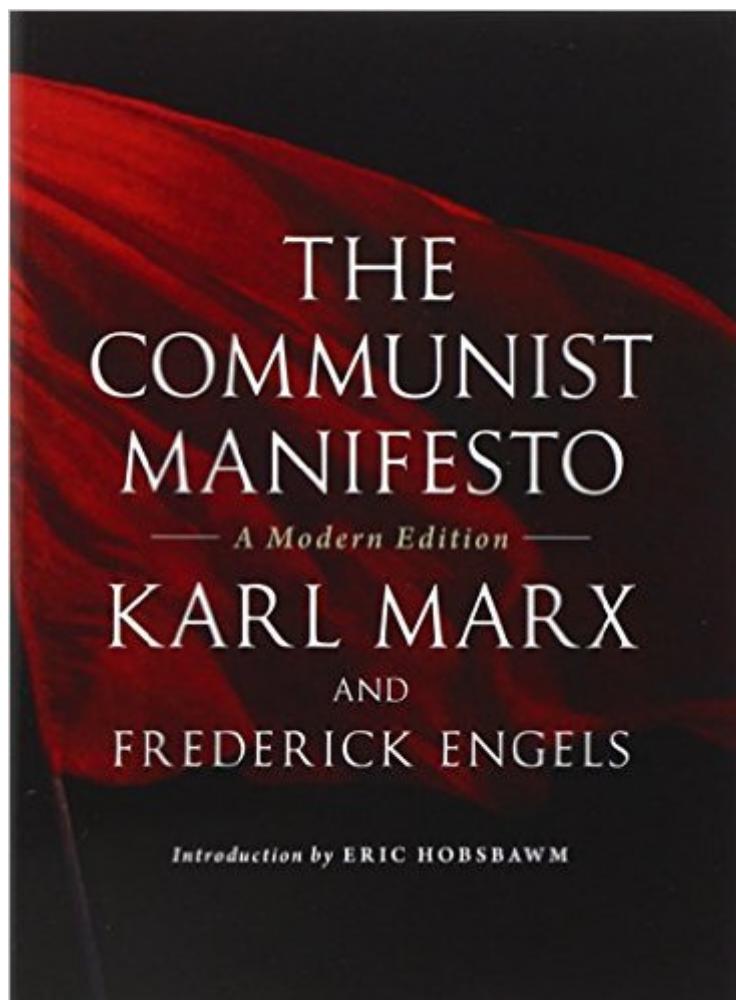


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The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition



Synopsis

In the two decades following the fall of the Berlin Wall, global capitalism became entrenched in its modern, neoliberal form. Its triumph was so complete that the word ‘capitalism’ • itself fell out of use in the absence of credible political alternatives. But with the outbreak of financial crisis and global recession in the twenty-first century, capitalism is once again up for discussion. The status quo can no longer be taken for granted. As Eric Hobsbawm argues in his acute and elegant introduction to this modern edition, in such times The Communist Manifesto emerges as a work of great prescience and power despite being written over a century and a half ago. He highlights Marx and Engels’ enduring insights into the capitalist system: its devastating impact on all aspects of human existence; its susceptibility to enormous convulsions and crises; and its fundamental weakness.

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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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