



The Communist Manifestoes: media of Marxism and Bolshevik contagion in America

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Abstract

The Communist Manifesto—rhetorical masterpiece of proletarian revolution—was published 69 years before the Bolshevik Revolution and had a complex reception history that implicated America and Russia in the long interval between. But once the Revolution shook the world, the *Manifesto* became indissolubly tied to it, forged together as constitutive moments of some supratemporal revolutionary dynamic. Its subsequent and further reception in America bore the marks of Bolshevik contagion, negatively in many quarters, positively in the early American communist movement. As various communist parties morphed and multiplied in the 1910s and 1920s, they announced themselves in manifestoes—communist manifestoes that in form and content followed and kept centrally in view the original of 1848. This essay explores the symbioses and synergies between the *Manifesto*, its Anglophone reception in America, and the Bolshevik contagion that spread into an emergent medium, namely, the manifestoes of American communist parties that heralded the revolution in Russia, a century ago.

Keywords *The Communist Manifesto* · Marxism · American communist movement · Manifestoes · Bolshevik contagion

Manifestoes are the veritable medium of modern revolutions. Pamphlets of provocation, they have been the written voice of revolutionaries since the 1640s and never more so than in 1848, 1871, and 1917. Of them all, the most iconic one is without doubt *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Karl Marx's rhetorical masterpiece. Published in London, in German, on the eve of the Revolutions of 1848, it was widely translated later, not least into Russian on the eve of the more explosive Bolshevik Revolution that brought about the Soviet Union and the Communist International. In form and content, it inspired or incited scores of other manifestoes—including American communist manifestoes—cast in its image. Lenin hailed it for

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its “new world-conception” when issuing his own manifesto, *The April Theses: The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution*. In Lenin’s assessment, that is, the paradigmatic text of political revolution ushered in an intellectual revolution as well, namely, the materialist conception of history and Marxism, more generally. This, of course, took translation, reception, and revolutionary action well after 1848—especially the world transforming energies of 1917. The editor of a recent edition pairing the iconic *Manifesto* with Lenin’s *Theses* dramatizes the point. “For without the Russian Revolution of November 1917, the *Communist Manifesto* would have been confined to specialist libraries instead of rivaling the Bible as the most translated text in modern history (Ali 2016, iv).”

This essay explores the symbioses and synergies between *The Communist Manifesto*, its Anglophone reception in America, and the Bolshevik contagion that spread into an emergent media, namely, the manifestoes of American communist parties that heralded the revolution in Russia, a century ago. Unlike the principal texts of the other essays in this special issue of *Studies in East European Thought*, the *Manifesto* of course did not come after the Revolution and could not reflect upon it. Indeed, it preceded it by 69 long years. But subsequent history has forged them together as constitutive moments of some supratemporal revolutionary dynamic. Moreover, the *Manifesto*, Russia, and America were complexly related to each other before as well as after the Revolution. This essay, then, tries to capture all this, in short form. The first section considers the rhetorical features of the materialist conception of history—the catching phrases of the doctrinal core of the *Manifesto*—that were to prove most striking for later communists and revolutionaries. The second traces the revisions and reception of the *Manifesto* in America with Russia in view but well before the Russian Revolution was remotely on the horizon. The third considers the circulation and continued life of the *Manifesto* in the early twentieth century, underscoring the dramatic transformations brought about by 1917. The fourth follows the Bolshevik contagion—and the living memory of the *Manifesto*—in American communist manifestoes, that is to say, in the manifestoes of the early American communist movement. The final section is a coda on the fated endurance of the *Manifesto*.

Communist rhetoric

The Manifesto of the Communist Party famously ends with an imperative, a phrase shouted in capital letters, commanding proletarian unity around the globe. “WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!” So goes the Authorized English Translation of 1888, later morphing into “Workers of the World, Unite!” in the wake of the Russian Revolution.¹ Seeking the unity it foretold and sought to bring about, the

¹ The original German was “Proletarier aller Lander vereinigt Euch!” English translations besides the Authorized English Translation, quoted above, vary: “Let the proletarians of all countries unite!” “Proletarians of all countries, unite!” On Marx’s tombstone, “WORKERS OF ALL LANDS UNITE!” “Workers of the World, Unite” was first used in Flora Tristan, *The Workers’ Union* (1843). It became the motto of the Soviet Union and of the American Communist Manifestoes.

Manifesto literally and self-consciously *manifests* the political designs of the new “party” (in the sense of a political movement or tendency) by and for an organized proletariat against the capitalist social order.

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution (Marx and Engels 1976, 519).²

The *Manifesto* is *about* revolution, about *its* part in *making* revolution, and about the *power of ideas* in that making.

The *Manifesto* not only comes out with the party’s revolutionary intentions, it also sketches its doctrinal core and sweeping hermeneutical program, namely, the materialist conception of history. Later shortened to “historical materialism,” the materialist conception schematizes history as the unfolding process of the complex interactions between the forces of production and the conditions of production, especially those conditions constituted by the relations of production, the antagonism of classes, and the system of property ownership.

Furthermore, an imminent revolution in 1848 notwithstanding, history has always been punctuated by revolutions when the conditions and relations of production enchain the development of the productive forces. Thus “the bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part;” indeed, as a ruling class, “the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production (486–487),” among the productive forces more generally. But time has run its course:

The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property (490).

The modern consequences of this disorderly dynamic include waste, over-production, and the creation of a class of industrial workers, “slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State,” who, crowded together into factories, “organized like soldiers,” form combinations and undergo “an ever-expanding union (491, 493).” The proletariat’s “strength grows, and it feels that strength (492).” Revolution is the inexorable outcome and promissory solution of the disorder of modern history. “The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation (495).” Theirs is the revolution of revolutions, the revolution to end all revolutions.

Sketched in these bold and rhetorical terms, the materialist conception comes ready-made with a formulaic slogan: history is “the history of class struggles

² Pagination in the first section refers to Marx and Engels (1976).

(482).” Class struggles are very much *human* struggles, not the playthings of structural forces beyond human effort; and they are eminently political: “every class struggle is a political struggle (493).” As such, they are concerned primarily with power and the state, as well as the organization of production. “The first step in the revolution by the working class,” so the *Manifesto* demands, “is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy (504).” And then there is the vision of a collective political life *after* the revolution in which there shall eventually be “an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all (506).”

The vision of the *Manifesto* brings to the fore its investment in the political power of ideas, ideologists, and intellectuals. The *Manifesto* positively boasts about itself being “the most radical rupture with traditional ideas (504).” It is “the history of ideas” that proves that the ruling class also rules in terms of its ideas. Ideas are of course bound up with the material conditions of life; and ideas and conditions change together. They make revolution together, when indeed they do so (since conditions also call up ideas of reaction, restoration, reform, or resistance).

When people speak of ideas that revolutionize society, they do but express the fact, that within the old society, the elements of a new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence (503).

“*Within the old society,*” new ideas emerge as the productive labor of ideologists and intellectuals, precedents of the crucial changes to come.

Ideologists are intellectuals; and intellectuals are ideologists. In short, ideologists are not (at least not necessarily) hack intellectuals; and they perform work in the class struggle. While the ideas they produce have political consequences with class content, those ideas cannot be reduced to the class to which the ideologist or intellectual was born or lived. Indeed ideologists and intellectuals of one class can change their minds, quite drastically, to embrace the political ends of another. One of the most striking paragraphs of the *Manifesto* attests to this, while offering an extraordinary autobiographical confession. As the “decisive hour” of class struggle approaches

a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole (494).

“Bourgeois ideologists” (read, those like Marx and Engels) can join the revolutionary class, doing so on the basis of their theoretical comprehension of history and inviting readers to do the same.

Part three of the *Manifesto* underscores and dramatizes the power of ideas and ideologists. Often ignored, unfortunately, part three is essential to the political work of the astonishingly provocative pamphlet (Leopold 2015). Having praised bourgeois ideologists who turned their coats by getting on board with history, Marx and Engels turn their fire on socialist and communist ideologists who

compete with the new “party” for adherents. Closeness in ideological space cuts no break; rather, it raises the ire and stakes in the battle of ideas. Reactionary socialism remains doomed because of its “total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history (504).” The “stubborn facts of history (510)” sink the fortunes of petty bourgeois socialism. The ideas of “Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism” may have served an original (if “fantastic”) purpose, but over time lost “all practical value and all theoretical justification” under changed conditions. The *Manifesto* drives the point home against these ideological adversaries who parrot the likes of Robert Owen and Charles Fourier.

Therefore, although the originators of these systems were, in many respects, revolutionary, their disciples have, in every case, formed mere reactionary sects. They hold fast by the original views of their masters, in opposition to the progressive historical development of the proletariat (516).

No making revolution without ideas up to the task.

All the socialist and communist alternatives faded away, remnants of the history they did not theoretically comprehend. As a consequence, part three became “the most antiquated section of the *Manifesto*,” Leon Trotsky (1938, 63) later observed. He added “with respect not to method but to material.” Method—at once historical interpretation, ideology critique, and political rhetoric—came largely to define the intellectual revolution that Marxism had by then become. But *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* of 1848 nearly suffered the same fate as the socialists and communists it so savagely criticized. Revolution later saved it.

Revisions & reception, Russia & revolution

The *Manifesto* did not contribute in any causal sense to the Revolutions of 1848. It was published too late for that, in any case. And, even then, Marx, always procrastinating, had to be prompted by the central authorities of the Communist League to finish the thing. Unlike the preparatory documents that preceded and informed it, especially Engels’s catechistic “Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith,” the *Manifesto* can fairly be said to have contributed to the red intellectual atmosphere of 1848, and certainly later. The Prussian police spies who read it certainly thought so. When the revolution failed and reaction set in, the fiery pamphlet was not utterly ignored by a sympathetic radical readership, if only to judge by its fitful publication and translation history (Draper 2004). For example, it was fairly quickly translated into English (in 1850 by Helen Macfarlane, assisted by Engels) when it was serialized in *The Red Republican*, the organ of the Chartists who had been hailed as a working class ally of “the Communists” (Marx and Engels 1976, 518) in the fourth and last part of the *Manifesto*. *The Red Republican* first identified the originally anonymous authors, as “Citizens Charles Marx and Frederic Engels.”³ The

³ Macfarlane’s translation (citing Marx and Engels at p. 287) is an appendix to Carver and Farr (2015, 261–282, 287) and to Black 2004.

Chartist editor, George Julian Harney, editorialized in a note that, here printed, was “the most revolutionary document ever given to the world” (Harney 1850, 1). But the years in the wake of 1848 marked a period of obscurity: “As the last flickers of the revolutionary period guttered out, the *Communist Manifesto* too faded from view” (Draper 2004, 33).

The Paris Commune of 1871 changed that fortune and tethered the *Manifesto* to revolution once again. The governing committee issued *The Manifesto of the Paris Commune* on 19 April—among several other manifestoes over the next 2 months—standing for the “communal revolution” and “the permanent intervention of citizens in communal affairs by the free manifestation of their ideas” (*Manifesto* 1871, 1). Marx hailed it in real time when addressing the General Council of the International Working Men’s Association (the First International) in London as “the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative” (Marx 1871, 21). A renewed urgency of manifestoes followed, including a reappearance of Macfarlane’s English translation of the *Manifesto* in an American publication, for the first time, *Woodhull & Claflin’s Weekly* on the last day (save one) of 1871. “The mass recirculation of the [original German] text in 1872, and the ‘feature’ edition with the new authorial preface, sparked over the years an enormous number of reprints and translations—and that process created Marx as a world-historical figure” (Carver 2015, 68). The 1872 German edition presented a formal name change to *The Communist Manifesto* (*Das Kommunistische Manifest*). And its new preface was the first of a number of prefaces over the coming years that contextualized the document, looking back. These prefaces, importantly, were not always consistent with one another and frequently erred about this or that matter of fact. They were nonetheless enormously influential on the changing reception of the “party” piece. In any case, recharged by revolutionary prospects, the 1872 preface hailed the Paris Commune “where the proletariat for the first time held political power, for two whole months.” It also applauded its own “general principles... correct today as ever,” whatever anachronisms remained by reprinting parts three and four. “But then,” the preface concluded (with a curious conception of intellectual rights), “the Manifesto has become a historical document which we have no longer any right to alter” (Engels 2002, 193–194).

A decade later, in 1882, a new Russian edition called forth a different preface, ever attentive to changed historical conditions. The authors (almost exclusively Engels, Marx being very ill) began on a false if telling foot. Looking back, they attributed to Bakunin (their arch-enemy in the struggle over the political direction of the First International) a first Russian translation “early in the sixties,” a context which made it “only a literary curiosity” (Engels 2002, 195). However, Bakunin was *not* the translator, and the date of publication was 1869. Strangely and falsely, too, they made an excuse (changed conditions again) for not dealing with Russia and the United States in part four of the original *Manifesto*. It was true that Russia had been overlooked, save in a general way when narrating the global consequences of “the world market.” But Marx and Engels (1976, 486, 518) had in fact since the very first printing singled out “the Agrarian Reformers in America” as an opposition party, like the Chartists, with whom the Communists could ally, united front style. Stranger still in the new preface was an emergent view of the prospects for revolution in

Russia. Whereas “the West” was going through the inexorable dynamic of capitalism, this no longer seemed the fated path of every country everywhere, not least Russia (Shanin 1983).

Now the question is: can the Russian *obshchina* ..., a form of the primeval common ownership of land, pass directly to the higher form of communist common ownership? ... The only answer to that possible today is this: If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for a communist development (Engels 2002, 196).

Revolution in Russia, unthinkable when the *Manifesto* was first penned, was now an open question, a quarter century before the unthinkable happened. The 1882 preface in which this question was raised was, in any case, the second and last to which Marx affixed his name, the year before his death, leaving future prefaces to Engels alone, not least the one introducing the Authorized English Translation of 1888.

Engels himself authorized the “AET,” having assisted Samuel Moore with the new translation and overseen all aspects of editing and publication. “There is a specter haunting Europe,” it began, and included other phrases that ring still. Who can forget “All that is solid melts into air?” Though it is *not* “always the most faithful rendition of the German original,” it was “the form in which, for over a century, the *Manifesto* became familiar in the English-speaking world (Jones 2002, 191).”⁴ Engels provided another, longer preface that recalled the Revolutions of 1848 and the glories of the short-lived Paris Commune. It remembered that during the years that separated these two revolutionary outbursts the *Manifesto* “seemed doomed to oblivion.” But it had returned with a vengeance: “at present it is undoubtedly the most widespread, the most international production of all Socialist literature, the common platform acknowledged by millions of working men from Siberia to California,” linking Russia and America for the first time. It repeated some errors about the publication history of different translations, again attributing to Bakunin the first Russian translation. But it also incorrectly identified the subsequent translator as “the heroic Vera Zasulich.” A correspondent of Marx on the question of the Russian path to communism, Zasulich was by then identified as a Russian Marxist whose heroism consisted in her attempted assassination of the governor of St. Petersburg in 1878. The translator was in fact Georgi Plekhanov. In the preface, Engels also offered up a sketch of the materialist conception of history—“correct today as ever”—all of which properly “belong to Marx.” Anachronisms remained because the third and fourth parts were retained, but Engels repeated the claim of the earlier preface that he “had no right to alter” the “historical document (Engels 2002, 199, 201, 204).” He nevertheless went on to supply eight substantial footnotes

⁴ Jones (2002, 191) allows of an alternative translation: “Carver is right to point out that the spirit in which Moore and Engels approached the text in 1888 was quite different from that in which Marx had written the text forty years before.” Carver’s translation is an appendix to Carver and Farr (2015, 237–260).

for Anglophone readers (who, he opined in a letter at the time, were “tremendously backward,” especially the “untheoretical matter-of-fact Americans” [in Draper 2004, 80]). The most significant of these footnotes, on the first page, insisted that “the history of class struggle” really referred only to “all *written* history” with renewed intimations that “the common ownership of land in Russia” (Engels 2002, 219) might foretell a different script for history, in the end.

The 35 years that passed between 1882 and 1917 witnessed the emergence of further editions and translations of the *Manifesto*. Engels contributed three more prefaces before his death in 1895. The radical presses churned out their copies.

Even before the Russian Revolution of 1917 [the *Manifesto*] had been issued in several hundred editions in some thirty languages, including three editions in Japanese and one in Chinese. Nevertheless, its main region of influence was the central belt of Europe, stretching from France in the West to Russia in the East. Not surprisingly, the largest number of editions were in the Russian language (70) plus 35 more in the languages of the Tsarist empire – 11 in Polish, 7 in Yiddish, 6 in Finnish, 5 in Ukrainian, 4 in Georgian, 2 in Armenian. (Hobsbawm 1998, 7)

The adventurous pamphlet had also inspired other manifestoes by then, notably *The Manifesto of the Socialist League* by William Morris in 1885. Published in London and reprinted in *The Alarm* in Chicago the same year, it faithfully and favorably quoted “the words of the Communist Manifesto of 1847 [sic]” about “cheap goods” “battering down Chinese walls” and how the bourgeoisie “shapes the world after its own image (Morris 1885, 1).” The Marxist exemplar may also have incited other ones, perhaps *The Anarchist Manifesto* by Anselme Bellegarrigue in 1850 and, more likely, *An Anarchist Manifesto* by Max Nettlau in 1895. Bellegarrigue was a ‘48er who declaimed against “class supremacy” and Nettlau was a member of the Socialist League who urged struggle against “State Socialism,” phrases associated with the manifestoes of Marx and Morris.

Revolution was heavy in the air for all these manifestoes. Russia made it even more palpable in 1917 with the revolutions of February and October (on the old calendar). In the lull between them—in April—Lenin wrote and speechified his own manifesto in the form of a set of theses dictating *The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution*. Many tasks were very particular ones—not least addressing world war—at an understandable remove from the concerns of 1848, 1871, the 1890s, or even 1905 when Russia experienced its first revolutionary experimentation with self-governing soviets and promises of liberal democratic rights (wrested from the Tsar in his own *October Manifesto*). Lenin did not lay out much by way of the materialist conception of history—save for the fact of class struggle—so much as an immediate action plan in the transition between stages of revolution. But “Marxism” was explicitly invoked, as it could not have been in 1848; indeed it was now available as a discursive weapon by adherents against those like “Ex-Marxist Mr. Plekhanov [who] does not care to recall Marxism” (Lenin 2016, 13). Nevertheless, *The April Theses*, as they became known, echoed features of the 70 year-old original, intimating lines of continuity or at least symbolic remembrance. Like the measures at the end of part two of the *Manifesto*, the theses were ten in number. They called

for many of the same things: confiscation of landed estates, nationalization of all lands, and a single national bank. They similarly imagined a revolutionary apparatus governing the confluence of industrial and agricultural labor (for Lenin, a republic of soviets). Critical of competing “socialists,” both appropriated the name “Communist Party” (which for Lenin was a more organized and disciplined affair). “A new International” was the goal of each. And Lenin’s demand for a “commune state” was expressly modeled on the Paris Commune as vividly described by Marx (Lenin 2016, 7–9).

Circulation, then Bolshevik contagion

Among its manifold effects—most evidently the creation of a Soviet state—the Russian Revolution was indelibly impressed on subsequent debates over Marxism, the reception of the *Manifesto*, and the proliferation of manifestoes addressing a transformed political world. Early communist party leader C. E. Ruthenberg (1922, quoted in Draper 1957, 97) added another manifold effect: “It was the Russian Revolution—the Bolshevik Revolution of November 7, 1917—which created the American Communist Movement.”

Marxism, the *Manifesto*, and various other manifestoes were already on the docket in America by the time of the October Revolution, of course (Buhle 2013). Four and a half decades earlier, the (First) International Working Men’s Association had been deported to New York by Marx and Engels—and allowed to expire there in 1876—largely as a consequence of struggles between the communists of the “Marx party” and the anarchists led by Bakunin. These struggles persisted and had consequences for a tangle of American parties and leagues associated in one or another way with Marxism or its leftist competitors—Socialist, Socialist Labor, Socialist Propaganda, Proletarian, Anarchist, Anarchist-Communist, and more (Goldwater 1964). At the same time, there was an agitated stream of antisocialist and anticommunist criticism, decrying the *Manifesto* (and all things socialist or anarchist) as dangerous and “unAmerican” (Myers 1919, 54).⁵

Immigrants—especially German immigrants—brought copies of the *Manifesto* with them to America. It would be impossible to count them, or to trace the brisk book trade in which German versions were on offer. Anecdotes are telling, however. Joseph Weydemeyer—a leading member of the Communist League and ‘48er friend of Marx and Engels—came to America in 1851 with a copy. He soon wrote an article in the *Turn-Zeitung* that was “the first attempt at a summary of a Marxist view to an American audience and in an American publication” (Draper 1962, 208). Indeed, he not only summarized, he actually quoted from the *Manifesto*, including the visionary passage about future liberty: “we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” Thus

⁵ Marxism and the *Manifesto* were of course central figures in the Red Scare of the 1920s and, later, in the House UnAmerican Activities Committee during the Cold War. Over the course of the twentieth century, the *Manifesto* earned its nickname as “the blueprint of revolution.”

was the *Manifesto* quoted in print for the first time in the United States. The article bore the title, “The dictatorship of the proletariat” (the very first use of this phrase). With such an ally across the Atlantic, Marx encouraged him to publish the *Manifesto* in Weydemeyer’s own new paper, *Die Revolution*. While Weydemeyer was unable to complete the assignment, he was the first to publish *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* in *Die Revolution*. Remaining Marxist to the core, he would later serve as a high-ranking officer in the Union Army, one of many reds in blue.

The *Manifesto* soon came off American presses in multiple languages. A complete German-language edition came out in 1851 and was followed by another in 1854. Thirteen more editions came out between 1871 and 1917. Most of these were published in New York and Chicago, but presses in Milwaukee and Cincinnati also served their own large immigrant German populations. English-language versions were sufficiently plentiful before the Russian Revolution, as well. As noted, these began in 1871 with the printing in *Woodhull & Claflin’s Weekly* where the *Manifesto*’s materialist conception of history and its overt communism were presented, tone-deaf, as the “new socialism” and placed willy-nilly on its pages touting spiritualism, dietary health, and Free Love. In 1890 and after, all editions followed the Authorized English Translation. This included the version in Eugene V. Debs’s Progressive Thought Library (Terre Haute, Indiana, 1901) and that of the New York Labor News (International Workers of the World, 1908). The *Manifesto* was also printed in far-flung American cities in Czech, Swedish, Finnish, Slovenian, Hungarian, Ukrainian, and Bulgarian. Three editions appeared in Croatian. Two more emerged from Chicago in Esperanto, “the language in which our children shall write the Constitution of the World (Baker 1908, i).” Russian language editions came to America, when in fact they came, straight from Moscow or St. Petersburg. A Russian language version was finally published in New York months after the Revolution, in 1919 (tallies and cities from Andréas 1963).

In 1886, a forceful mode of intellectual and literary production emerged on the American scene in the form of the Charles H. Kerr & Company of Chicago. Founded by the son of abolitionists, the Company would go on to become the oldest labor and socialist publishing house in the United States (Ruff 2011). Besides a German-language one and both Esperanto versions, it published nine AET editions in large and repeated print runs (in 1888, 1902, 1905, 1908 [bound with an Esperanto translation], 1911, 1912, 1913, 1915, and 1916).⁶ Before and after the Russian Revolution, Kerr & Company also published all the major works of Marx and Engels, as well as other Marxist luminaries like Karl Liebknecht and Antonio Labriola. When taking stock of its archives in 1985, it remembered this way:

If Marx’s CAPITAL can be considered the most prestigious of Kerr’s titles, the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO is beyond all doubt the company’s all-time best-seller. First published by Kerr at the turn of the century, it has remained in print ever since, going through scores of printings... When Gene Debs or Kate

⁶ Editions identified from Andréas (1963) and Kerr Company Archives at the Newberry Library, Chicago. There are some discrepancies about dates.

O'Hare or John Reed gave a comrade a copy of the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, it was almost certainly a copy of the Charles H. Kerr edition (Rosemont 1985, 41)!

Kerr & Company also published the first series of the *International Socialist Review* in the opening two decades of the twentieth century. Phenomenal in literary scope, it included some of the most famous political intellectuals on the Left. While many were self-identified “Marxists” or “communists,” all were at least familiar with the *lingua franca* constructed from the materialist conception of history, the political economy of *Das Kapital*, and the ringing phrases of the *Manifesto*. Among the very long list of contributors were to be found the promising writers who were to become premiere Russian and American communists: Lenin and Trotsky, as well as John Reed, C. E. Ruthenberg, Louis C. Fraina, Sen Katayama, S. J. Rutgers, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, James P. Cannon, Max Eastman, Robert Minor, and William Z. Foster. The list would also include Alexandra Kollontai (“Working Women of All Countries, Unite!”), E. Haldeman-Julius (who made the *Manifesto* #55A of his “Little Blue Books”), and Ernesto Untermann (translator of volumes 2 and 3 of *Capital* for the Kerr Company, “while living on a chicken farm in Orlando, Florida [Rosemont 1985, 41]).”

The media of revolution circa 1917 included other publications and outlets in America, important if somewhat less high-toned than the *International Socialist Review* or *The New Review* out of New York. Among them were *The Class Struggle*, *The Masses*, *The Liberator*, *The Revolutionary Age*, *The Proletarian*, *The Appeal to Reason*, and *Truth*. Lines out of the *Manifesto* and encouragement about revolution in Russia were frequently in them. So were manifesto-like texts: programs, proclamations, platforms, preambles, charters, memorials, editorials, and open letters. John Reed (1919b, 8) made “A New Appeal” urging “direct mass action” to readers of *The Revolutionary Age*, referring sarcastically to those liberals and reform socialists “who think Karl Marx wrote a good Anti-Trust Law.” “The only real Marxists,” he declared in a letter on their behalf, are the Bolsheviks who believe “in proletarian revolt followed by a dictatorship of the proletariat (Reed 1919a, 1).” That dictatorship was “our conception of socialist political control,” announced Jay Lovestone and William Weinstone (1919, 6) when quoting Marx directly: “We hold with the Communist Manifesto that ‘the proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in this [forthcoming] state—i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class.’” With “principles” articulated half-century earlier, “Marx and Engels Furnish Answers” to pressing questions raised by the Revolution of “the Bolsheviks, Grave-Diggers of Capitalism,” C. E. Ruthenberg (1919, 4) insisted. Louis Fraina agreed, at least about the *Manifesto* and proletarian revolution in Russia, the Bolshevik party being “*Socialism in action, Marxism become life.*” He then quoted from the 1883 preface to the Russian edition of the *Manifesto*. “And bear in mind,” he concluded, “that when Marx and Engels wrote, the situation, equally in Russia and throughout Europe, was not in the least as revolutionary as today (Fraina 1918, 7).”

In such pronouncements—by different American Marxists who would go on to live different political lives, including some anti-communist ones—the *Manifesto*

and the Russian Revolution were made indissolubly one, fused together as theory and event. Even liberals contributed to this fusion, in their own reception history of the incendiary pamphlet (Farr and Ball 2015). As for communists, “the 1917 Soviet Revolution institutionalized the *Manifesto* as the founding text of ‘real existing socialism,’ producing print runs in the millions (Riggs 2013, 311).” “Marxist Communism,” more generally, “became inextricably linked with the Bolshevik *coup d’état* of 1917 and with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which claimed to be the Revolution’s implementation or continuation (Fleming 2009, 9).” When Bolshevik Revolution became Soviet State, the *Manifesto* poured out in fresh print by different publishing houses and partisan presses. Under the auspices of the Socialist Party of America, the Rand School of Social Science—claiming to be “the only Socialist Training School for the Working Class in America”—published their version of the AET in 1919. *The Appeal to Reason* (from Girard, Kansas) published another in its pages in 1920, as did the Australian Socialist Party in Sydney. When all the publications of the Charles H. Kerr & Company were placed “on the ban” by the Canadian Government in 1920—the same year the Company had countless documents seized during the Palmer Raids in Chicago and elsewhere—the Socialist Party of Canada used their limited monies to publish still another AET to meet “the need created by the loss of Kerr’s literature” (Whitehead Estate 1918, 1).

American Communist Manifestoes

The most intriguing medium that kept the *Manifesto* vividly alive in radical circles was itself a manifesto. Indeed, it was a communist manifesto—an American communist manifesto—one after another after another. And these communist manifestoes (plural) announced the emergence or moments of change in actual existing communist networks, especially its parties (and leagues), not to mention their factions and fractions. The American communist movement was nothing if not factional and fractious, with a rapidly morphing scene of parties (and leagues) through the late 1920s. So to reconstruct the history of this media—these manifestoes—is indeed to reconstruct the history of its—or their—parties and networks. An essay of this kind and length can scarcely do justice to this twinned history, but the main outlines of developments in the late teens and twenties can be sketched.

The media-network dynamic propelled by these American communist manifestoes after—and taking their cues from—the Russian Revolution may be said to begin officially in early 1919 with the *Manifesto and Program of the “Left Wing” Section, Socialist Party*. It proved to be “the fundamental theoretical document of the American communist movement (Davenport 2005).” It did not come out of the blue, for it was preceded by a number of increasingly communistic manifestoes or programs, like the *Program for Revolutionary Socialism* (1919), adopted in 1918, promulgated by the Socialist Propaganda League of America. Preceded by two earlier manifestoes from 1915 and 1916, the latest *Program* followed the 1848 original in several particulars, not least the political conviction that “imperialism must be fought by means of the international class struggle of the proletariat.” Indeed it quoted Marx directly, foregoing inverted quotes: “The proletarian revolution cannot seize hold of

the ready-made machinery of the state for its own purpose.” Rather, it must destroy it. These fighting words were introduced with the boast that the SPLA had “accepted the Bolshevik program long before the Bolsheviks conquered power (*Program* 1919, 8).” At roughly the same time, an alternative Communist Propaganda League of America issued its own *Organizational Preamble* (1919, 114) whose epigraph was a robust quote from the iconic original, underscoring that “the theoretical conclusions of the Communists,” whether 1848 or 1918, “merely express actual relations springing from an existing class struggle” and require “the conquest of political power.”

Nevertheless, the *Manifesto of the “Left Wing” Section* was the pioneer manifesto that embraced the theory and nomenclature of Marxist communism and announced the attempt by the Left Wing Section to wrest leadership of the Socialist Party from what it sneeringly called the “dominant ‘moderate Socialism.’” The moderate leadership—that is, the Right—proposed mere reforms, kowtowed to the capitalist state, misunderstood the significance of events in Russia, and had forgotten “the teachings of the founders of scientific Socialism (*Manifesto and Program* 1919, 211).” Drawing directly from the original—upon which it was patently modeling itself—the Left Wing thundered: “We assert with Marx, that ‘the class struggle is essentially a political struggle’” (214), operating equally in governmental and industrial fields. Moreover, while tactically avoiding a direct call to physical force, it went on: “Marx declared that ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes.’ This machinery must be destroyed (215).” Furthermore, a number of the demands in the “program” echoed those found in Marx’s original, like worker control of industry and the expropriation of banks and railways. Other demands clearly required the developments of very recent history, like “the unequivocal endorsement of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic” and the anticipated creation of “Workmen’s Councils” in America modeled on “the Federated Soviets (215).” More immediately, the Left Wing called for an “emergency national convention” to be held in August 1919 to have it out with the Right.

Before the convention got underway, there came out of Moscow in March 1919 another defining instance of communist media, announcing a network of supreme importance, *The Manifesto of the Communist International to the Workers of the World*. The Communist International was the Third International, the first being Marx’s own. It was immediately dubbed the Comintern or the C.I., the one for which Vladimir Tatlin drew up his famous model of a monument. Written by Trotsky and published in the first issue of *The Communist International* edited by Grigory Zinoviev, the Comintern’s founding *Manifesto* began with an obvious acknowledgment: “Seventy two years have gone by since the Communist Party proclaimed its program to the world in the form of the *Manifesto* written by the greatest teachers of the proletarian revolution, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.” In spite of mortal enemies and “complex paths” across seven decades, it went on, “essentially the movement proceeded along the path indicated in advance by the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.” This new Comintern manifesto was immediately translated into English and published in *The Revolutionary Age* in New York. In its pages it contrasted one sort of internationalism—namely, the Wilsonian imperialism of the League of Nations—with the internationalism of the Comintern. This, the *Manifesto* insisted, was “the

International of open mass action of the revolutionary realization, the *International of deeds*.” It concluded with a twist on the famous slogan of unity. “*Workers of the World*—in the struggle against imperialist barbarism, against monarchy, against the privileged estates, against the bourgeois state and bourgeois property, against all kinds and forms of class or national oppression—*Unite!*”

All aspirant communists in America—especially the Left Wing of the Socialist Party—wanted recognition by and inclusion in the Comintern. (Actually, so did the Socialist Party moderates and the Industrial Workers of the World, the IWW.) Yet, the Left Wing split apart in 1919 over the effort to transform the Socialist Party into a more communistic one, from within. Those left-wingers that thought the effort worth it, tried to capture the leadership during the Socialist Party’s August conference. Failing in that task (out-maneuvered on parliamentary grounds), they bolted and staged their own impromptu convention in Chicago and created the Communist Labor Party. During their convention, a contretemps blew up between John Reed, author of *Ten Days That Shook the World*, and Louis Boudin, author of *The Theoretical System of Karl Marx*. At stake was the wording of an amendment that Reed had proposed. It underscored, very dramatically, the enduring semantic power of the iconic *Manifesto*. Max Eastman, a communist at that time, too, witnessed and reported the incident.

Boudin laughed with a learned scorn at one of the phrases that John Reed had embodied in an amendment to the platform. Reed said nothing, but quietly slipped out of the building and pretty soon came back with a copy of the Communist Manifesto, in which he showed Boudin the identical phrase at which he had been laughing. The scholarly brows were bent in perplexity: “It’s a very poor translation,” he said (Eastman 1919, 18).

The translation, of course, was none other than the Authorized English Translation; and the phrase was likely “the conquest of political power.” At the end of its dramatic, impromptu convention, from which Boudin had “fled like a leaf out of the storm” (Eastman 1919, 19), the Communist Labor Party adopted a manifesto-esque *Platform and Program* (1919, 3), in which it declared itself “in complete accord with the principles of Communism, as laid down in the *Manifesto of the Third International* formed in Moscow.”

The other part of the Left Wing thought that capturing the Socialist Party from within was a waste of communist time. It had called for its own conference—making for three conferences in one week in Chicago’s late summer of 1919. They named themselves the Communist Party of America in immediate rivalry with the Communist Labor Party—including fighting over which should be recognized by the Comintern. There were real differences between the two, especially on the question of the necessity of physical force in any revolutionary moment. But neither was giving up on being more Marxist than the other, more Bolshevik in their contagion. At the end of their conference, the new Communist Party of America published its own *Manifesto and Program* (in 1919) with a second edition soon following (in 1920) that added a long historical *Report* to the Comintern. The first page of the *Manifesto and Program* rendered the title more simply and evocatively as *The Communist Party Manifesto*. It was an incredible document, having an initial print run of

25,000. Theoretically, rhetorically, and historiographically, it was the richest of the American communist manifestoes of the late teens and twenties, rivaled only by the months-previous one by the Left Wing of the Socialist Party. In short staccato sentences, it read very much like the 1848 original—which, naturally, it quoted.

The world is on the verge of a new era. Europe is in revolt. The masses of Asia are stirring uneasily. Capitalism is in collapse. The workers of the world are seeing a new life and securing new courage. Out of the night of war is coming a new day. The specter of Communism haunts the world of capitalism. Communism, the hope of the workers to end misery and oppression. The workers of Russia smashed the front of international Capitalism and Imperialism. They broke the chains of the terrible war; and in the midst of agony, starvation, and the attacks of the capitalists of the world, they are creating a new social order (*Manifesto and Program* 1920, 1).

It went on like this for some fourteen bristling pages, before turning to an eight-point program and then to a party constitution, weaving together the familiar themes of Marxism, brought up to date in the aftermath of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution. After considering the war, imperialism, and the failures of “American Socialism,” it concluded in a fiery yet familiar way: “The old order is in decay. Civilization is in collapse. The workers must prepare for the proletarian revolution and the Communist reconstruction of society. The Communist International calls! Workers of the World, Unite!” (14).

This particular *Manifesto* was of further interest because its principal author, Louis Fraina, appended a *Report* directed to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI). It amounted to a short partisan account of the socialist and communist parties and their conferences in recent American history. Into his historical report, Fraina dragged the Communist Labor Party, “this third party adventure,” he sneered, known for “personal politics” and “centrism” rather than “a consistent formulation of Communist fundamentals” of the sort he thought he had written into *The Communist Party Manifesto (Manifesto and Program* 1920, 38). Indeed, he had more comradely characterizations of the Left Wing Section of the Socialist Party and of the Socialist Propaganda League—and, by implication, their manifestoes, too. Not incidentally, but without attribution, he had himself largely written those two manifestoes and, as journal editor, published them just months before. During this stretch of time and unfettered by formal education,⁷ he had also written two crucial books: *Revolutionary Socialism* (1918) in which Marx, Engels, and the *Manifesto* were treated to close analysis. And, months later in 1918, having caught the Bolshevik contagion more or less directly from Lenin, he had also brought out *The Proletarian Revolution in Russia*, consisting of writings or speeches

⁷ “Fraina was that common phenomenon in radical movements, the self-taught intellectual. The Marxist movements have been especially favorable breeding grounds for this revolutionary type because they are so top heavy theoretically, beginning with Marx. The very effort to read his works—and later those of Lenin and Stalin—can become a tremendous incentive to further study or self-improvement (Draper 1957, 63).”

by Lenin and Trotsky, with Fraina's extensive notes. The pair of books and the three manifestoes made Fraina, "the first *writer* of pioneer American communism. He did more than anybody else to explain and popularize the basic program of the Russian Bolsheviks (Cannon 1962, 60)."⁸

The rivalry between—as well as the factional rivalries within—the Communist Party of America and the Communist Labor Party ran deep and wide. There were splits, and splits upon splits (Draper 1957). The two Parties and the various factions within each of them disagreed about many things of importance, including armed insurrection, the status of foreign-language federations, and the exceptional character (or not) of American capitalism. They did not disagree, however, on the guiding light provided by the original *Manifesto* or, for the time being, the dictates of the Communist International. Indeed to the Soviet leadership at the helm of the Comintern, the criss-crossed rivalries were not only counterproductive, they endangered the world revolutionary cause. Zinoviev, President of the ECCI, demanded an immediate conference to achieve unity between the two parties. Soon enough, if not immediately, and not without resistance from the foreign-language federations in the still-styled Communist Party of America, a conference was held to achieve organizational unity. From it emerged a new party whose first act was the adoption of a constitution and the promulgation of the *Program of the United Communist Party*. At the head of the program was a long epigraph drawn from the first, fourth, and fifth paragraphs of the AET version of the original *Manifesto*. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," *et cetera, et cetera*. The program then began in earnest by underscoring "these historic words" that were even truer in 1920 than in 1848 (*Program* 1920, 8). The class struggles in the interval had "sharpened and intensified to the point that brings us face to face with the alternative of 'a revolutionary reconstitution of society' or 'the common ruin of the contending classes' (8)," using Marx's own phrases. Thus, this latest communist manifesto drew from the doctrinal core of Marxism, that is, the materialist conception of history. The conception was brought up to date, as the united American communists saw it, by the historical analyses drawn directly, and quoted at great length, from "the Manifesto of the Communist International" (11–12).

Unity and unification of a more convincing or lasting kind to the Communist International were still elusive, given the resistance of elements of the foreign language federations of the (now "old") Communist Party of America. The Comintern, thus, wanted renewed efforts. Within the year, the barely begun United Communist Party of America held yet another conference with these resistant elements at Woodstock, New York, in May 1921. The re-organizational results of which emerged with another new moniker, the Communist Party of America, Section of the Communist International, *aka* the "unified" Communist Party of America—unified at least for the moment. And, for that moment, the slogan of this latest development incorporated the hammer and sickle, nodding to the Bolshevik Revolution's symbol of worker-peasant alliance, but also the time-honored phrase of the *Manifesto*,

⁸ Fraina's biographer, Buhle (1995, 76), calls *The Proletarian Revolution in Russia* "the first significant English-language document of the Russian Revolution."

“Workers of the World Unite!” While the CI had finally given its imprimatur to the American communist movement—so long sought by the Americans—the movement’s partisan morphing was not nearly at an end. By December of the year (1921), a development anticipated by Zinoviev came about. His months-old letter warned the divided American comrades to be prepared to go underground, just as the Bolsheviks had had to do in the years before the Revolution. The Palmer Raids and the Red Scare in America turned Zinoviev’s warning into prophecy. The Party went underground and explained itself to its proletarian readership in an entirely predictable way, namely, as a *Manifesto of the Communist Party of America to the Workers of the United States* (1922). It sought from them an understanding that the Party’s going underground was a matter of necessity for survival. But it was not a matter of its concealing its revolutionary views (by dint of itself, a manifesto to the workers). For *bona fides*, it hailed the ur-document: “In the first Communist program ever issued, the founders of scientific communism, Marx and Engels, long ago declared: ‘The Communists disdain to conceal their aims’ (*Manifesto* 1922, 4).”

The “unified” CPA, Section of the Communist International, thus went underground but left aboveground its complement, the Workers Party of America. The latter was in all matters under the control of the underground party, making it “Party 2” to the underground “Party 1.” Appearing to unknowing readers as an entirely new and independent party, it issued its own *Program and Constitution: Workers Party of America* (1922). It resolved among other things to establish “a monthly magazine ‘to propagate the principles of Marxism and revolutionary understanding (1921, 31).’” It made a Convention Call that ended with the familiar motto, though it actually inverted the last sentences of the AET: “Workers of the World, Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a world to gain.” The following year it distributed another new manifesto, *Workers, Unite for the Struggle Against the Bosses: Manifesto of the Workers Party of America* (1922) adjusting and moderating some of the revolutionary phraseology of the underground CPA. It also issued yet another *Program and Constitution* just a few months before it was dissolved in 1923, on the 75th anniversary of the iconic *Manifesto*. The underground and aboveground parties came out and merged—or re-merged—again at the behest of the Comintern. The dual party arrangement was, in this way, “liquidated.”

The name “Workers Party of America” lasted for another couple of years for the merged communist party. But, in 1924, there came another nomination in the American communist movement, revealed in a manifesto-styled pamphlet, *Workers (Communist) Party of America: What It Stands For, Why Workers Should Join*. With a tear-out membership application form at the end of its fourteen pages, it was written in the clear didactic style of the party’s general secretary, C. E. Ruthenberg. It railed against U.S. imperialism, capitalist bosses, and the maltreatment of workers and Negroes. Its biting cartoons carried its anti-capitalist and pro-Soviet message. One entitled “Child Labor,” by Robert Minor, showed the jowly fattened head of a capitalist boss, thrown back, mouth wide open skyward, emitting an engorged tongue, ready to drop in and swallow a tiny girl dangling above in his stiff little fingers, while another child flails in his maw, going down the hatch (Ruthenberg 1924, 5). On the cover was a more sedate sketch of the state of the American proletariat with two workers on lunch break, under a tree, reading a hysteric and denunciatory story

about “Bolshevism!” (in *The Cry-bune* newspaper whose motto was “First to Last—The Bunk”). One worker to the other, who had presumably just asked what this all really meant: “I know what this Bolshevism means, Bill—it means us.” Manifesto by cartoon drawing!

Never at peace, the Party’s factions, if anything, got worse. This was fueled by Stalin’s grasp on power over the old Bolsheviks, including Trotsky who was exiled in 1927 and expelled from the Soviet Communist Party the next year. The Americans who vowed loyalty to Trotsky, notably James P. Cannon, were themselves expelled from the Workers (Communist) Party of America in 1928. Cannon (1944, 79–80) had found it “as clear as daylight that Marxist truth was on the side of Trotsky” when he read, almost by accident in Moscow, a translation of *The Draft Program of the Communist International: A Criticism of the Fundamentals* (1928) by Trotsky. Still thinking of themselves as communists and internationalists, Cannon and comrades formed their own party, first as Communist Opposition, then Communist League of America (Opposition), and, within a decade, the Socialist Workers Party. A Fourth International was eventually created to challenge the Third, so firmly under the grips of Stalin. More new media was a standard communist response to changed circumstances, notably *The New International* and a newspaper, *The Militant*, in whose early pages appeared Trotsky’s critique of the draft program—his anti-manifesto-manifesto—as well the inaugural manifesto of the breakaway Americans, *Platform of the Communist Opposition* (1929). “The present position of the Russian Revolution and its Marxist-Leninist foundation,” it began, “is the dominating factor in the world movement that must determine the course of every communist and revolutionary worker (1929, 1).” It denounced “the Stalinization of the American Party” and underscored Trotsky’s frequent pronouncements about “the Revolution betrayed” (eventually becoming Trotsky 1937).

At great cost otherwise—losing members and talented leaders, driving comrades away or into the arms of the American state—the expulsions by the Workers (Communist) Party did achieve a measure of unity in the organizational apparatus of cadres that remained. An important faction (the Trotskyist opposition) was no longer a faction at all, but simply out of the party for good. At least there was to be a temporary cessation of “the deep-rooted unprincipled methods of factional struggle,” as it was put in *On the Road to Bolshevization* (1929, 30). Consisting mainly of letters from the Comintern to the American party, demanding discipline and loyalty, it invoked a crib of the materialist conception of history:

The development of the productive forces on the basis of the technical transformations of the new forms or organization of labor, leads to increasing antagonisms between them and the limited home markets and, consequently, to a further deepening and sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism (28).

That line could have come out of the original *Communist Manifesto*, more or less, but what immediately followed was cast in Soviet-inspired argot: “The slightest concession to the advertisers of the growth of technique, the slightest vacillation, is an intolerable opportunist mistake (28).” Notably, *On the Road to Bolshevization* failed altogether to mention Marx, Engels, or the *Manifesto*. But its introduction unveiled the latest development in the fitful history of the American

communist movement—a new name for a newly expunged party—the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA). “Workers of the World, Unite!” was emblazoned on its signature newspaper, *The Daily Worker*—just as it was on *The Militant*—jointly upholding the slogan’s venerable tradition. The party’s heyday and deeper grass roots were to come during the Great Depression that was just then unfolding (Klehr 1984; Storch 2007). The proliferation of pioneer communist parties and their manifestoes, cut in the mold of the iconic original, thus came to an effective end in 1929 with the consolidation of—and name change to—the CPUSA.

The *Manifesto* endures

Besides their intrinsic interest, the communist manifestoes of the last century’s teens and twenties have historical value as a reminder—or revelation—of the actual range of political ideas and ideologies that have in fact populated American history. Not everything is either liberal or conservative or exceptional. They should be read if for no other reason. Few people appear to read them in fact, however, and far fewer turn to them for political inspiration. Not so, the iconic *Manifesto*. As fate would have it, it has outlived them all. When looking back from a later vantage point at the parties of the first ten years of American communism, Cannon (1962, 35) made a telling observation. “The ideas of Marxism, which create revolutionary parties, are stronger than the parties they create, and never fail to survive their downfall.” We may say nearly exactly the same thing about the pamphlets of provocation considered in this inquiry: *The Communist Manifesto*, which made possible the manifestoes of subsequent communist parties, is stronger than the manifestoes it made possible, and never fails to survive their downfall.

Consider what has become of the *Manifesto* on this centennial of the Russian Revolution. New editions keep flooding out from virtually every press, popular and academic. It was a best seller in Britain in 2015 (Priestland 2017). Many readers, new and old, are finding insights about globalization in its pages, now that globalization has spread its wings over every thing (Steger 2015). Its historic mark on literary form is evident in the superabundant number of manifestoes that there are these days, political and commercial, serious and superficial. But however many there are, with more inevitably to come, if you mention the words “the manifesto” to someone, you can bet they will think you are referring to *The Communist Manifesto*, and no other.

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