials and tribulations of the 1850s. While it took a concerted political effort in the mid-1860s and finally in 1872 to make this document speak to mass audiences, the overwhelming truth is that the *Manifesto* communicates astoundingly well to this day, despite its obvious roots in a German-speaking political world long gone. This is because it asserts general propositions about politics, society, humanity, technology, labor, production,

economics, trade, morality, family, women, ideas, action, class, war, peace, government, nationhood and much else. Its language is colorful, even fantastic and Gothic, famously invoking specters and sorcerers. The diction is direct, hortatory, provocative, scornful and inspiring, and it has generated familiar apothegms and catchphrases in its "authorized" English rendition: "A spectre is haunting Europe" (CW 6: 481)[2]; "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (CW 6: 482)[3]; "every class struggle is a political struggle" (CW 6: 483); "The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (CW 6: 486)[4]; "no other nexus between man and man ... than callous 'cash payment'" (CW 6: 487); "the idiocy of rural life" (CW 6: 488); "All that is solid melts into air" (CW 6: 487)[5]; "What the bourgeoisie ... produces ... is its own grave-diggers" (CW 6: 496); "The working men have no country" (CW 6: 502); "The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class" (CW 6: 503); "to win the battle of democracy" (CW 6: 504)[6]; "Political power ... is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another" (CW 6: 505); "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (CW 6: 506); "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains" (CW 6: 519); "WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!" (CW 6: 519).

However, bold assertions and memorable catchphrases do not in themselves explain the extraordinary power and interest of this work, appropriate as these gems are to manifestos, where the object is to arouse emotion and get people onside. As Engels said at the time, "some history would need to be narrated" (CW 38: 149) in order to back up the "principles of communism" (CW 6: 341–357) which he had been drafting. The authors were aiming to get their message across, or rather the message to which they wanted the League of Communists to adhere, and with which they as international colleagues could then agitate for more support. The large-scale political struggle at the time – which the *Manifesto* makes clear – was for representative and responsible (rather than monarchical and authoritarian) governments, and indeed it took a number of generations, and many, many lives, before this was realized – as much as it has been – in democracies of the twentieth century. We should certainly ponder the entrenched and often violent resistance of ruling elites in even constitutional regimes throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to any extension of the franchise – and granting of civil rights generally – to majorities of women and working class people, and to minorities excluded from full citizenship on racial, religious or other grounds. Unlike other manifestos, the *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels contextualizes this democratizing struggle within a history of human civilization as such, conceived on a global scale.

What keeps the *Manifesto* fresh and relevant is its opening gambit: societies have long been divided between ruler and ruled, rich and poor, but then, we learn, oppressor and oppressed. This politicizing turn to what is otherwise a

familiar and uninspiring litany disarms resignation, complacency and – crucially for the new model atheists Marx and Engels – any next-worldly get-outs. But rather more importantly from our perspective – and also from that of the newly industrializing societies of the 1840s – the focus on technology, power-driven production and mass consumption economies is spot on. For Marx and Engels, and for the committed and could-be communists of their intended audiences, human history has turned on the industrial revolution. Whether or not this upheaval has reached anyone in particular, it is – as the text states with horrifying imagery – on an unstoppable march across the globe.

It is quite possible to read the opening sections I and II of the *Manifesto* as a "hymn to the bourgeoisie," where "bourgeoisie" is simply a reference to the commercial, property-owning and capital-accumulating classes of society that anyone – then and now – can recognize on the street and read about in the news media. That is because there is paragraph after paragraph recounting their achievements in revolutionizing technologies and constantly improving the means of production and communication, erecting architectural wonders and conjuring "whole populations . . . up from the ground" (CM 238–241). All of that is clear on the page, and one need not buy the political conclusion at all – that the "downfall" of the bourgeoisie is "unavoidable"[7] – in order to be gripped by the narrative (CM 246). Rather the reverse – the narrative is what makes the text vivid today, and intellectually interesting. While referencing the history of the last few hundred years, the picture painted by this highly visual text is far from quaintly historical – it is instantly recognizable to us since we live in a globalized world of manufactures and markets, producers and consumers, rich and poor, even if the shoppers seldom see the workers in their (often "developing world") factories and sweatshops.

Moreover, the text works hard to explain the political reactions that we have – one way or another – to the social circumstances that it outlines. It sweepingly identifies both the commonplace and the academic wisdoms of an age with the interests of the ruling classes – the bankocracy, oligarchs and their political counterparts. It dismisses claims to timeless truths of moral resignation, or to assurances that elites act in the best interests of the oppressed. It then points the finger directly at such hypocrisies, and challenges us to consider our own positioning carefully, given the "more or less hidden civil war" in society (CM 245) that it urges us to acknowledge.

This argumentative tactic is an unsettling, troubling experience for the reader of whatever social class, since it challenges the peace/war, order/disorder and even rural/urban and national/international binaries through which – so we are educated to believe – the world is made intelligible, and through which morally justified actions (or inactions) must be viewed. It is a bold step indeed to bin history as previously understood – dynasties, wars, "clashes of civilizations" – and substitute for that mesmerizing array the quotidian business of getting a living and making a society that everyone engages in. But it is even bolder to exclaim that order is really disorder – breaking out "here and there" – and that it

is "class struggles" which are "political struggles," not the usual flimflam and flummery put on by rulers, whether dictators or democrats (CM 243). "Workers have no nation of their own" (CM 250) is not an empirical, descriptive statement that is either true or false, and it is certainly not meaningless: it is a wake-up call to think about things afresh, and way out of the box.

The chapters in this volume approach the text from a variety of different but complementary perspectives, drawing out diverse but overlapping insights, and enriching our appreciation of the authors' achievements in writing such a remarkable work. The contributors approach the work contextually, in terms of local politics, intellectual history, biographical chronology, rhetorical analysis, reception studies, a variety of critical political engagements and current theoretical ones. In looking at the *Manifesto* in so many different ways, and finding so many different things within it – and so much to say about it – this volume is unique.

POLITICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Chapter 1, by Jürgen Herres, contextualizes Marx and Engels as Rhineland radicals, energized by the French revolutionary ideals of the 1790s and the July Revolution of 1830. These events were current within their own living memories, or at least those of their near-elders. In the Prussian (and Prussianizing) context in which they lived, such ideas were borderline treasonous, and certainly scandalous views to hold. The chances to express them – even in coded form – were strictly controlled. Socialist or communist ideas were the cutting edge of social criticism, but were barely known in the region. These visions were truly outrageous, since they proposed – one way or another – a wholesale remaking of society, including personal and family relationships, morals and religion and law and government, if indeed government even survived at all in their thinking. Herres presents the contextual and textual details through which these radicals – in later years the "'48ers" – operated at the time, negotiating the barriers of nation and class as they thought, wrote and (clandestinely) speechified. Marx and Engels were not unique, and they were not alone. They had their distinctive qualities, individually and as a duo. But Rhenish radicalism was a milieu, and while many of its denizens may not seem important to us now, they were important to Marx and Engels at the time, given their active political – and not simply intellectual – engagements.

David Leopold's Chapter 2 explores the intellectual context through which Marx and Engels conceived the *ad hominem* section III of the pamphlet, probably the least read and most neglected part of the work. Yet this section was uniquely chosen by Marx himself for excerpting during the closing days of the revolutionary events (Draper 1994, 26–27). The thinkers subjected to critical scrutiny there were all being read and were considered inspiring – to various degrees – at the time, for example, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen and Proudhon. Leopold explains in detail what works and ideas were under

consideration by Marx and Engels, and thus clears up obscurities that trouble readers today. He outlines the chronological and textual distinctions through which Marx and Engels understood contemporary socialisms and communisms, and dispels the myth that the two were wholly dismissive of utopians. Indeed, Leopold explains why the two acknowledged the distinct achievements of the utopian genre, and records that they offered similarly generous views of other ideas and visions. Marx and Engels emerge as knowledgeable rather than merely hostile critics. Of course, any critique by the two is not merely one of ideas but rather of politics, and of strategies for (or displacements of) the kind of world-changing activity that they aspired to. Section IV of the *Manifesto*, brief as it is, thus follows on from section III, so that communists – having confronted class struggle *and* thinkers who have missed the point – can move on to local engagements.

The rhetoric of the *Manifesto* is often referred to in passing, but has never before been analyzed in detail. James Martin's Chapter 3 explores the argumentative strategies deployed in the text, and shows how they work together to generate action, rather than mere assent. Rhetoric is thus presented as an art of persuasion, rather than crafted – and crafty – deception, as it is often taken to be today. Martin contextualizes Marx and Engels within the still-lively traditions of classical rhetoric of their educations, and deploys the classical canons to show us exactly why their text has the power to persuade. This reading of the text thus departs from usual strategies of rationalist reductionism such that emotion and values count for nothing. Martin shows instead how *ethos* and *logos*, character and reason, norms and facts, are marshalled throughout to make a political case, even noting the rhythmic character of the paragraphing and the dramatic form of the narrative. In this way the images and imagery of the text come to life. Many readers have skipped over such "ornaments" and exaggerations, and instead parsed the text into testable propositions. These propositions might be interesting enough in some contexts, but are in fact violent excisions from a powerful experience. Through Martin's analysis the *Manifesto* comes into its own as not just another polemic, but a work of insurgency.

Terrell Carver's Chapter 4 considers the *Manifesto* in Marx's and Engels's lifetimes, looking critically at how and whether it was important to them, and, crucially, to others, especially those in the self-styled "Marx party" within the German socialist movement of the mid- to late 1860s. Marx, as ever, was looking for publicity and influence, and Wilhelm Liebknecht and others were looking for a "founding father." Politics in Germany was turning to mass activity and partisan elections, and a readable and rousing pamphlet, together with an aged and geographically removed icon, proved a good project. The re-publication and circulation of 1872, eventually incorporating the signed, if somewhat ambivalent prefatory thoughts of the authors, made Marx into Marx and the *Manifesto* one of "Marxism." This was key to the biographical reception of Marx, and to the bibliographical reception of his works, which developed over the next twenty years or so. Carver shows that even critical, rather

than overtly hagiographical, accounts of the lives and works of Marx and Engels take the importance of the *Manifesto* throughout their careers too much for granted, given that its premier position – reflected in its often out-of-chronology positioning in many twentieth-century editions of selected works – has made it the "intro" to Marx. In conclusion Carver conducts a thought-experiment, asking what the *Manifesto* would mean today if the reception of its authors had developed counterfactually without Marx becoming iconic and his "thought" becoming an "ism."

POLITICAL RECEPTION

While Engels set up the reception of Marx's "thought" as an eponymous "ism," he fought shy of the term "Marxism," and, after all, in an authoritative sense, he simply *was* "Marxism." After his death, the situation was different. Chapter 5 by Jules Townshend takes us into an era of "footnotes" to Marx, some literal (and by Engels), and others much more metaphorical. These amendments and addenda, though, were united in claiming a posthumous *imprimatur*. Townshend tracks the relationship between the *Manifesto* and Marxist ideology as it developed, a process through which the "general principles," said by the authors in 1872 to reside in the text, were filled in, interpreted and re-interpreted, and then adapted as political "unknown unknowns" came over the horizon. The *Manifesto* was understood to present a dialectical analysis of historical contradictions through which a class politics of revolutionary change has taken – and is currently taking – place. He concludes that the *Manifesto* – as a political document infused with theoretical rigor – was written to avoid elitism and authoritarianism through a combination of radicalism and realism, given the condition-dependency frame through which human activity is presented. On this view, the dialectical pulse that Townshend finds in the *Manifesto* may beat weakly at present – even in an era of global capitalist crisis – but that merely restates the need for action. And action, after all, was the performative project of the text.

Chapter 6, by Emanuele Saccarelli, takes us directly to the world of action. Reviewing the fifty years of global politics from 1848, Saccarelli argues that the *Manifesto* was right in broad outline – predicting rapid economic development and class-driven democratization – but that the substantive political agenda was proceeding only in an uneven and contradictory manner: propertied classes (the bourgeoisie of the text) were prone to compromise with authoritarian, imperialist and even absolutist regimes, and working classes (the proletariat of the text) sometimes preferred compromising reform to revolution. In Russia and Germany in the early years of the twentieth century, the *Manifesto* was a flashpoint in theory-and-practice debates over the "permanent revolution" involving Kautsky, Bernstein, Trotsky, Luxemburg and others, including scholars such as Mehring and Ryazanov. This posed the question as to whether a socialist (and eventual communist) revolution would have to proceed in stages,

typically involving a bourgeois-democratic regime, or could – in some cases – transform an economically and politically underdeveloped country or region into a socialist and democratic workers' state. Rather than functioning as a point of orthodox doctrinal deduction, the *Manifesto* – as Saccarelli shows – posed a highly political and deadly practical dilemma in its very structure: how does a synoptic yet analytical view of human historical development lead readers to a program of practical proposals? Moreover, the "Communist Party" of the title was equally problematic: was it descriptive or hortatory? And was the geographical progression of revolution quite as smooth and universal as the text seemed to say?

Some of the answers to these questions emerge in Chapter 7 by Leo Panitch. The central thesis of the *Manifesto* is that of "class struggle," and indeed in modern and modernizing times as an ever-simplifying struggle between two classes only: bourgeoisie and proletariat. Panitch shows how crucial states have been and are in this complex process and "more or less hidden civil war." In his reading of the text, nation-states – of whatever class character – are in no way epiphenomenal to the politics of revolutionary transformation and counter-revolutionary resistance. In the post-Second World War decades since 1950 Panitch charts an increasing commitment within democratic/capitalist states to integrate technological innovation with capital accumulation, and to "globalize" this to their advantage at the expense of the "developing" world. Siding with Schumpeter against Piketty, Panitch cites the *Manifesto* on the truly revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie and of state power (*Staatsgewalt*) as their "device." Rather similarly he finds the *Manifesto* both revolutionary and prescient in its treatment of the proletariat, pointing out that the text argues both ways dialectically: workers are increasingly thrown together in close proximity and also able to use technologies of mass transport and communication, yet specifically organized mass socialist/communist parties – to which the text looks forward – can be crucial to the success of this process. Even Marx's own work later in the International Working Men's Association from 1864– and the international work of further generations of committed socialists – is prefigured as a structural feature of politically committed social change. The *Manifesto* argues that the bourgeoisie produces its own gravediggers, but proletarians must do the digging in solidarity.

Joan C. Tronto's Chapter 8 shows us exactly how women make cameo appearances in the *Manifesto*, but are haunting it throughout. After contextualizing and reviewing Marx's and Engels's writing on women, Tronto acknowledges the varied inspirations that a wide variety of feminists have taken from their work. She then leads us back to the text of the *Manifesto* in order to examine its imagery in relation to feminist concerns. These concerns – far from resolved in present-day societies – relate to sex, gender and sexuality in the workplace, and this in turn reveals much the same picture in the "family," namely, that of male dominance and masculine privilege. Spectral women – intimidated in factories and abused as prostitutes – lurk in the recesses of the

text. Yet interestingly, some of the most rhetorically and sarcastically effective sections of the *Manifesto* are the ones where the two authors raise "women" and "family" as major concerns, and are clearly working hard to engage their readers. In the end, however, Marx and Engels are steamed up to attack bourgeois masculinity, yet rather cool on engaging with any very specific ideas of proletarian – hence *human* – transformations, particularly in the "family" context. Moreover, among the specters haunting the *Manifesto* Tronto detects a fear that proletarians need to "man up" lest they be subjected to, and even content with, feminization and passivity. Idioms of revolutionary rhetoric, familiar to Marx and Engels as well as to their intended (male) audience, reproduce gendered hierarchies in among the critical comments on the contemporary – for them and us – gender order.

INTELLECTUAL LEGACY

The *Manifesto* is a canonical work in political theory over and above its familiar introductory value in relation to Marx and Marxism. James Farr and Terence Ball, in Chapter 9, show how its reception developed through engagements involving liberal philosophers and philosophically minded liberals. They consider the contributions of Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, Sidney Hook, Isaiah Berlin, Karl Popper and John Rawls. Employing a version of ideology-critique, these writers responded to the assertions and arguments in the text relating to the issues they regarded as classic ones: individual freedom, governmental legitimacy, the nature and scope of human rights, the status of moral truths, the circumstances through which justice might be realized, the proper justification for political violence, the very nature of – and reason for – human society and in particular, of course, what would constitute a good one. Political theorists do their theorizing well aware of current political contexts and personal political commitments, and Farr and Ball contextualize their key philosophers within contemporary events and engagements, thus revealing many varieties of liberalism and variations in political orientation. The *Manifesto* has thus gained a second life in the twentieth century as a textbook item, ideal for seminar discussion and debate. The work was emphatically not written for intellectuals in particular, or for university students in general, but well-educated intellectuals around the world – liberal philosophers first and foremost – are all presumed to have read it.

In Chapter 10, Manfred B. Steger develops a genealogy of globalization as a social science term and as a political discourse, mapping our factual relations to – and ongoing concerns with – the rapidly industrializing world so remarkably delineated by Marx and Engels. Steger thus provides a frame through which to view the more recent manifestos issued by two scholars of the left – Jacques Derrida and David Harvey – both of whom draw considerable inspiration from the concepts and analysis rhetorically expressed by Marx and Engels in 1848. These contemporary efforts have fought back against neo-liberals – ideologues of

"market globalism" – who have declared the death of Marxism and irrelevance of Marx. Derrida and Harvey work from the *Manifesto* to construct a discourse of globalization that challenges current economic orthodoxies decisively, and impacts productively in a publicly political way. Steger credits Derrida with having launched a revitalized *Manifesto* into the worldwide debate on the nature and future of capitalism, and having used it to prefigure a New International arising from anti-globalization movements and protests. Harvey credits Marx and Engels's *Manifesto* with an innovatory grasp of spatial thinking in relation to economic activity, and thus to global history. Steger concludes that the *Manifesto* was stalking neo-liberalism and neo-liberals and that now – as then – it openly proclaims that there is an alternative and a new world to be made.

While the *Manifesto* has lately been criticized for its Eurocentricity – as indeed how many "standard" works have not? – Robbie Shilliam's Chapter 11 takes a more productive and interesting tack within the post-colonial framework. Arguing that the slave, and in particular the plantation slave, occupies a spectral and recessive place in the narrative, Shilliam shows us how the "slave analogy" animates the figure of the proletarian "wage-slave" in the text. In that way the world market, and colonial imperialisms and conquests, appear in the *Manifesto*, but swiftly recede as the European working class comes to the fore. The European proletarian is thus the active agent of world-historical change. Shilliam pursues the pre-history of the text by investigating Engels's earlier works, which narrate the slave analogy – itself derived from Tory radicals and Chartists – in order to make the misery of the European proletariat intelligible and affecting. Shilliam's point is that this discursive practice denotes a non-engagement with the histories and realities of enslaved peoples. Moreover, the economic struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat – as the two great classes of industrial society – displaces the historical and contemporary integration of capitalism with imperialism. Both sides of the dialectical class duo are thus imbued with a presumption of white supremacy. Shilliam concludes that it was the practice of black Marxists that attempted, at least, to transcend the merely analogical engagement of the *Manifesto* – and subsequent other Marxisms – with slave labor and racial oppression.

The closing critical engagement of the volume is Elisabeth Anker's Chapter 12, which takes up Walter Benjamin's theme of "left melancholy." This is a condition which disables contemporary critique precisely through an emotional attachment to an object, namely the *Manifesto*. The object is disavowed – because its promises have failed and its goals are unreachable – but leftists nonetheless hold fast to it, in particular to its methods of critique and style of narration. In a novel turn, Anker argues that this melancholia mimics the melodramatic content of the *Manifesto* itself, where melodrama enacts "moral self-righteousness, galvanizing sentiment and binary diagnostics of oppression." Taking Giorgio Agamben and joint authors Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri into her sights, Anker shows how their texts recapitulate the melodrama of the *Manifesto*, and how this occludes their ability to engage with

the politics of the present. Their works focus on a past ideal – as embodied in the promise of emancipation and the virtue of the proletarian class subject. Melodrama in the *Manifesto* itself – by sharp contrast – focuses forward and is not motivated by loss and regret. Moreover, melodrama also works performatively to construct agency in individuals and collectivities – the grave*diggers* of the bourgeoisie. In Anker's view the *Manifesto* is not itself a melancholic text, lost in mournful disavowal and intellectual righteousness. It was written to inspire responsible collective action in the face of shameless oppression. It celebrates whatever it takes to break with the "history of all society up to now" (CM 237).

MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The English translation by Terrell Carver appended to this volume was freshly done from the first, 1848 edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (the original title of the anonymous pamphlet). It is thus somewhat different from the "authorized" (by Engels) translation of 1888, reproduced innumerable times as an English-language "standard" text, which (as with the catchphrases quoted above) it obviously is. The purpose in doing a translation in that way was to frame the work as a political intervention, rather than one of theoretical "doctrine" that had somehow wandered in to the wrong genre. It was also possible to correct a number of errors and oddities, and to challenge readers with some unfamiliar turns of phrase. These renditions are rather more literally attuned to the German original than are the freedoms taken by Samuel Moore and Engels, the English-speaking surviving author. The chapters below are referenced to this version, and the citations and quotations from the other works of Marx and Engels are to the fifty-volume *Collected Works* (1975–2004), or, where not included, to the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (in progress since 1972).

MANIFESTO OF THE GERMAN COMMUNIST PARTY (1850)

Also based on the first edition (1848) of the *Manifesto*, Helen Macfarlane's English translation was the first to be published, albeit rendering the German text in a somewhat shortened form. In the Chartist periodical *The Red Republican* her work – which appeared in successive installments in November 1850 – was prefaced with a short note by G. Julian Harney, a radical Chartist campaigner and sometime political associate of Engels and Marx and their communist *confrères*. While odd-sounding in some places (the "frightful hobgoblin" of the opening sentence, for instance) her version is also more accurate at other points than the translation by Samuel Moore (assisted by Engels) dating from 1888, and never out of print since then. Marx and Engels seem variously to have been both approving and disapproving of her work on the few occasions when it crossed their paths. Macfarlane's version had a