



Friedrich Engels, the eldest son of a successful German industrialist, was born in Barmen on 28th November 1820. As a young man his father sent him to England to help manage his cotton-factory in [Manchester](#). Engels was shocked by the poverty in the city and began writing an account that was published as [Condition of the Working Class in England](#) (1844). He also made friends with the leaders of the [Chartist](#) movement in [Britain](#).

In 1844 Engels began contributing to a radical journal called *Franco-German Annals* that was being edited by [Karl Marx](#) in Paris. Later that year Engels met Marx and the two men became close friends. Engels shared Marx's views on capitalism and after their first meeting he wrote that there was virtually "complete agreement in all theoretical fields". Marx and Engels decided to work together. It was a good partnership, whereas Marx was at his best when dealing with difficult abstract concepts, Engels had the ability to write for a mass audience.

While working on their first article together, *The Holy Family*, the Prussian authorities put pressure on the French government to expel [Karl Marx](#) from the country. On 25th January 1845, Marx received an order deporting him from France. Marx and Engels decided to move to [Belgium](#), a country that permitted greater freedom of expression than any other European state.

[Friedrich Engels](#) helped to financially support Marx and his family. Engels gave Marx the royalties of his book, [Condition of the Working Class in England](#) and arranged for other sympathizers to make donations. This enabled Marx the time to study and develop his economic and political theories.

In July 1845 Engels took [Karl Marx](#) to England. They spent most of the time consulting books in [Manchester Library](#). During their six weeks in England, Engels introduced Marx to several of the [Chartist](#) leaders including [George Julian Harney](#).

Engels and Marx returned to Brussels and in January 1846 they set up a Communist Correspondence Committee. The plan was to try and link together socialist leaders living in different parts of Europe. Influenced by Marx's ideas, socialists in England held a conference in London where they formed a new organisation called the Communist League. Engels attended as a delegate and took part in developing a strategy of action.

Engels returned to England in December 1847 where he attended a meeting of the Communist League' Central Committee in [London](#). At the meeting it was decided that the aims of the organisation was "the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the domination of the proletariat, the abolition of the old bourgeois society based on class antagonisms, and the establishment of a new society without classes and without private property".

Engels and Marx began writing a pamphlet together. Based on a first draft produced by

Engels called the [Principles of Communism](#), Marx finished the 12,000 word pamphlet in six weeks. Unlike most of Marx's work, it was an accessible account of communist ideology. Written for a mass audience, [The Communist Manifesto](#) summarised the forthcoming revolution and the nature of the communist society that would be established by the proletariat.

[The Communist Manifesto](#) begins with the assertion, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Marx and Engels argued that if you are to understand human history you must not see it as the story of great individuals or the conflict between states. Instead, you must see it as the story of social classes and their struggles with each other. Marx and Engels explained that social classes had changed over time but in the 19th century the most important classes were the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. By the term bourgeoisie Marx and Engels meant the owners of the factories and the raw materials which are processed in them. The proletariat, on the other hand, own very little and are forced to sell their labour to the capitalists.

Marx and Engels believed that these two classes are not merely different from each other, but also have different interests. They went on to argue that the conflict between these two classes would eventually lead to revolution and the triumph of the proletariat. With the disappearance of the bourgeoisie as a class, there would no longer be a class society. As Engels later wrote, "The state is not abolished, it withers away."

The [The Communist Manifesto](#) was published in February, 1848. The following month, the government expelled Engels and Marx from Belgium. Marx and Engels visited Paris before moving to Cologne where they founded a radical newspaper, *New Rhenish Gazette*. The men hoped to use the newspaper to encourage the revolutionary atmosphere that they had witnessed in Paris.

Engels helped form an organisation called the Rhineland Democrats. On 25th September, 1848, several of the leaders of the group were arrested. Engels managed to escape but was forced to leave the country. [Karl Marx](#) continued to publish the *New Rhenish Gazette* until he was expelled in May, 1849.

Engels and Marx now moved to [London](#). The Prussian authorities applied pressure on the British government to expel the two men but the Prime Minister, [John Russell](#), held liberal views on freedom of expression and refused. With only the money that Engels could raise, the Marx family lived in extreme poverty.

In order to help supply [Karl Marx](#) with an income, Engels returned to work for his father in [Germany](#). The two kept in constant contact and over the next twenty years they wrote to each other on average once every two days. Friedrich Engels sent postal orders or £1 or £5 notes, cut in half and sent in separate envelopes. In this way the Marx family was able to survive.

Other books published by Engels include [The Peasant War in Germany](#) (1850), [Anti-Dühring](#) (1878) and the [Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State](#) (1884) .

[Karl Marx](#) died in [London](#) in March, 1883. Engels devoted the rest of his life to editing and translating Marx's writings. This included the second volume of [Das Kapital](#) (1885). Engels then used Marx's notes to write the third volume that was published in 1894.

Friedrich Engels died in [London](#) on 5th August 1895.