

Historical Context of the Communist Manifesto

- **France:** The French Revolution began on 14 July 1789, and the revolutionary period ended in 1799, with the fall of the brief rule of the Jacobin "Directoire" and the accession of Napoléon Bonaparte as Emperor. Bonaparte ruled from 1799 to 1814, and again for "100 Days" in 1815. France returned to Bourbon monarchy (essentially absolute, although with a constitution) from 1814 through 1830 (reigns of Louis XVIII and Charles X); then a revolution of the middle class, the *bourgeoisie*, placed on the throne Louis Phillippe, the "citizen king." Louis Phillippe's limited constitutional monarchy was known for the rise of the *haute bourgeoisie* (mainly financiers) as distinguished from the petty *bourgeoisie* (shopkeepers, traders & such). Prince Louis Napoléon attempted coups more than once, hoping to establish a new Empire, while at the other extreme anarchists fomented revolt. All major classes joined in a revolt on February 22, 1848 and established the Second Republic. (Louis Napoléon was elected its first President, then staged a coup in 1851 and became Emperor Napoleon III.)
- **Germany:** At the time of the French Revolution, Germany was still governed as numerous semi-independent states, each with its prince, united in the Holy Roman Empire, with Prussia as the dominant power. In 1806, following his invasion and conquest of many of the German states, Napoléon disestablished the Holy Roman Empire. Prussia declared war, but was routed and lost much of its territory to Napoléon. Between 1813 and 1815 most of Germany regained its full independence from France, and the German Confederation was formed (a loose coalition veering much of the territory of the old Empire, but with far fewer separate states). The nobility regained some of its power; but as a result of the long period of conquest it had to cede significant political power to financial institutions. The peasants, on the other hand, remained peasants, and as discontent grew, the Confederation became increasingly repressive, leading to an unsuccessful revolution in 1848. (There was a variety of so-called "Liberal Revolutions" throughout Austro-Hungarian and German Empires, 1848-49; their aims were mainly nationalistic and for civil freedoms, not consistently Republican or Socialist; most failed.)
- Other relevant world events of 1810-1848:
 - War of 1812; Franco-Prussian War; Mexican war
 - Revolutions in Mexico, Central and South America, 1830's
 - British Empire abolished slavery 1833, but not in all colonies; serfdom persisted in Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1848
 - Italian Republican revolutionary movement (Mazzini, Garibaldi, 1830's-40's) against feudal principalities and domination of foreign powers
 - Reign of Queen Victoria begins 1837
 - Panic of 1837, US (wildcat banking, land speculation)
 - "Sociology" defined as a science by Auguste Comte, exponent of positivism

- Prussia passes 1st child labor laws, limits juvenile labor to 10 hrs/day, 1839; similar laws in various US states over next decade; UK Factory Act (women, children 13-18), 1847
- Opium wars and first British-Afghan War, 1839-42
- Labor riots in N. England, 1842; worker uprising in Paris, 1848
- Sciences of physics and thermodynamics make major strides, 1840's
- Dorothea Dix reports on conditions of asylums and prisons, 1843
- Potato famine in Ireland, 1846
- Arts, culture:
 - Beethoven's 9th Symphony, 1825
 - The Hunchback of Notre Dame, 1831
 - Oliver Twist, 1838
 - *Daily News*, first inexpensive daily press, inaugurated in England with goal of social reform, 1846 (Charles Dickens, founder and first editor)
 - Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights 1847
 - Vanity Fair 1848