

173 years since Marx and Engels established the Communist Manifesto

This January 2021, full of jubilation and full of revolutionary optimism, we celebrate the 173rd anniversary of the completion of Marx and Engels' Manifesto of the Communist Party, which was adopted in this month in 1848 and then sent to London for publication, which took place at the beginning of February 1848; because of this great event in the history of the world proletarian revolution, which marks a before and an after. In this editorial we want to refer, very briefly, to some questions set out by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Chairman Mao in this respect.

We want to begin with the origin and foundational significance for the International Communist Movement of the Manifesto, quoting Lenin, who writes in this regard:

„In the spring of 1847 Marx and Engels joined a secret propaganda society called the Communist League; they took a prominent part in the League's Second Congress (London, November 1847), at whose request they drew up the celebrated *Communist Manifesto*, which appeared in February 1848. With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world-conception, consistent with materialism, which also embrace the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of a new, communist society.“ (Lenin: Karl Marx)

Chairman Mao tells us that "Marxism has not taken a single step in life without struggle"; it is in a struggle till death against opposing and contrary currents and ideas that the scientific ideology of the proletariat arose. In his "Karl Marx", Lenin says that Marxism arose in a struggle to the death against the doctrine of Proudhon, which at that time was of special importance among the revolutionary groups in Paris; a doctrine of Proudhon, "which Marx pulled to pieces in his *Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847", and also "waging a vigorous struggle against the various doctrines of petty-bourgeois socialism" (Lenin: Karl Marx).

In the Statement of the Maoist Parties and Organisations of November 2020, for the Celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Great Frederick Engels, some very significant historical facts concerning the Manifesto are clearly summarised:

“Our founders, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were united in their work with an indestructible bond in their thoughts and actions, in their joint struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. They are the authors of the Manifesto of the Communist Party in 1848, the certificate of birth of the International Communist Movement. Its publication coincides with the great revolutionary upsurge of the years 1848-1849, which would shake the whole of Europe, from England to Hungary, when for the first time in history an armed confrontation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie took place. Marxism was forged and tempered in the fire of class struggle. The two-line struggle initiated by Engels and crowned with Marx's work was fundamental to the important victory of the Marxist Red Faction at the Second Congress of the League of the Just in November 1847. At this Congress, personally led by Karl Marx and having Frederick Engels as his secretary, the modification of the name of the League, which will be called the

League of Communists from now on, was approved and its old motto, "All men are brothers", was changed to the immortal motto: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!"

Marx and Engels are the fathers of scientific communism, they are the authors of the Manifesto, that is why we transcribe below Engels' letter to Marx, 23-24 November 1847, which reads:

“Give a little thought to the Confession of Faith. I think we would do best to abandon the catachetical form and call the thing Communist Manifesto! Since a certain amount of history has to be narrated in it, the form hitherto adopted is quite unsuitable. I shall be bringing with me the one from here, which I did; it is in simple narrative form, but wretchedly worded, in a tearing hurry. I start off by asking: What is communism? and then straight on to the proletariat—the history of its origins, how it differs from earlier workers, development of the antithesis between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, crises, conclusions. In between, all kinds of secondary matter and, finally, the communists' party policy, in so far as it should be made public. The one here has not yet been submitted in its entirety for endorsement but, save for a few quite minor points, I think I can get it through in such a form that at least there is nothing in it which conflicts with our views.”

In the margin of this letter from Engels to Marx, Lenin noted: "Engels wrote the draft of the Communist Manifesto".

Lenin's annotation in the margin of Engels' letter is a just and correct recognition of Engels' role in the establishment of the Manifesto, a historical accuracy which is completed by his article "The Marx-Engels Correspondence", where Lenin writes:

“This historical letter of Engels’s on the first draft of a work which has travelled all over the world and which to this (day is true in all its fundamentals and as actual and topical as though it were written yesterday, clearly proves that Marx and Engels are justly named side by side as the founders of modern socialism.”

But for a better understanding of the historical relationship of the two authors, more specifically in the elaboration of the Manifesto, it is worth quoting the part of Engels' letter to Marx, 26 October 1847, in which he gives an account of his interview with Louis Blanc, as follows:

You, I said, were the chief: Vous pouvez regarder M. Marx comme le chef de notre parti (i.e. de la fraction la plus avancée de la démocratie allemande, que je représentais vis-à-vis de lui) [You can regard Mr Marx as the head of our party (i. e. of the most advanced section of German democracy, which I was representing vis-à-vis him) and his recent book against Mr Proudhon as our programme.] et son récent livre contre M. Proudhon comme notre programme."3 Of this he took most careful note.

Moreover, Engels wrote in the PREFACE TO THE GERMAN EDITION OF 1883:

The basic thought running through the Manifesto – that economic production, and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom, constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently (ever since the dissolution of the *primaeval* communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social evolution; that this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the

bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression, class struggles – this basic thought belongs solely and exclusively to Marx.*

I have already stated this many times; but precisely now is it necessary that it also stand in front of the Manifesto itself.

(*“This proposition,” I wrote in the preface to the English translation, “which, in my opinion, is destined to do for history what Darwin’s theory has done for biology, we both of us, had been gradually approaching for some years before 1845. How far I had independently progressed towards it is best shown by my Conditions of the WorkingClass in England. But when I again met Marx at Brussels, in spring 1845, he had it already worked out and put it before me in terms almost as clear as those in which I have stated it here.” [Note by Engels to the German edition of 1890])

This leads to the precision of Chairman Gonzalo, at the First Congress of the CPP, coincidentally in January 1988, that: Marx and Engels, mainly Marx, established the Communist Manifesto. A precision, which Engels himself declared, as we have seen in the above quotations, and thereby recognised Marx's leadership when there were still only two of them and established Marx's main authorship of the fundamental idea that permeates the whole Manifesto. These were the words of Chairman Gonzalo at the opening of the First Congress:

"Here we are first and foremost for the undefeated ideology of the international proletariat, for Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, mainly Maoism; here we are also as a concretisation of that great almighty truth by application to our concrete reality from which Gonzalo thought derives. Without Marx, Lenin and Chairman Mao we would not be here, without the international proletariat plus the masses of the world we would not be here. This year, 1988, is a year that reminds us of two great milestones: 1) 140 years since the publication of the Communist Manifesto, 140 years since Marx and Engels, mainly Marx, established it and by coincidence it was in this month, January, we are under that great omen, a universal milestone illuminates this Congress. 2) 60 years since the founding of the PCP by Mariátegui. Two good omens, one universal and one national".

To conclude, we inform you that, in close connection with this editorial, we will be publishing on our pages Engels' "Principles of Communism", mentioned in his letter to Marx in November 1847, and Lenin's work "Karl Marx". We also announce the forthcoming publication of Marx and Engels' Manifesto of the Communist Party.