

Demands of the Communist Party in Germany

“Demands of the Communist Party in Germany” were written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in Paris between March 21 (when Engels arrived in Paris from Brussels) and March 24, 1848. This document was discussed by members of the Central Authority, who approved and signed it as the political programme of the Communist League in the revolution that broke out in Germany. In March it was printed as a leaflet, for distribution among revolutionary German emigrant workers who were about to return home. Austrian and German diplomats in Paris informed their respective governments about this as early as March 27, 28 and 29. (The Austrian Ambassador enclosed in his letter a copy of the leaflet which he dated “March 25”.) The leaflet soon reached members of the Communist League in other countries, in particular, German emigrant workers in London.

Early in April, the “Demands of the Communist Party in Germany” were published in such German democratic papers as *Berliner Zeitungs-Halle* (special supplement to No. 82, April 5, 1848), *Düsseldorfer Zeitung* (No. 96, April 5, 1848), *Mannheimer Abendzeitung* (No. 96, April 6, 1848), *Trier'sche Zeitung* (No. 97, April 6, 1848, supplement), *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (No. 100, April 9, 1848, supplement), and *Zeitung für das deutsche Volk* (No. 2 1, April 9, 1848).

Marx and Engels, who left for Germany round about April 6 and some time later settled in Cologne, did their best along with their followers to popularise this programme document during the revolution. In 1848 and 1849 it was repeatedly published in the periodical press and in leaflet form. Not later than September 10, 1848, the “Demands” were printed in Cologne as a leaflet for circulation by the Cologne Workers’ Association both in the town itself and in a number of districts of Rhenish Prussia. In addition to minor stylistic changes, point 10 in the text of the leaflet was worded differently from that published in March-April 1848. At the Second Democratic Congress held in Berlin in October 1848, Friedrich Beust, delegate from the Cologne Workers’ Association, spoke, on behalf of the social question commission, in favour of adopting a programme of action closely following the “Demands”. In November and December 1848, various points of the “Demands” were discussed at meetings of the Cologne Workers’ Association. Many editions of the “Demands” published during the revolution and after its defeat have survived to this day in their original form, some of them as copies kept in the police archives.

At the end of 1848 or the beginning of 1849 an abridged version of the “Demands” was published in pamphlet form by Weller Publishers in Leipzig. The slogan at the beginning of the document, the second paragraph of point 9 and the last sentence of point 10 were omitted, and the words “The Committee” were not included among the signatories. In 1853, an abridged version of the “Demands” was printed, together with other documents of the Communist League, in the first part of the book *Die Communisten-Verschwörungen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* published in Berlin for purposes of information by Wermuth and Stieber, two police officials, who staged a trial against the Communists in Cologne in 1852. Later Engels reproduced the main points of the “Demands” in his essay *On the History of the Communist League*, published in November 1885 in the newspaper *Sozialdemokrat*, and as an introduction to the pamphlet: K. Marx, *Enthüllungen über den Kommunisten Prozess zu Köln*, Hottingen-Zürich, 1885.

English translations of the “Demands of the Communist Party in Germany” appeared in the collections: *The Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels* with an introduction and explanatory notes by D. Ryazanoff, Martin Lawrence, London (1930); K. Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, ed. V. Adoratsky, Moscow-Leningrad, Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR (1936); *ibid.*, New York (1936); *Birth of the Communist Manifesto*, edited and annotated, with an Introduction by D. J. Struik, International Publishers, New York, 1971, and in other publications.

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“Workers of all countries, unite!”

1. The whole of Germany shall be declared a single and indivisible republic.
2. Every German, having reached the age of 21, shall have the right to vote and to be elected, provided he has not been convicted of a criminal offence.
3. Representatives of the people shall receive payment so that workers, too, shall be able to become members of the German parliament.
4. Universal arming of the people. In future the armies shall be simultaneously labour armies, so that the troops shall not, as formerly, merely consume, but shall produce more than is necessary for their upkeep.

This will moreover be conducive to the organisation of labour.

5. Legal services shall be free of charge.
6. All feudal obligations, dues, corvées, tithes etc., which have hitherto weighed upon the rural population, shall be abolished without compensation.
7. Princely and other feudal estates, together with mines, pits, and so forth, shall become the property of the state. The estates shall be cultivated on a large scale and with the most up-to-date scientific devices in the interests of the whole of society.
8. Mortgages on peasant lands shall be declared the property of the state. Interest on such mortgages shall be paid by the peasants to the state.
9. In localities where the tenant system is developed, the land rent or the quit-rent shall be paid to the state as a tax.

The measures specified in Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9 are to be adopted in order to reduce the communal and other burdens hitherto imposed upon the peasants and small tenant farmers without curtailing the means available for defraying state expenses and without imperilling production.

The landowner in the strict sense, who is neither a peasant nor a tenant farmer, has no share in production. Consumption on his part is, therefore, nothing but abuse.

10. A state bank, whose paper issues are legal tender, shall replace all private banks.

This measure will make it possible to regulate the credit system in the interest of the people *as a whole*, and will thus undermine the dominion of the big financial magnates. Further, by gradually substituting paper money for gold and silver coin, the universal means of exchange (that indispensable prerequisite of bourgeois trade and commerce) will be cheapened, and gold and silver will be set free for use in foreign trade. Finally, this measure is necessary in order to bind the interests of the conservative bourgeoisie to the Government.

11. All the means of transport, railways, canals, steamships, roads, the posts etc. shall be taken over by the state. They shall become the property of the state and shall be placed free at the disposal of the impecunious classes.
12. All civil servants shall receive the same salary, the only exception being that civil servants who have a family to support and who therefore have greater requirements, shall receive a higher salary.
13. Complete separation of Church and State. The clergy of every denomination shall be paid only by the voluntary contributions of their congregations.
14. The right of inheritance to be curtailed.

15. The introduction of steeply graduated taxes, and the abolition of taxes on articles of consumption.

16. Inauguration of national workshops. The state guarantees a livelihood to all workers and provides for those who are incapacitated for work.

17. Universal and free education of the people.

It is to the interest of the German proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie and the small peasants to support these demands with all possible energy. Only by the realisation of these demands will the millions in Germany, who have hitherto been exploited by a handful of persons and whom the exploiters would like to keep in further subjection, win the rights and attain to that power to which they are entitled as the producers of all wealth.

The Committee

Karl Marx, Karl Schapper, H. Bauer, F. Engels, J. Moll, W. Wolff