

SUMMER READING SUPPLEMENT; THE PRINCE AND THE MANIFESTO

Both The **Prince** and **The Manifesto** present different ideas regarding political power. The question of its nature, origins, the role of people in it, the ideas of class structure are some of the areas most explored. This handout will advise on some of the ideas that you should be aware of and look for in the reading. It is also important to keep in mind the historical context in which each lived. Machiavelli was writing in Renaissance Italy to a relatively small, elite audience while Marx was writing in the industrialized 19th century Europe to a much broader group of people. Each reflects much of their time in their respective works. Use the following to guide your reading.

The Prince by Machiavelli

1. How does the author use history to support his position?
2. What patterns does he see?
3. Is he observing or advocating the use of political power?
4. What figures in history (past and present) demonstrate Machiavelli's ideas?
5. What talents must a ruler have? Are these acquired or intrinsic to a Prince?
6. What personal qualities must a ruler possess? What role does cruelty or ruthlessness play in maintaining power?
7. What is the ultimate or most important goal of a ruler?
8. How can a prince maintain an empire?
9. What is the source of power as well as its goal?
10. What importance is placed on the role of advisers? What must be considered in their selection?
11. How must one deal with enemies? What must be considered in this?
12. What is the role of "luck" or "fortune"? What must the prince do with this?
13. Is Machiavelli advocating cruelty for its own sake? Why/why not?
14. Who is this addressed to? What does Machiavelli hope will be achieved by this person?
15. Are such tactics incompatible with a modern liberal democratic state, such as the United States or Great Britain?

The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx

1. Like Machiavelli, Marx uses lessons from history. However, Marx uses patterns of struggle between classes based mostly on economics. How does he show this?
2. Who are the “bourgeoisie”? What is their place in the history of class struggle?
3. What credit does Marx give to the “bourgeoisie”? From whom did they take power?
4. How does the “bourgeoisie” sow the seeds of their own destruction? What will they eventually become?
5. As free enterprise allows the capitalist system to grow, what will eventually happen to competition? Is this seen today?
6. Marx considered himself a social scientist, not a political theorist. How does he apply science to his view of politics and economics?
7. What is Marx’s argument about the inevitability of “revolution”?
8. What will eventually happen to the “bourgeoisie” class in the capitalist system? Why?
9. Who are the “proletariat”? How did industrial society produce them?
10. How are the “proletariat” becoming more united throughout the industrialized world?
11. What changes must occur in industrialized society that will lead to the revolution?
12. If the revolution is inevitable, in what type of society will it first occur?
13. Again, if revolution is inevitable, why is it necessary for the “workers” to rise up?
14. How do modern welfare programs (e.g. social security, Medicare, welfare, unemployment insurance, student loans, etc.,) reflect Marxist views?
15. Why did Marx feel that socialism was a fraud in its attempt to redistribute wealth?
16. What aspects of “bourgeoisie society” does Marx criticize?
17. How does Marx justify the abolition of private property, marriage, religion and family? Why does he feel that this would not really be a big change?