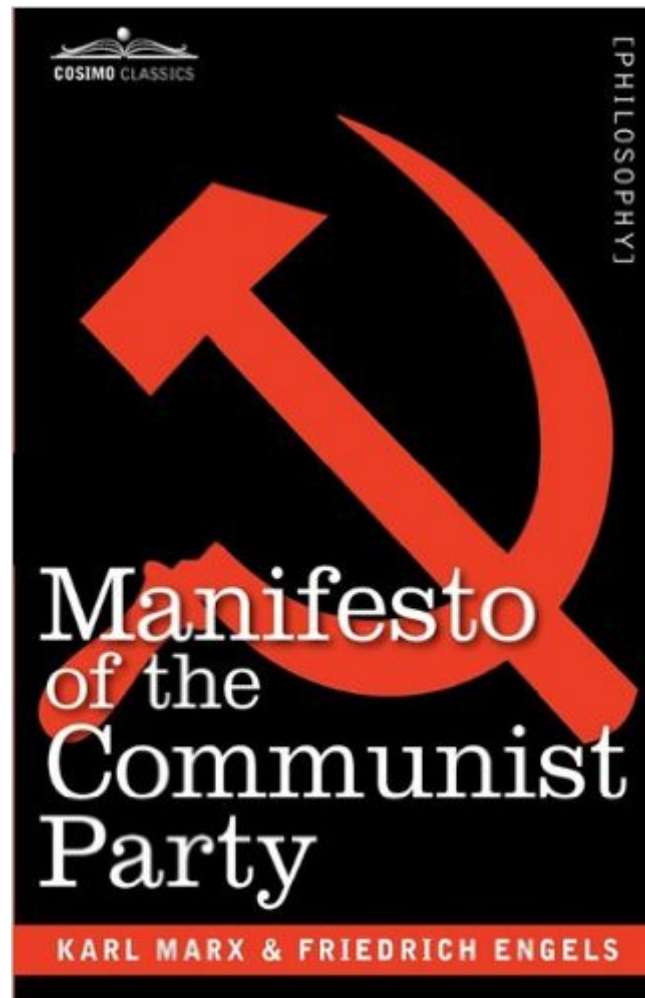


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Manifesto Of The Communist Party



Synopsis

Ironically, The Communist Manifesto, first published in 1848 for the Communist League, had little influence in its own day. Only after Karl Marx and Frederick Engels's other writings had made their views on socialism widely known did it become a standard text. For nearly a century it was one of the most widely read - some would argue misread - texts in the world. Manifested in vivid prose, the Manifesto continues to irk the capitalist world, lingering as an eerie specter even after the collapse of those governments, which claimed to be enacting its principles. Certainly, the aim here is not to create converts. Instead it is to help readers probe the writing with its distinct point of view, so that we might understand the political and historical significance of the text while still maintaining a stance that allows us to think critically about the subject and form our own opinions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My five star rating is based on the quality of this handsome edition of one of the classics of political philosophy. Classics of this magnitude, whether Adam Smith's THE WEALTH OF NATIONS, Tocqueville's DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA, or THE FEDERALIST PAPERS have achieved a status that makes the assigning of a rating rather silly. Regardless of one's feelings about Marxism or Communism, a work of such gigantic influence is of such a status that rating it is almost silly. It is one of the constitutive artifacts of our culture. The particular edition I am reviewing is the recent reissue on Verso with an introduction by Eric Hobsbawm. There are a host of editions of THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, and virtually any of them will do the trick, but I very much enjoyed this

edition, partly for the handsome jacket and binding, and partly for the superb intro by Hobsbawm. It is not a new translation, and indeed it isn't clear that there will ever be much of a demand for a new translation. The MANIFESTO was first published in 1848 and this translation in 1888. Moore's translation is the standard one for a simple reason: Engels examined it closely and helped Moore in editing the final draft of the translation. Although I had read a fair amount in the writings of Marx over the years, this was my first time to read the work from cover to cover. I found it surprising on several levels. First, it was a much easier to read work than I had anticipated. This is upon reflection hardly surprising. The work was intended as a pamphlet for the masses, and it was essential that it be as understandable as possible. Also, the concepts and ideas articulated in these pages have become a part of the intellectual landscape of Western civilization.

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