



VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Communism: A History of Repression, Violence, and Victims

Chapter 4 Assessments and Assignments

Create the Context

Homework or pre-class preparation activity:

- Have students read the chapter story and essay, with a particular focus on the ideas found in *The Communist Manifesto*.
- Assign the videos listed below as a primer on Karl Marx.
 - *Karl Marx: Philosopher and Revolutionary Socialist* (4 minutes)
<https://youtu.be/16IMc5mhbZk>
 - *Karl Marx and The Communist Manifesto* (3 minutes)
<https://youtu.be/OQ8iRDUy9zY>

Wrap-up Questions

- What were some of the main influences on Marx prior to writing *The Communist Manifesto*? What did Marx see occurring in his world that he sought to address with his *Manifesto*?
- How would Marxism affect the family?
- According to Marx, what are the two competing groups in society? What are the main characteristics of each group?
- What are the main points of Marxism laid out in *The Communist Manifesto*?
- Why did Marx seek to eliminate private property?

- What are the effects of communism in the nations that have experienced this form of rule?

Assessments

- **In-Class Assessment 1: Debate**
Organize a mock debate about the implementation of communism. What are the main characteristics of this ideology, and what are the consequences of its implementation?
- **In-Class Assessment 2: Role Play**
Take away a student's favorite pencil or pen, backpack, phone, etc. Tell them that they are no longer able to have any private property and that all these special items are now shared with the class. What does the elimination of private property mean to the students?
- **Take-Home Assessment**
Have students pick one of the remaining communist countries and create a short presentation. Have them give some background on the countries and what day-to-day life is like under the communist regime. Ask students to explain how the ideas in *The Communist Manifesto* have influenced these countries.

Primary Source Activity

- **Primary Source Activity: Analyze**
Ask students to summarize each quotation from *The Communist Manifesto*. What are the main ideas found in the excerpts? Are these ideas still relevant? Where do we see these ideas today?

Primary Source: Excerpts from *The Communist Manifesto*

Abolition of Private Property

The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.

We Communists have been reproached with the desire of abolishing the right of personally acquiring property as the fruit of a man's own labour, which property is alleged to be the groundwork of all personal freedom, activity and independence.

Hard-won, self-acquired, self-earned property! Do you mean the property of the petty artisan and of the small peasant, a form of property that preceded the bourgeois form? There is no need to abolish that; the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it, and is still destroying it daily... Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property..."

Abolition of the Family

Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.

Abolition of Marriage

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalised community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e., of prostitution both public and private.

Abolition of Nations

The Communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality. The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.

National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

Abolition of Religion

But whatever form they may have taken, one fact is common to all past ages, viz., the exploitation of one part of society by the other. No wonder, then, that the social consciousness of past ages, despite all the multiplicity and variety it displays, moves within certain common forms, or general ideas, which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms.

The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involved the most radical rupture with traditional ideas.ⁱ

ⁱ Marx and Engels, *Manifesto*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm>.