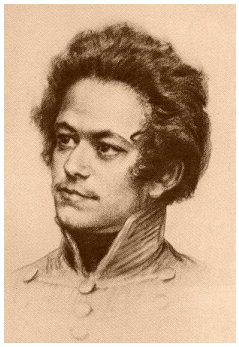
Concept Document and Calendar: The Communist Manifesto Reading Group

Metro DC Democratic Socialists of America, Summer 2024



"The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working Men of All Countries, Unite!"
-Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party

Summary: The Communist Manifesto Reading Group is a reading group starting in June 2024, with the purpose of reading and discussing one of the key works in the radical tradition: *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Based in the DC area, the Reading Group hopes to analyze its history, legacy, and the world that created it since it was released just before the Revolutions of 1848 with the help of China Mieville's recent book *A Spectre, Haunting*. The group will meet weekly in a virtual setting on Tuesday nights, with 2 in-person social events around the DMV and the option to continue future socials or continue readings and discussions. No experience or knowledge level is required to join. *The Communist Manifesto* and the essays we will read are available for free online.. The group will use a Notes document during and before meetings to gather members' thoughts and questions.

Origin: The idea for the group came from two sources: 1) New members joining DSA without having read many socialist classics 2) The relevance of the Communist Manifesto in an era where the socialist movement is found more in groups such as the Communist League and DSA than with state power or mass membership organizations. The group intends to meet interest in the history of socialism by reading a key work on the topic.

Details: The group is based with Metro DC DSA's Political Education Workgroup and welcomes members from outside of the organization. The group will primarily consist of reading and then holding online meetings to discuss the Communist Manifesto and its legacy.

Structure: The group will have 2 coordinators that take responsibility for administrative elements of the group. The group will pass facilitation duties and other conversational responsibilities between members meeting-by-meeting unless the group determines otherwise.

Timeline and Location: The group is intended to start readings and discussion just after Memorial Day in 2024. The group will meet ~every week until late July, with meetings held all or mostly online and with 2 dedicated group social meet ups. The reading group may hold some meetings outside of the reading structure if prompted by anyone.

Discussion doc

Draft Calendar -all times at 7:30 pm unless modified

Meeting #1 (Tues. June 4): Introductions and Overview of Reading Group format, online

Optional Reading: "Introduction to the Communist Manifesto", Eric Hobsbawm

Social Gathering #1 (Tues,. June 11): Social Get-Together, Communist Manifesto Reading Group, Wonderland Ballroom, 1101 Kenyon St NW, Washington, DC 20010

Meeting #2 (Tues, June 18): What did the world look like when the Manifesto was written?, Online, and presentation/visit from Metro DC DSA Steering

Readings: The Great Towns, Frederick Engels; The Sadler Committee Report (1832), The People's Charter

Meeting #3 (Tues. June 25): The Communist Manifesto, Parts I and II, online.

Reading: "Preamble, Part I: Bourgeois and Proletarians; and Part II: Proletarians and Communists" (Pages 14-27)

Optional Reading: "On the Manifesto and the Manifesto Form" and "The Communist Manifesto in Its Time" , Pages 12-38, *On a Spectre Haunting*, China Mieville

Meeting #4 (Tues. July 2): The Communist Manifesto, Parts III and IV, online

Reading: Part III: Socialist and Communist Literature; and Part IV: Position of the Communists in Relation to the Various Existing Opposition Parties, Pages 28-34

Optional Reading: The Coming Era of Mutualism, Pierre Proudhon; The Phalanstery, The Phalanx at Dawn, The Establishment of a Trial Phalanx, Charles Fourier;

Meeting #5 (Tues. July 9): Outcomes of the Manifesto & the 1848 Revolutions

Reading: On The History of the Communist League by Frederick Engels; Chapter 1 (pgs 21-40) in The Age of Capital by Eric Hobsbawm

(Optional) XX. The Late Trial at Cologne, Letter by Wilhelm Weitling to Moses Hess

Social Gathering #2 (Tues. July 16), Social Get Together, Lyman's Tavern

Meeting #6 (Tues. July 23): The Communist Manifesto in Today's Moment, online

Optional readings (choose 1-2): China Miéville: Marx's Communist Manifesto Has Much to Teach Us in 2023 | Global Policy Journal, The Communist Manifesto: more relevant than ever (Trotsky, 1938), Yanis Varoufakis: Marx predicted our present crisis – and points the way out | Communism | The Guardian, The Communist Manifesto After 150 Years

After: Group can continue reading other books or items, hold other social meet ups, etc.

Other resources: