The rise & fall of the Communist Party

Introduction

- Parti communiste français (PCF)
- There were lots of different Communist parties in different countries
- There is still a Communist party in Britain
- Daily newspaper: ‘The Morning Star’
- Communist parties aren’t just of historical interest
- The Communist Party in France (in particular) was very dependant on the Soviet Union
- This was both financially and politically
- In the 1990s, there was a joke that the Soviet Union disappeared, but the PCF was still very loyal to it
- What is Marxism?
- The FCP saw itself as the orthodox Marxist party of France for a while
- Karl Marx died in 1883
- Discovering the laws of Capitalism
- He worked closely with Engels
- ‘The Manifesto of the Communist Party’
  - They argued these laws needed to be understood in order for the most down-trodden people (salaried workers) to get rid of Capitalism and introduce Communism
  - This would be an ultimate form of equality
  - ‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs’
  - Beyond that, they didn’t talk much about Communism
  - They were writing in the middle to late 19th century
  - Influenced by the 1789 Revolution
  - From that perspective, 1789 had swept away feudal order and replaced it with bourgeois order (as far as they were concerned)

**Proletariat: working class**

- It wasn’t out of ordinary that they should rise up and get rid of Capitalist order
- That would be the end of what they called ‘pre-history’
- Classy society would be replaced by something more just
- Above all, be very equal
- For them, the dynamic of history revolved around class struggle
- Class struggle was the motor of history
- They were interested in:
  - 1848 Revolution
  - 1871 Paris Commune
- Working class people had been rising up
- The tendency is to want equality and implement a democratic society

Formation After 1917