

Reclamation
of
Communism

by

Adam Denker

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“The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a World to Win.

Workers of the world, Unite!”

These fiery words concluded the “Manifesto of the Communist Party” by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. They were a declaration and a rallying cry, boldly announcing to the world that Communists would not retreat, they would not hide their intentions because they did not need to. The cause of the Communists was noble, just, and necessary. For the Communists strived toward the total liberation of all people, the end of exploitation, and a classless society where everyone truly is equal. Communists all over the world strived to overthrow monarchies and oligarchic republics, establish democracies, often for first time, and to improve the standard of living for all people. Such a cause requires no deceit, no trickery to bring the masses to your cause. Because the masses are the cause. Their liberation, and your own, is the very thing which a Communist fights for.

For over 100 years Communists boldly proclaimed themselves in this way, never attempting to hide their intent and proudly calling themselves Communists. But then came the cold war, McCarthyist fear and silencing of dissent, and the rise of the "new left."

With the confrontation between the U.S. empire and the USSR, came heavy stigmatization of Communism. The term came to become synonymous, in the public eye, with totalitarian dictatorship (much because of U.S. propaganda efforts to do just that) and even opposition to Democracy. Because of this the "new left" sought to distance itself from the term "Communism," and the ideals it represented. They no longer sought to transform society into a classless one. Now "leftists" looked to Social-Democratic ideals as the "true" embodiment of Socialism. They denuded the left of it's anti-Capitalist goals, now seeking to instead make Capitalism more ethical (something, Communists have always regarded as neither possible nor desirable.) Even leftists that still sought to end Capitalism, such as Anarchists, tried to distance themselves from Communism and Marxism, denying the crucial role those ideals played in the formation of Kropotkin's ideology. Even Anarchists that acknowledged this, and sought to reinvigorate the Communist ideals of Anarchism, like Murray Bookchin, still avoided the term "Communism." Because if they dared use it, they would be labeled a treasonous sympathizer to the Soviet Union, and perhaps even face arrest. They ignored that all-important tenant founded in those final lines of the Manifesto; Communists do not hide our goals or abandon our ideals. Communists proudly and boldly announce our ideology, we do not allow Capitalists to redefine our terms.

It is long past due that Communists reclaim our name, that we once again make our intentions known to the world, and proudly bear the title of Communists. We will always be demonized by the Ruling Class, the owners, and always have been. We shouldn't care what they say and what they think of us, because they are our enemies; we aren't appealing to the Ruling Classes. It is the Working Class, the "Proletariat," the renters, the laborers, the homeless and jobless, all those who cannot live off the work of others, it is they that we preach to. We make it known to them that we seek to allow them to liberate themselves, because no one can do it for them, and we *are them*. We tell our fellow workers what we are, and what Communism is.

It is to you that I now speak. To you, the wage-worker, the renter, to all those who do not own the factory or the department store, to all those who must sell their labor just so they can keep a roof over their heads and food in their stomachs. I'm here to tell you that we Communists are not the wealthy owners trying to maintain their power, as the fascists are. We are from among you, we are workers. As I write this I work two jobs to keep from becoming homeless. So, when we tell you what we are seeking to accomplish, we are not making promises of things which we want to give you, as the politician does. We are asking you to help yourself, to take our hands as equals to liberate us all.

What do we, the Communists, seek to liberate us all from? We all know what the Capitalists have taught us that communism is, what they claim about our talk of liberation. The Capitalists tell you we want dictatorship, that we oppose Democracy. They point to the Soviet Union as if it were the primary example of Communism, and as if Communists want to duplicate it exactly. The Soviet Union is an important country to study and learn from because it was the first great experiment with Communism. But it is no more the perfect example of Communism than the first efforts at building Democracy out of Feudal-Europe were perfect examples of Democracy. If we wholly reject the Soviet union as a learning tool because it was too oligarchical, why then do we hold up the establishment of Parliament in England with the Magna Carta as a triumph of Democracy? That "Democracy" was anything but, as only the nobles could vote or hold office. Even when America's Republic was first established, only male landowners could vote or hold office. But these are still important, still victories of Democracy that put us one step further down the road to a better world. The Soviet Union is no different. It was imperfect, but it made great strides in our march towards complete freedom and Democracy, and proved many of the core concepts of Communism as correct and possible.

Since I have pointed out that Communists oppose oligarchy and dictatorship, you might be asking what we want. What do Communists Stand for, why do we believe a revolution is necessary, and how do we want to change society and Government?

Communism is the pursuit of the ideals that inspired the American Revolution, and that the U.S. Government has always paid lip service to. Communism is the abolition of class society

and all forms of exploitation, it is the end of the subjugation of the many by the few. Communism is true Democracy where all people are a part of Government, not subjected to it. This is what we advocate when we call ourselves Communists; Communists demand Democracy in all systems that affect everyone and everyone needs to survive and live comfortably. Instead of a sham Democratic Government controlled by wealthy Oligarchs, and workplaces ruled by small Tyrants.

Communists see the old echos of Feudal and Religious Society that continue to dominate our lives, and we know they must be abolished. Where before we had the King, the Lord, and the Priest, we now have the Owner, the CEO, and the Economist. Where before we were serfs subjected to Church law and the command of the Noble, we now are Wage-Workers subjected to the Puritan Work Ethic and the dictates of the Capitalists who own all things that we rely on to survive. Where before the System was guarded by Knights devoted to the code of Chivalry, now Capitalist Society is enforced by Police that are blindly devoted to whatever the Capitalist Oligarchs declare is the law.

Communists, above everything else, oppose exploitation. We want you, the worker, to benefit entirely from your work. Not work to support the laziness of owners and be rewarded for your backbreaking labors with a miniscule portion of the wealth you create. But we also know that we are not islands unto ourselves. We all need and benefit from the society we live in, and thus it is in our interests to ensure that everyone is healthy, comfortable, and always has access to all they need to survive. This is why Communists regard healthcare, shelter, food, water, and access to work, all as human rights. And so seek to build systems that allow all access to these needs, instead of leaving most lacking these simply because they don't generate profit for an owner, as Capitalism does.

However, unlike the Social-Democrats who think all of these can be provided without changing anything by implementing welfare systems, Communists know that the system must be drastically altered to ensure all of these things for everyone. Thus Communists advocate changing both the Government and the economy into a single Democratic System. Under such a system, tax-funded welfare programs would not exist at all, because everyone's needs would be provided for inherently by the socio-economic system.

I know that right now everything you've been taught in School or by your friends and family is screaming at you: "This is utopian, impossible! This is tyrannical! It only works on paper, not in real life! It always devolves into a Dictatorship!. etc. etc." All these points I will address in the coming pages. I ask you to please remember that these points about Communism were taught to you by Capitalists. If you wanted to learn how a car works, would you consult an Amish person? If you want to know what Communism is, do not seek out its most ardent opponents. Instead, listen to Communists.

To my Communist Comrades I say stand up and boldly proclaim our name! End this cowardly concealment of our title, do not let the Capitalists take it from us. Those who fight to end tyranny and exploitation never have anything to be ashamed of, but rather it is their opponents that should be ashamed.

Of course, Communism is a solution to a problem. We cannot ever convince you to advocate for a solution if you do not believe there is a problem. Obviously, we all want a classless society, or at least the vast majority of people, especially those who believe in Democracy. Communists point to Capitalism as a system that must be eliminated first if we are to achieve that classless society. But why? Why can't we achieve classlessness without abolishing Capitalism? That, is not a short answer, Karl Marx wrote for years on the subject, and created the most comprehensive analysis of Capitalism to-date, called "Das Kapital," and it is three immense volumes long! Nonetheless, I will attempt to answer this question as concisely as possible.

1

The Malady

What Is Capitalism?

Before we talk about the problems of Capitalism, we have to first define Capitalism itself. I've found this misunderstanding of what we are referring to when we say "Capitalism" to be the biggest hurdle when speaking to people about why we must abolish it. Often people think we are advocating against "the free exchange of goods and services," or even advocating against you owning any property at all. Anger at anyone advocating for a system that abolishes those things is perfectly understandable, and we do not want to abolish them. In fact, we want to expand them both because Capitalism is neither of those things, and actually hinders them both

The primary component of Capitalism, its major defining aspect, is the private ownership of what's called the "means-of-production." The means-of-production is the tools, workplaces, and resources, used to make the things we all rely on for survival and a modern comfortable life. Like a car factory, or a forest of timber, or the machines used to pave roads, etc. The means-of-production is not your house, your car, or your other personal possessions. These things are called "personal property," and they are yours, no Communist wants to take them away from you, because we want to have our own personal property as well; Communists don't want their personal property to be owned by the Government either. Often Communists will refer to the means of production as "private property." We use this term because the means of production is privately owned under Capitalism. We never refer to your personal property as private property, only Capitalists do that.

Under Capitalism, the purpose of the means-of-production is not to supply the population with what it needs, but to be a source of wealth for the private owners. These private owners employ people that do not own the means-of-production to work it for them. They pay these workers a "wage" and sell the products that these wage-workers produce for more than what they spent to produce those products (including the cost of the wage.) This extra income is called "profit," and it must exceed both the cost of maintaining the means-of-production and the cost of the worker's wages. The owners of the means of production, called the Bourgeoisie, live off of these profits. If they make no profit, then they must close the business, even if the business makes enough to pay for the upkeep of the business and the wages of the workers (called "Breaking even.") Because the purpose of Capitalist business is not to provide what the workers need to survive, but to provide an owner with profit. What I have just described, as you can see for yourself, is a system where one person lives off of the work of others. Profits are made by the workers, by all rights of reason and ethics, they should go to the workers evenly. Instead, the profits all go to the owner, the Bourgeoisie.

Keep in mind, I am speaking of *profits*, not the cost of maintaining the means-of-production. It's important to point this out because I have often heard the argument

that “it costs money to maintain a business” as a retort when I argue that profits are unpaid wages of the workers. Business expenses are not profits. Profits are what is left *after* business expenses are paid for.

This is the class division created by Capitalism; Capitalism reduces society into two major groups: The owners of the means of production, the Bourgeoisie, and those who do not own the means of production, the Proletariat. The Proletariat, having no source of income beyond what they can produce with their own work, are forced to sell their labor to the Bourgeoisie in order to survive. They are further forced into this situation by other factors, such as the restrictions on purchasing and owning land, the laws against cultivating public land, taxes which must be paid in sanctioned currency, and simply the overpowering influence of the Bourgeoisie who have the most political clout due to their wealth and control over the means-of-production. All of this creates a system which requires people to have currency. And if you do not own the means of production, the only way you can get currency is to sell your labor. And since the majority cannot own the means of production, since we cannot have a society composed of all business owners and no workers, or even a society that is *mostly* business owners, the majority must sell their labor to survive.

This system is not natural as many would insist. There was a time when Capitalism did not exist, which was less than 200 years ago. It's easy to assume that Capitalism is older than this due to the system which preceded Capitalism: Mercantilism. Mercantilism was a transitory system from Feudalism, and thus had similar aspects to both Capitalism and Feudalism. It was an interesting system that certainly warrants a discussion, but for the sake of brevity I will keep the discussion focused on defining Capitalism. So it is merely worth noting that there were systems before Capitalism, you can even go back to Feudalism if you need to in order to understand this, or to the Slave-based production systems before Feudalism if you still need convinced. Since Capitalism was preceded by other systems, it is not natural. That is: it is not an unavoidable state of society that we must be subjected to. It was created by people, and we can create a different system.

I will revisit that last point later on and discuss several proposed systems for replacing Capitalism. But first I think Capitalism needs to be fleshed out more, after all, as the old mechanic's proverb says: “if it ain't broke, don't fix it.” We wouldn't even be having this conversation if Capitalism didn't need to be replaced, but it's likely that you may need more convincing on that point. So, let's begin by discussing the “fuel” of Capitalism: wage-labor, and a subject that we can both agree is bad: slavery.

Wage-Labor and Slavery

What is slavery? The easy answer is that it's making one person do something against their will. But that is not complete, as this would describe every prisoner as well. Perhaps we could say that it's the commodification of human beings, the act of regarding people as property. That is a much more accurate term. But take the Serfs of feudal Europe for example. They could not be bought and sold like chattel, and even had certain rights. Nobles couldn't simply punish or kill them with impunity. Yet that practice is universally regarded as a type of slavery. Perhaps, then, we could agree that slavery is the practice of making a person work for you, and taking all that they produce with that work? Personally, I think that is much more accurate. It effectively describes every form of slavery, and also brings me to my point: wage labor is a form of slavery.

Wage labor is the practice of an owner hiring a worker to work for them, as we have already discussed. The owner, once again, takes all that the worker produces, and then gives back a small portion of that produce in the form of wages, almost universally in the form of a State-sanctioned currency. "*Ah ha!*" The Capitalist will say. "That shows that it's not slavery! A slave receives nothing for their work!" But don't they?

Slaves are always given shelter and food. In some cases, like the Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire, they even received pay. So, if slaves receive a wage, even if that wage is in the form of food and shelter, then the only difference between a wage worker and a slave is that the wage worker usually receives a bit more back than a slave. But if that's the only difference, then there is no difference. There have always been slaves throughout history that were treated better than wage workers, and had access to luxuries that wage workers do not. Meaning that those slaves were paid more than most wage workers, but they were still slaves. "Then that's not the difference!" A Capitalist might say: "Slaves cannot go where they want, they can only ever do what they're told and work for who they're told. They have no agency over their lives!" But, do wage workers have such agency?

They might have some choice in who they work for, but the system is still the same. They still are subjected to wage work. If a prisoner is given the opportunity to choose their prison, they're still a prisoner. And even then, this choice is usually in-name-only for wage workers. Because in truth it is not them that chooses where to work, but the owner that chooses

what workers to hire. A wage worker is usually too poor, and must accept the first job they are offered. Since it is illegal to harvest your own timber to build your own house, and you cannot build such a house on open land, but must purchase it, nor grow your own food on open land and also must purchase either the land or food. No one can choose to simply live by the fruits of their own labor, and must choose to submit themselves to wage work. The choice between hunger and homelessness, and wage work, is not a choice at all. Slaves have the same kind of choice: work for their master, or be punished and killed. “But, wage workers can save their money, or invest it, and eventually become owners! Then they aren’t wage workers anymore!” This is the next argument the Capitalist will make.

Not only are most wage workers not able to do those things, as the amount they receive back from the owner is so meager that it’s barely enough to provide for their food and shelter, but also: there were slaves subjected to this very system. Both “indentured servants” and the Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire were only subjected to slavery for a period of time, after which they were freed. And there are many cases of slaves in the United States eventually earning enough money to buy themselves and earn their freedom. Slavery that you legally can work your way out of is still slavery, and for most such slaves they are never able to earn enough to purchase their freedom.

Friedrich Engels also touched on this entire subject in his essay “Principles of Communism,” where he answers the question “how is the proletarian different than a slave” in this way:

“The slave is sold once and for all; the proletarian must sell himself daily and hourly. The individual slave, property of one master, is assured an existence, however miserable it may be, because of the master’s interest. The individual proletarian, property as it were of the entire bourgeois class which buys his labor only when someone has need of it, has no secure existence. This existence is assured only to the class as a whole. The slave is outside competition; the proletarian is in it and experiences all its vagaries. The slave counts as a thing, not as a member of society. Thus, the slave can have a better existence than the proletarian, while the proletarian belongs to a higher stage of social development and, himself, stands on a higher social level than the slave. The slave frees himself when, of all the relations of private property, he abolishes only the relation of slavery and thereby becomes a proletarian; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in

general.”

Here Engels draws a similar comparison between the slave and the wage-worker. Both are regarded only as a means to wealth, nothing more. They have no value outside the value they produce for an owner. However, he also points out how a slave in many ways can be in better condition than a wage-worker. If a wage-worker is worse off than a slave, then they are no better off than a slave. They *are* a slave.

Yet still there is still another defense of wage labor, but from an unlikely source: the Socialists and even some Communists who wish to preserve wage-labor in the form of “labor notes” or some similar system that pays workers in vouchers they can use to buy things. These vouchers are not traditional money, as they have no more value, nor even exist, after being spent. The argument from such Socialists, is that wage-labor without private owners or traditional money is not exploitation, and in that regard they are correct. Wage-labor in a democratically managed workplace, and even “labor-notes,” is far superior to Capitalist wage-labor. Yet, there is still no proper material basis to support the arguments these Socialists use to defend the continued existence of wage-labor. They often use the very same arguments as Capitalists, arguments like: “we must regulate the distribution of goods,” or “those who work harder should be given a greater reward.” But there are other ways of regulating the distribution of goods, ways which don’t allow for the development of economic inequality. And how can we gauge who’s work is more valuable? We cannot. I will reference the great writings of Peter Kropotkin in his seminal work “The Conquest of Bread.” For no one else could put it so succinctly and eloquently:

“If you enter a coal-mine you will see a man in charge of a huge machine that raises and lowers a cage. In his hand he holds a lever that stops and reverses the course of the machine; he lowers it and the cage turns back in the twinkling of an eye; he raises it, he lowers it again with a giddy swiftness. All attention, he follows with his eyes fixed on the wall an indicator that shows him on a small scale, at which point of the shaft the cage is at each second of its progress; as soon as the indicator has reached a certain level he suddenly stops the course of the cage, not a yard higher nor lower than the required spot. And no sooner have the colliers unloaded their coal-wagons, and pushed empty ones instead, then he reverses the lever and again sends the cage back into space. During eight or ten consecutive hours he must pay the closest attention. Should his brain relax for a moment, the cage would inevitably strike against the

gear, break its wheels, snap the rope, crush men, and obstruct work in the mine. Should he waste three seconds at each touch of the lever, in our modern perfected mines, the extraction would be reduced from twenty to fifty tons a day.

Is it he who is of greatest use in the mine? Or, is it perhaps the boy who signals to him from below to raise the cage? Is it the miner at the bottom of the shaft, who risks his life every instant, and who will someday be killed by fire-damp? Or is it the engineer, who would lose the layer of coal, and would cause the miners to dig on rock by a simple mistake in his calculations? And lastly, is it the mine owner who has put all his capital into the mine, and who has perhaps, contrary to expert advice asserted that excellent coal would be found there? All the miners engaged in this mine contribute to the extraction of coal in proportion to their strength, their energy, their knowledge, their intelligence, and their skill. And we may say that all have the right to live, to satisfy their needs, and even their whims, when the necessities of life have been secured for all. But how can we appraise their work? And, moreover, Is the coal they have extracted their work? Is it not also the work of men who have built the railway leading to the mine and the roads that radiate from all its stations? Is it not also the work of those that have tilled and sown the fields, extracted iron, cut wood in the forests, built the machines that burn coal, and so on?

No distinction can be drawn between the work of each man. Measuring the work by its results leads us to absurdity; dividing and measuring them by hours spent on the work also leads us to absurdity. One thing remains: put the needs above the works, and first of all recognize the right to live, and later on, to the comforts of life, for all those who take their share in production. But take any other branch of human activity — take the manifestations of life as a whole. Which one of us can claim the higher remuneration for his work? Is it the doctor who has found out the illness, or the nurse who has brought about recovery by her hygienic care? Is it the inventor of the first steam-engine, or the boy, who, one day getting tired of pulling the rope that formerly opened the valve to let steam enter under the piston, tied the rope to the lever of the machine, without suspecting that he had invented the essential mechanical part of all modern machinery —the

automatic valve.

Is it the inventor of the locomotive, or the workman of Newcastle, who suggested replacing the stones formerly laid under the rails by wooden sleepers, as the stones, for want of elasticity, caused the trains to derail? Is it the engineer on the locomotive? The signalman who can stop trains? The switchman who transfers a train from one line to another? — To whom do we owe the transatlantic cable? Is it to the engineer who obstinately affirmed that the cable would transmit messages when learned electricians declared it to be impossible? Is it to Maury, the scientist, who advised that thick cables should be set aside for others as thin as canes? Or else to those volunteers, come from nobody knows where, who spent their days and nights on deck minutely examining every yard of the cable, and removed the nails that the stockholders of steamship companies stupidly caused to be driven into the non-conducting wrapper of the cable, so as to make it unserviceable.

And in a wider sphere, the true sphere of life, with its joys, its sufferings, and its accidents, can not each one of us recall some one who has rendered him so great a service that we should be indignant if its equivalent in coin were mentioned? The service may have been but a word, nothing but a word spoken at the right time, or else it may have been months and years of devotion, and are we going to appraise these “incalculable” services in “labour-notes?” “The works of each!”

But human society would not exist for more than two consecutive generations if everyone did not give infinitely more than that for which he is paid in coin, in “cheques,” or in civic rewards. The race would soon become extinct if mothers did not sacrifice their lives to take care of their children, if men did not give all the time, without demanding an equivalent, if men did not give just to those from whom they expect no reward.

If middle-class society is decaying, if we have got into a blind alley from which we cannot emerge without attacking past institutions with torch and hatchet, it is precisely because we have calculated too much. It is because we have let ourselves be influenced into giving only to receive. It is because we have aimed at turning society into a commercial company based on debit and credit.”

After all this, the only defenses of wage labor left are ones appealing to culture. “It builds character!” and the like. These arguments have no material basis, and are nothing more than the same tired defenses of slavery that people have been spouting since time immemorial. The only true option is an end to wage slavery, of every type. We must liberate ourselves from the tyranny of the work-clock. Stop forcing ourselves and our fellow citizens to work for a set period of time just to gain what they need to survive, regardless of whether or not that work actually needs done. For that, as I will discuss next, is actually a carry-over from Feudal theocratic oppression. It is called “The Puritan Work Ethic.”

The Puritan Work Ethic, Profits, and the Decline of Happiness

We all know the famous story of Martin Luther nailing his "95 Theses" to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church door. We know this as the second greatest split in Christendom; this split marked the moment that half of Europe broke away from the Catholic Church, and formed what would be called the "Protestant Church." (Which would itself split up numerous times) What is often overlooked is something far more important: this split set in motion the creation of an ideology that would be so pervasive that we still live under it today, that even atheists adhere to it, and preach its virtues without even knowing that they are spreading religious dogma. This ideology is known now as "Puritan Work Ethic."

At the very beginning of Luther's "95 Theses," he makes the argument that repentance for Christians is a lifelong endeavor. Luther believed that Christians must struggle their whole lives against their "sins" and are never free from this struggle. But he did not deride this struggle, he praised it. Luther viewed this conflict as a kind of purification, which would ultimately redeem an individual. Luther also attacked the Catholic definition of "vocation," which was defined as "spiritual work" at the time, that is; only the work of Priests, Missionaries, and Monks. Luther argued differently, he believed that God is as pleased by work of the milkmaid as he is the work of the minister; "God is milking the cows through the vocation of the milkmaid." Luther would argue throughout his life that God answers prayer through the work of Christians; "God gives the wool, but not without our labor. If it is on the sheep, it makes no garment." With these ideas Luther laid the foundation for the deification of labor. Before Luther's teachings, work was merely a necessity of life, a means to provide sustenance and other needs. Now, since God was seen to be working through the act of manual labor, work started to be regarded as a religious act.

This religious regard for work really took form with the Puritan Calvinists of England, specifically those who colonized America. These Puritans sanctified work in the same way Luther had done, but through the lense of their own religious beliefs. Puritans went a step further with Luther's belief about the lifelong struggle against one's own "sin." Puritans didn't just deify that conflict, they deified the very act of suffering. Puritans glorified "suffering for God," believing that suffering to advance "the gospel" was the greatest way any person could glorify God. Since work was holy, suffering in your work was encouraged. They also believed that a person's entire life must be committed to glorifying God; everything a person does or says should bring glory to God. All this created a culture that emphasized never ceasing difficult work. Because you weren't working to provide for your needs, you were working as a necessary

part of worshipping God. "Laziness" was no longer just refusing to work, it had become a sin that one could commit simply by not working *hard enough*. Even if a person was able to provide for all their needs with the work they did, if the maximum amount of effort wasn't ceaselessly performed, you were regarded as having committed a *sin against God!*

Do you see the foundations of our modern work ethic? It's represented in the smallest details of our jobs. Cashiers being required to stand the whole time they are working, office workers being required to stay at work even if all their tasks are completed, soldiers painting rocks or raking dirt! All of these are examples of the Puritan work ethic being subjected upon a secular society. They are acts which serve no purpose beyond the performance of the act itself. They better society in no way, yet they are enforced because we still detest the Puritan ideas of laziness; you must not only work as much as possible, you must suffer at that work regardless of if the work needs done that much, performed that painfully, or even if that work needs done at all!

The insidious nature of this Puritan Work Ethic isn't just manifested in cruelty towards people and it's general destruction of happiness, but also in the fact that it is a part of the bedrock of Capitalism. Max Weber makes this very argument in his 1905 book: "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism." In this book, Weber argues that it was the shift from emphasizing metaphysical, other-worldly, rituals and devotion, towards earthly "mundane" work which Puritanism brought about that allowed Capitalism to develop. But it wasn't merely a change in culture that Puritanism brought which facilitated the rise of Capitalism, it was the material effect, and its usefulness for profit seekers.

Overworking obviously creates an over-abundance of goods, which is a condition that Capitalism requires to exist in order to function. Capitalists promoted the Puritan work ethic, knowingly or not, because that mindset was required for them to maximize profit. Because so long as the workers adhere to Puritan ideas of what constitutes "laziness" and good work, they can be exploited. Think about the very idea of "hard work" being regarded as a positive thing. It makes far more sense to try and make work *less difficult*. But for a Capitalist to maximize profits, the workers must work as hard as possible for no greater reward. And the workers will gladly do so as long as they believe it is unethical, that it's "lazy," for them to do otherwise.

This method of overwork and over-production is not only unethical because of how it needlessly abuses the workers, but because it's ecologically unsound. Its very foundation is inefficiency, because it encourages the continuation of work long after there is a need to do so, wasting both resources and labor-power, which should be used to address other needs. Instead, it's all wasted on producing more food than can be eaten, more cars than need exist, and a myriad of products that no one even wants, all to be thrown away and add to the degradation of the environment.

As it stands now, society places work before needs, work before happiness. In fact, you

should be happy to work so hard! How can anyone not see the echoes of the Puritan sanctity of suffering in this? This moral insanity has to end. There is no morality in suffering and misery, there is no morality in working more than we must. "But we will become weak!" The Unquestionable-They will cry. "Haven't you seen WALL-E?!" God help us all, now that we have based our society on the "wisdom" of cartoons. There is no material basis for the idea that humans become fat, stupid, and incapable of taking care of themselves when not worked to exhaustion day-in and day-out. If this were true, the owning class should have died out naturally long ago. "But that's not true! Owners *do* work hard!" The Unquestionable-They is likely saying now. Pretending this point is correct, then they've only proven their first point wrong, because the owners don't *have to* work at all. They can hire managers and accountants to do everything for them. If they work, they do so simply because they want to. No more, no less.

The owners allow themselves to live according to more natural laws of work ethic. Working only when they have to and when they want to, never any more. This was the state of being for all of humanity (except slaves, of course) until our subjection to Capitalism and the tyrannical Puritan Work Ethic it favors. Even the serfs of Medieval-Europe had more days off than modern wage-workers! Hunter-Gatherers work only a few hours a week, and that is the most successful system humanity ever devised.

I can already hear the cries of the Unquestionable-They: "Those were 'primitive' societies. To live in modern society with modern technology, we need to work harder." No, we don't. I refer you to what we've been talking about: *over*-working, and undue suffering while at work. Being uncomfortable while working doesn't even require any serious consideration. You cannot work as effectively if you are miserable. As for overworking: at the very base of it, it's a type of discomfort. It prematurely wears a person out, wasting their energy that could be saved for that job later, or applied to different meaningful work. And the products that it produces: tell me, how do the thousands of acres of unbought new cars, that are parked to rot in the deserts of the American southwest, help provide cars for everyone? How does this even warrant consideration? It's literally producing more than is needed. It does nothing but waste human energy and resources.

The Puritan work ethic is the last vestige of theocratic Medieval-Society, ironically continued often by even atheists. And like the rule by the priest and the bishop, the domination of the masses by work before need is slowly crushing our species, and bringing the planet with us. The clergy of Europe began the conquest of the world, and their shadow continues to be cast in every Capitalist workplace, every clearcut forest, every industrial slaughterhouse. That shadow was felt by the Sioux Nation as it opposed the Dakota Access pipeline. That shadow is felt in every sweatshop. That shadow is felt by you, the wage-worker, every time you find yourself forced to endure needless work, and needless suffering at work. Step out of this shadow, reject this archaic religious dogma, and overthrow the tyranny of the Puritan Work Ethic. Take back your happiness.

But, you may be wondering, why can't we end the Protestant Work Ethic now, without instituting Communism? How does it relate? That answer is in the need for profits to exist under Capitalism. We just discussed how this ethic is necessary to maximize profits, but the very act of maximizing profit, which allows Capitalism to have some semblance of functionality, is a flawed design.

Capitalism is a system of endless economic growth. A business must continually produce profits, it cannot "break even," and it must always grow. Elsewise it will have to close. And here we encounter perhaps the most damning aspect of Capitalism: it is inherently unstable, it actually is not a system that can function properly in any capacity. Capitalism has within it a huge and glaring inherent contradiction between profits and wage-labor, the two defining aspects of it. As I will explain in the next pages.

The Inherent Contradictions of Capitalism

I've discussed the moral problems with Capitalism to some length now, but the problems Communists have with Capitalism are not purely issues of morality. Capitalism is defined by two primary aspects: wages and profits. These are the cornerstone of Capitalism, wages are the diesel in the engine of the train, and profits are the rails. Without these institutions, Capitalism would not exist. But the relationship between the two is a flawed design, an inherent contradiction. This system does not run like a well-oiled train, because it can't.

As I've already described, Capitalism divides society into two primary groups: owners (Capitalists, "the Bourgeoisie." The people who own the factories, stores, rental properties, natural resources, and other forms of capital: what is commonly called the "means of production.") and workers (laborers, "the Proletariat," the people who do not own businesses or other forms of capital, and must work for a wage to survive.) For Capitalism to function, the workers must be a vast majority, as they are also the prime movers of capital. The workers build the products and buy them, providing the owners with profit.

In order to make a profit, the owners must sell products for more than what it cost to produce them. They must maximize their profit and minimize their cost of production. This means that owners must pay workers as little as possible. And that, once said, reveals the great contradiction of Capitalism. The very source of the owner's wealth must be as poor as possible. Profits rise as wages decrease. This decrease can, and often does, exist even as the literal value of wages increases. Because the prices of goods is increased by the owner in order to offset their risen cost of production which occurred as a result of rising wages. So now the workers must pay more for goods, and as a result their wages have actually decreased.

There is another way that the Bourgeoisie maximizes profits, a tactic that has become more popular in modern times: instead of simply paying workers less, or raising the price of products to offset the cost of production, owners often reduce their workforce. That is: employ fewer workers who produce more. Although this has the effect of reducing strikes and the general disgruntled attitude of the workforce, it still has a similar effect on the economy; more workers have less buying power. Once again: the very driving force of Capitalism is reduced by the owners increasing their profits.

As profits rise, as the economy grows, meaning that all businesses must grow in order to remain competitive and in business. In order to grow, Businesses must continuously increase their profits. In order to keep their profits rising, the owners raise prices without raising wages. Or, they raise wages, but also raise prices, so the effect is negated. Or, they keep prices the same, and raise wages, but lay off workers and make the remaining workers work twice as hard.

No matter which method the Bourgeoisie use, the buying power of the masses shrinks. More and more luxuries become too expensive for the workers as a whole, killing those markets first. This means the workers are spending all their wages only on what they need to survive. When all of the produce of a worker's labors goes to make an owner rich, and the worker receives only the minimum of food and shelter they need to survive, this is called slavery. Regardless of what labels we put to it, or what legal status the worker has, the material effect to the worker is the same as if they were a chattel slave.

Eventually, the contradiction between wages and profits makes it so the workers cannot even afford needs. They become homeless, destitute, or at the very least dependant upon welfare from the State. They can no longer move capital by purchasing things. Thus the engine of Capitalism runs out of fuel and comes to a halt. Factories close because their owners aren't turning a profit for themselves. Workers are laid off, reducing their buying power even further, exponentially compounding the problem. Depression (Or "recession," if the political leaders are trying to save face) ensues.

But this floods the market with cheap labor and cheap property, as millions of workers are more desperate for any and all work and many businesses close and sell their factories and other property. This allows the Bourgeoisie to expand, buying more businesses and hiring more workers for cheaper wages. Making the economy climb back up. Round and round it goes, boom to bust and back again. All the while the wealthiest of the Bourgeoisie get more and more wealthy every time, as they expand their Capitalist Empires with each depression and sell-off of businesses.

This is why every period of prosperity in Capitalism is followed by a period of depression. This was seen in the late 19th Century, the "Great Depression" of the 30's, the economic slump of the 70's, the "crash" of 1987, and most recently with the "Great Recession" of 2008. So, as you celebrate the economy recovering, as you watch profits rise and wages inch upward, or even as you push for a higher minimum wage, remember this: it will only bring another crash. Chaos is the very nature of Capitalism, it cannot be stabilized nor made ethical.

The only permanent solution is to end this madness. We must end the pursuit of profit, end competition over the means of subsistence, and instead create an economic system built on cooperation and providing for everyone's needs.

Of course, the Capitalists are not ignorant of this reality. Anyone with even the smallest understanding of history can see it. And Capitalists have developed their own solution for this inherent contradiction: Fascism.

What Is Fascism?

Today the terms Fascist and Nazi are heard with alarmingly increasing regularity, and clashes in the streets between Fascist and Anti-Fascist demonstrators is an almost daily occurrence. On August 12th, 2017, a Fascist demonstrator even tried to kill an entire group of Anti-Fascist protesters in Charlottesville with his car, succeeding in injuring dozens and killing one: Heather Heyer. As this conflict grows, it's important to stop and ask, and to analyze, exactly what Fascism is and why it's so dangerous. When you do that, you can also see why Capitalism makes Fascism an inevitability if Capitalism is not ended.

Fascism was born out of the turbulent and economically unstable years of the early 20th century. It began in Italy during World War One. During that time the populace was organized into a militaristic group of labor unions known as "fasci," which simply means "a bundle." The separate worker groups aided the Italian war effort, and provided a platform for spreading radical ideologies. People involved in the fasci began to believe that Liberal Democracy had become obsolete, they could see how traditional Capitalist society was unable to overcome the inherent contradictions of Capitalism. But they did not advocate for the workers to seize industry and democratize the economy, as the Communists did.

In 1914, under the leadership of Benito Mussolini, these separate fasci were united into a single party called "The Autonomous Fasci of Revolutionary Action." This Fascist Party advocated for Italy to join the war on the side of the Allied powers, and used extreme nationalism to advocate for a reorganization of society into a single unit. The fascists believed that the State should be merged with economic entities, like corporations and business leaders, as they viewed that such experts of economics could create an efficient planned economy to counteract the inherent contradictions of Capitalism and prevent further economic depressions. (Here we can see, once again, how Economists and Business-Owners have replaced the Priests and Nobles of Feudalism.)

The fascists admired military organization, and wanted the whole of society to function in this manner, under the direction of the Capitalist leaders. However, the planned economy advocated by the Fascists was not like the one advocated and created by the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks, being Communists, eliminated private ownership over the means of production and instead consolidated control of it under a Republican Government. The system advocated, and eventually created by the Fascists, was one that did not eliminate Capitalism; it maintained private ownership over the means of production. Instead, the Fascist system brought the Bourgeoisie into Government as heads of the economy in order to plan it. The Fascists system

didn't just protect the power of the Bourgeoisie, it *expanded their power*.

This is why, time and time again, we see the Bourgeoisie not only show a lack of concern for Fascists, but they actively *court them*. Benito Mussolini enjoyed support from the largest banks in Italy, and even the Pirelli family. Which even included financial donations. The Ford Motor Company openly supported Nazi Germany, even going so far as to print this in their official company publications:

“At the beginning of this year we vowed to give our best and utmost for final victory, in unshakable faithfulness to our Fuehrer.”

In 1940 during the “Battle of Britain” and only one year before the U.S. entered the war on the side of the Allies, the Ford Motor Company gave 30 percent of all rubber it manufactured to Nazi Germany and other Fascist countries. Henry Ford himself donated 50,000 Reichsmarks a year to Nazi Germany on Hitler's birthday. We can even see this today at times like after the violent protests of 2017 in Charlottesville, where President Trump (the first Billionaire President) called the Fascist demonstrators, one of whom murdered Heather Heyer: “Very fine people.”

The other primary aspect of fascism was their belief that society needed an enemy. The Fascists saw how the nations of Europe were able to mobilize their populations into societies of singular purpose during World War One, due to the great fear of their enemies which was fostered by the different powers (think of the posters and other propaganda that painted the Germans as barbaric “Huns.”) The Fascists believed that this was the ideal society: one where the whole of a nation works towards a single goal of fighting its enemies. They believed it was the only way a nation can progress, and that the greatest technological achievements were made under such a system. The only way that society could be organized in such a way, the only way to realize its full potential, was through war. In that belief, the Fascists created their most pervasive ideal: the scapegoat of “the other.”

“The Other” is anyone who doesn't fit the ideal person of the nation, anyone who is from outside the dominant culture and ethnicity, or deviates from the accepted social norms. In Europe this is most often the Jews and the Roma people, but Fascists extended their alienation and scapegoating to homosexuals, disabled people, and anyone else that they viewed as either deviating from the norm or unable to perform as a worker, and thus unable (in their eyes) to contribute to society. To the Fascists, the nation was everything. One nation, united, working to “better” itself through concerted effort and conflict, guided by the most economically knowledgeable people in a never ending war against the enemies of the nation: “the other.” This alienation of “the other” kept the population afraid, and thus controllable, and also served to foster a sense of extreme nationalism. I've described before, in previous writings, how

nationalism is the new great religion, and that is precisely how fascists used it.

So now we see the pillars of fascism: corporate merger with Government to plan the economy, fostering of extreme nationalism, alienation of anyone outside that nation and scapegoating them for all of society's problems, and perpetual warfare. This is what Fascists in 1920 advocated, and it's what Fascists today advocate. And it's no coincidence that Fascism has returned to the mainstream during this economic crisis.

I mentioned before that Fascism was a response to the inherent contradictions of Capitalism, an attempt to counter those contradictions without abolishing Capitalism. That's really what Fascism is: the inevitable outcome of Capitalism. As these economic crises become more frequent, as the flaws of Capitalism become more apparent to all, the Ruling Class take action to avoid losing power. That action is Fascism. They take direct control of Government, and distract the masses with warfare and fear of "the other."

I hope you've taken notice of something: that this is what the U.S. has always been. Mussolini and Hitler studied the United States to form their ideologies, and as inspiration for their racist laws. They sought to duplicate the U.S.'s accomplishments. The U.S. has always been ruled by the Businessman, the Bourgeoisie. They wrote the constitution, they are always the ones elected to office, they are held up as "the most capable to govern." The U.S. has always fostered extreme nationalism, and always alienated and scapegoated minorities. And the U.S. has always, constantly, made war both to expand its power and to keep the populace united behind the Government out of fear of its enemies. The truth is : The U.S. invented Fascism, the Italians just gave it a name.

Still, even in the U.S. there has been some semblance of Democracy, and at least a spirit of support for it. But that will die eventually if we do not end Capitalism. As these economic crises grow in frequency and severity, which is inevitable due to the inherent contradictions of Capitalism, the Bourgeoisie will tighten their grip on political power. Eventually they will throw back the facade and rule openly as a new Nobility, just as they did in previous Fascist Governments. We've already seen a taste of this. Both ruling political parties brazenly court Corporate financing and wealthy Business Owners, directly against both the interests and desires of the average citizens. And in the last two Presidential races both parties have openly declared "the party picks the candidate, not the people." This undemocratic system is inevitable under Capitalism. Because the most economically powerful entities will always dominate the political landscape, and the working class is never, and can never be under Capitalism, the most economically powerful group.

This is why a Democratic Government cannot exist under Capitalism. The best that it can ever be is a broad Plutocratic-Oligarchy. Capitalism is the undemocratic control over the means of production, the things we all need and rely on to live our lives. That system is a very betrayal of Democracy.

Capitalism Betrays Democracy

Democracy is the great imperative, and the triumph of civilization. It is birthed from the principles of the enlightenment age, where our ancestors realized that the only way to advance society and improve life even for a few, was to improve life for all. It is inspired by and sustained by an ethical system which promotes equality, justice, and prosperity for all, and for everyone to have an equal voice in the systems that affect their lives. It's safe to assume that the one thing that I and any reader of this book can agree on is the necessity for a Democratic Government. What is always baffling to me is how any advocate for Democracy can ever support Capitalism. How can anyone demand Democracy in Government, and tolerate tyranny over the means of production? How can we claim equal representation in the system which creates our laws, while subjecting ourselves to dictatorship of the systems which provide all the things we rely on to survive and live a modern life? Capitalism is a betrayal of the ideas behind Democracy. For this essay I am going to rely on the writings of a colleague of mine, Chris Tumlinson, to argue this point. As I feel I could not argue it better than he already has. I am going to quote his essay on this subject in its entirety, which he originally wrote in the form of "memes" to share online. I highly encourage anyone to visit his facebook page: "Learn Socialism" to read more writings like this one:

"In a Democracy, we expect our leaders to answer to us and we expect to have an equal voice in the day-to-day decisions that govern our lives. As a worker, does the leadership of the company you work for answer to you? Do you have an equal voice in the decisions that govern your workplace, where you spend the majority of your life? Why do we expect Democracy over our political systems, but not our economic systems, which have the most impact on our lives?"

The issue of course is one of freedom. The goal of Democracy can be summed up in this word. Democracy is meant to increase the freedom for everyone, and the common belief is that collective economic systems, like Communism, stifle this freedom. Chris Tumlinson moves forward with this theme:

"First of all, what is freedom? Freedom is the power to act, speak, think, or choose without restraint. In other words, it is the power to make decisions over one's own life. We can all agree that freedom is very important, that all individuals should have the power to make decisions over their own lives.

But is freedom of the individual an absolute? An absolute is something that can be viewed as existing independently and not in relation to other

things. Unless an individual isolates themselves completely from human society, the freedom of the individual cannot be viewed as an absolute because the freedom of one individual does not exist independently from the freedom of other individuals.

In human societies, where individuals live side-by-side and interact with one another every day, the freedom of any individual to make decisions over their own lives will always have a relationship with the freedom of others to make decisions over their own lives.

For example: if an individual while exercising their individual freedom, decides to dump garbage into a water supply, their decision will interact with the freedom of others, the freedom to have clean and unpolluted water. If an individual, while exercising their individual freedom, decides to express hate speech towards others, their decisions will interact with the freedom of others, the freedom to live without fear. If an individual, while exercising their individual freedom decides to build a fence around a natural resource, their decision will interact with the freedom of others, the freedom of access to that resource. If an individual, while exercising their individual freedom decides to tear down someone else's house and build their own in its place, their decision will interact with the freedom of others, the freedom to have and live in their own home.

Our freedoms overlap. Some decisions made by individuals have the potential to affect the lives of more than that individual. This is the purpose for which Democracy exists.

Democracy is the process of making decisions together so that everyone whose life will be affected by a decision has a chance to participate in making that decision. When the freedom to make decisions over one's own life overlaps with the freedom of another to make decisions over their own life, we use Democracy so that each person affected by the decision has a voice in that decision.

Those who are affected by the outcome of a decision should always have a say in that decision. When determining whether a decision should be made individually or Collectively (through Democracy), the question should be asked: who will be affected by this decision? If the decision

will affect only the individual, it can be made individually by the one who is affected. If the decision will affect more than the individual it should be made collectively (Through Democracy) by all who are affected. This is how we create fair and equal societies where the freedoms of all are respected, so that the best decisions can be made for the best benefit of everyone. Without Democracy, individuals can make decisions without concern for the lives of others, which limits the freedom of those who are affected by excluding them from making decisions over their own lives

The core of Capitalism is individualism. Capitalism emphasizes the importance of individuals (Capitalists) and the pursuit of their own self-interests (profit) as having a higher importance than the collective interests of others. Capitalism ignores Democracy and grants decision-making power over the lives of many into the hands of a few. Under Capitalism individuals own and control the means of production; they dictate all of the decisions of a business in order to pursue their own interests, which is the pursuit of profit. In pursuing profit, Capitalists make decisions which affect the lives of many others (their employees and their communities) while giving little or no decision-making power to those who are affected.

The core of Socialism is collectivism, Socialism seeks to democratize work, production, and distribution so that workers and communities are empowered to make decisions over their own lives rather than be subjected to the dictatorial decisions of individual owners of the means of production (Capitalist employers.) In this way, the collectivism of Socialism offers greater freedom than the individualism of Capitalism. When workers come together to make the decisions that affect their lives, they don't decide to endanger themselves, to eliminate their own livelihoods, to shut down the facilities that support their communities, or to damage the environment in which they and their families and loved ones live. Socialism emphasizes the shared interests of all workers and the whole of human Society. Socialism is about real Democracy.”

A Democratic Government cannot exist Within an undemocratic socio-economic system like Capitalism. We realized this with the system that preceded Capitalism: Feudalism. Why can't so many people see that it is the same situation? We know that Feudalism could not

facilitate a Democratic Government because the Nobility held all the real power, they held control over the means of production, the things everyone needed to survive and live a modern life. And as such the Nobility would simply control any Governmental body as well. It is the same situation with Capitalism; those private owners over the means of production (the Bourgeoisie) will always dominate Government, no matter how Democratic the Government is structured. Because the Bourgeoisie control the very systems and resources that we all need and rely on for a modern life. The means of production has an even more profound impact on our lives than the Government. It is where we get our food, it is where we get our homes, it is where we get our medical care, it is where we get our education (books and the internet), it is where we get our news and entertainment, and it is where we get our transportation. As such, it must be Democratically owned and controlled, not privately as it is under Capitalism.

The common theme of today is for people to insist that such radical change is not necessary, that Capitalism can be regulated into an ethical and Democratic system through Social-Democratic reforms and regulation (although they usually mistakenly call this “Democratic-Socialism.”) This is simply a fallacy. It does not matter how many laws you lay on top of the Capitalist system, how many regulations and social -welfare programs you use to try and force it to be ethical. The best you could ever achieve by such is a slightly broadened Plutocratic-Oligarchy. Because at the end of the day, the people who privately own and control the means of production will have to be catered to simply because the real power over everyone's lives lies in their hands.

Even if it were possible to regulate Capitalism into a solid Democracy and an ethical socio-economic system would it even be desirable? I do not think so. For starters, because you still cannot overcome the inherent contradiction between wages and profit, it's a part of the bedrock structure of Capitalism; Capitalism is an inherently unstable system and it's preferable to end it simply because of this. But on top of that, the amount of legal structure and bureaucracy needed to accomplish such a feat would be immense. Making Government too costly to operate and further alienating the people from it. Resulting in the very same situation that we started out trying to rid ourselves from. It's like trying to modify an antiquated vehicle, like a wagon or a chariot, so that it could travel on modern highways safely. The weight from the added engine, brakes, lights, drive-train, and safety equipment, would stress the frame, which was never designed for such things, requiring constant maintenance and the ride would never be as comfortable or as safe as a modern car that has been designed from the beginning to drive at current speeds on modern roads. Capitalism is an antiquated socio-economic system that works against the interests of the majority, against the interests of you and me. It must be scrapped and replaced with a system that has been designed from the beginning to preserve and facilitate Democracy. Capitalism must be replaced with Communism: a classless society.

As long as one group of society is held above another, as long as society is divided and stratified, the top group or groups will always rule and the bottom group or groups will always be

subjugated. We cannot just hope that the rulers will be benevolent, we must not have rulers. Society must be Democratic, not Oligarchic. But society will always be Oligarchic as long as there is class, even if we establish Socialism, the democratic ownership and control over the means of production, and eliminate the class divide of the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat. Because that wasn't the first class system to be created, and still isn't the only class system to exist. In order for Democracy to finally flourish we must have a classless society. And in order to have a classless society, we must eliminate Government as a State. And that is ultimately the goal of Communism.

Still, I'm sure that word no doubt creates a sense of great apprehension in your mind, and that is understandable given what you've been taught Communism is. But please, now, let a Communist tell you what Communism is.

2

The Cure

What is Communism?

I've talked at length about the problems of Capitalism, but I'm sure you need to know about the solutions. It is not enough to simply point out problems, a person must have an answer to them or else not say anything at all. Communists have the solution. Karl Marx famously put it:

"Communism is the riddle of history solved. And it knows itself to be this solution."

However, Communism likely conjures images in your mind of the Gulags and purges of Stalin's Russia. Or the famines of Mao's "Great Leap Forward." Or even just a basic image of dictatorship and opposition to Democracy. I will not waste any time defending nor denouncing the actions of past Communist countries, as such arguments only lead to absurdity due to the massive amounts of propaganda from both sides. What I will say is: those specific things you fear are not Communism. These things are neither goals of nor inevitable outcomes of Communism, because Communism *is* the goal. These terrible things were done by people following certain ideas about how to achieve Communism. None of whom achieved that final goal even by their own admission.

Whether or not those actions and ideas were a positive force is certainly debatable, and has been debated ad-nauseum. The point I am making is: they are not the only Communist ideologies. Their methods are not the only proposed methods for achieving Communism. I will cover several proposed methods later, but we must begin with what Communism is now that we have established what is not.

In the simplest terms possible, Communism is a society that has eliminated class (divisions of society.) It is a society with no Ruling Class, no Working Class, no Governing Class, no Wealthy, no Poor, no Homeless, no Jobless. There is some disagreement among the different sects of Communists as to how such a society would be structured to achieve this, but the basic goal, a classless society, remains the same for all Communists.

The other thing in which all Communists agree is that the first thing that must be done to achieve a classless society is to abolish private ownership over the means of production. In other words: establish Socialism. Because you will not ever have a classless society so long as the means of production is controlled in an entirely undemocratic way. This is why all Communists are Socialists. Private ownership of the means of production facilitates the existence of the most powerful existing class: the Bourgeoisie. It reduces the majority of the population into a powerless class: the Proletariat. By democratizing control over the means of production, both of these classes are eliminated. There is no longer Bourgeoisie or Proletariat,

only one people. But what then, you may be wondering, is the difference between Socialism and Communism? If Socialism eliminates Capitalist class society, why have separate terms? Some Communists argue that there is no difference, that Socialism is the name for the “lower phase of Communism” where private ownership over the means of production is still in the process of being eliminated. There is some merit to that argument, but I have a different outlook.

The class system of Bourgeoisie and Proletariat is the most prominent and hardest felt class divide, but it is not the only one in existence. It is, after all, only 200 or so years old. Society was divided into other classes throughout history. As Karl Marx famously stated in the Manifesto:

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

Many of these past class structures still exist, and unless opposed directly, they will continue even after the establishment of Socialism. Indeed, it's even possible that past class structures which have diminished, or disappeared altogether, could reassert themselves if we do not seek to create a classless Society. If all we do is build Socialism, democratize the means of production, we will not ever achieve Communism. For we will still be plagued by wealth inequality (even if we replace existing currency with "labor notes." We saw this in the Soviet Union), we will perhaps see the re-emergence of religious class divides, and we will beyond a doubt still be divided by the Oldest and first class divide : the divide between the Governed and the Governors.

This is an issue which even Lenin and Engels discussed at length. As Engels said in his book “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State”:

“But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state.”

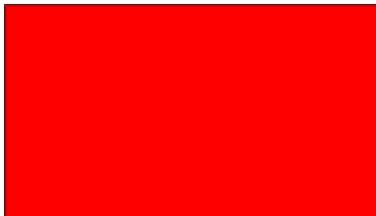
So long as the Government is held above the people, so long as it is constituted in such a way that it is a “State” as Engels and Lenin defined a State, then this class system still exists and Communism cannot be achieved. And this is the ultimate difference between Socialism and Communism. A simply Socialist system makes no attempt to eliminate Government as a State. Under such a system, the people are alienated from the practice of governance and that is a social divide, a class system. Although there is much argument in Communist circles about how to do it, all Communists seek to end this class system as well , we all seek to end Government as a State and instead make the people themselves the Government (I use “Government” as a kind of

shorthand term for “the organization of society.” All society must be organized to avoid chaos. No matter what that organization looks like, it is still a “Government” even if it is not a “State”)

What I hope I have been able to convey is that Communism is Democracy, but a true pursuit and fulfillment of the promise of Democracy. Because Communists recognize that so long as a single aspect of society is undemocratic, then it corrupts the whole of society and none of it is Democratic. And I mean *society*, not private life. Communists have no intention of intruding on anyone's lives in regards to things which have no effect on others. Your home, your personal possessions, they belong to you and your family alone. And your religion is your business, so long as you do not force it on others nor use it to bring harm on others.

Communism is “the end of history,” the final form of human society that so many have theorized for so long. And it is the society that so many have strived to achieve for eons. From ancient Athens, to the Anabaptists of the late middle-ages, to the various Communist movements of the last 170 years. Humankind has always sought to throw off the shackles of class society and instill true Democracy. Communism is the Society that all common people want. The difference between a Communist and the rest of the people is that when a Communist envisions this ideal society, they don't dismiss it out-of-hand as an impossible fairy-tale. Instead, the Communist looks at it as the solution to an equation, then seeks to find that equation.

But what is that equation? How can Communism be achieved? That is truly where the division begins, not only between Communists and the rest of the people, but between Communists ourselves. Truly we all want the same things, even Communists and the rest of the people. But we have different theories about how to make them happen. Let me explain in as concise a manner as possible what the most popular proposed methods are for achieving Communism.



Socialism

Before we even talk about Communist ideologies, we need to clear up the definition of Socialism, as it has been muddied in recent history.

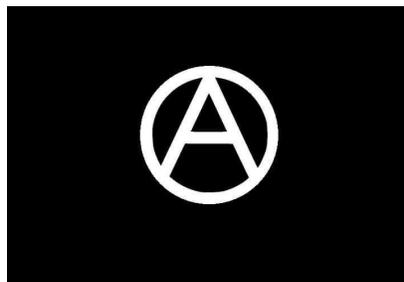
Socialism is the parent of all Communist ideology. It was born out of the fires of the many revolutions at the turn of the 19th century. It has become an umbrella term, as its only emphasis is worker ownership and control over the "means of production" (the tools, workplaces, and resources needed to make things.) Think of a worker's Co-op. That is essentially what Socialism advocates, except on a national, and even global scale, where private ownership of such workplaces is abolished.

What the term refers to has been confused in recent years, as some people use it to refer to State-Socialism, which is a Socialist system where the state is used to protect common ownership of the means of production. Or even more recently it is confused with Social-Democracy, a Capitalist system with heavy State regulation of business and strong tax-funded social-welfare programs. But neither of these uses for the term "Socialism" alone is correct. Socialism only refers to the working class's relationship to the Means of Production, not any specific system of Government, and it certainly does not simply mean tax-funded welfare systems or Government regulation; any system which still allows private ownership and control over the means of production is not a Socialist system. Once again, it is Engels who says this so concisely. From a letter he penned in 1881 to Eduard Bernstein:

"It is simply a falsification perpetrated by the Manchester Bourgeoisie in their own interests that they call 'Socialism' every interference by the state in free competition – protective tariffs, guilds, tobacco monopoly, nationalisation of certain branches of industry, the Overseas Trade Society, and the royal porcelain factory. We should *criticise* this but not *believe* it. If we do the latter and develop a theory on the basis of this belief our theory will collapse together with its premises upon simple proof that this alleged socialism is nothing but, on the one hand, feudal reaction and, on the other, a pretext for squeezing out money, with the secondary object of turning as many proletarians as possible into civil servants and pensioners dependent upon the state, thus

organising alongside of the disciplined army of soldiers and civil servants, an army of workers as well. Compulsory voting brought about by superiors in the state apparatus instead of by factory overseers – a fine sort of Socialism! But that's where people get if they believe the Bourgeoisie what it does not believe itself but only pretends to believe: that the state means socialism..."

This is why every Communist ideology falls under the umbrella of Socialism, as they all advocate some kind of system where those who work the means of production own and control it democratically, and no single person can claim ownership of it. Because private ownership over the means of production creates a class system. However, it is important to keep in mind that not all Socialists are Communists, because whether it is out of disbelief that a classless society is possible or lack of desire for it, there are many Socialists who do not seek to create a classless society.



Anarchism

Anarchism is one of the broadest Leftist ideologies, really an umbrella term for many Communist Ideologies. It's as old as Socialism, and developed out of the same conflicts in the early 19th century.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon is widely regarded as the "father of Anarchism," as he was the first public figure to declare himself an Anarchist, and is largely responsible for the ideology's popularization. He is arguably most famous for his assertion that "property is theft." Which summarizes his position that land can only belong to someone as long as that person themselves is able to use it.

Proudhon's ideals were important in the formation of Anarchism. However, over the last 200 so years, Anarchism has largely outgrown him through the influence of later writers like Peter Kropotkin and Murray Bookchin.

Modern Anarchism is best summed up through the meaning of its name: Anarchy means "without rulers." It's based on the idea that society can, and should, function without unjust hierarchies. Because of the common belief in the western world that a land without rulers is one of chaos and disorder, Anarchy has wrongfully become used as a synonym with chaos among

non-leftists. But chaos is not the goal of Anarchism, as is testified by its symbol. The "A" stands for Anarchy, and the "O" stands for Order. It symbolizes the Anarchist belief that order can only truly and permanently be achieved once rulers and Governments as States have been eliminated, and society governs itself through localized Direct-Democracy. However, most Anarchists do recognize the need for temporary hierarchies and leadership positions for specific tasks. Such as leading an army in a time of war, or managing a construction project or a research endeavor. But they believe that these hierarchies must be temporary, have no authority outside their specific purpose, and always be answerable to the people as a whole who can remove the person in charge of the project if they fail in their duties. Thus making these hierarchies "legitimate."

The society that Anarchists seek to build is, essentially, Communist. Which is why they were initially a part of the First International Communist Assembly, organized and led by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The difference between Anarchists and other Communists is not their goals, but how they believe those goals must be achieved. I will expand on this point in the next two ideologies.



Anarcho-Communism

This is the most common anarchist ideology. It has its roots in the French revolution, but developed out of the Anarchist section of the First International Communist Assembly. It was arguably made most popular, and heavily influenced by Peter Kropotkin's "The Conquest of Bread." In which Kropotkin describes how a fully Communist society may be achieved, and how it could work, as well as refuting arguments against Communism, such as the common belief that communism causes people to be lazy or kills creativity. Kropotkin also diverged from many traditional Anarchists in his refutation of all forms of currency, even the "labor notes" favored by Bakunin.

Anarcho-Communists advocate for communism, just like Marxists, Leninists, Luxemburgists, and other Communists. However, "AnComs" differ in their rejection of a Transitional-State all-together. Anarcho-Communists believe that Communism can be achieved directly out of a revolution of the working class. Like other forms of Anarchism, Anarcho-Communists not only reject the necessity of a Government as a State, they believe that these State-type-Governments actually perpetuate Capitalist systems, and cannot ever lead to Communism. AnComs do not believe that any State-type-Government will ever, or can ever,

“wither away.” They believe that Government as a State must be deliberately dismantled by the working class instead, and immediately replaced by Governmental systems that are not, to paraphrase Friedrich Engels: “held above the people.”



Leninism (a.k.a. "Marxism-Leninism," a.k.a. "Bolshevism")

First, I must be honest about my bias. I am not an adherent of Leninism, and I am even opposed to many of the ideals advocated by Leninists. So that is important to keep in mind as you read this description. Although I have tried to give as unbiased a description of Leninism as I can.

Leninism is perhaps the most widespread Communist ideology in the world. It is commonly referred to as “Marxism-Leninism” by its adherents, as they believe it is the continuation of Marxist thought. It is also often referred to alongside Maoism, as Maoism was largely influenced by Lenin’s ideology, although they do differ in some key points. Leninism was developed by Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik party and largely considered the founder of the Soviet Union. It was the official ideology of the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991.

The primary difference between Leninism and other communist ideologies is Leninism’s insistence on the “Vanguard Party.” Leninists argue that the most class conscious individuals should lead the revolution against the ruling class, and build the transitional Socialist-State. While most orthodox marxists have a far more vague definition of this transitional Socialist-State, Leninists interpret Marx’s “dictatorship of the proletariat” as building a more traditional State-structure, a Republican Democracy, but one that is occupied by members of the working class and defends against reactionary forces that could subvert the revolution and rebuild Capitalism. Leninists believe that this is necessary, as they do not believe that Communism can be built directly out of the revolution, as Anarcho-Communists do, (although they would perhaps argue that their “Worker’s State” is a continuation of the revolution) they instead believe that Communism must be built via a Transitional-State that "wither away" as it eliminates private ownership over the Means of Production. They believe that rather than tear down every Capitalist system, the workers must instead “lay hold of the ready-made State” and replace the former Capitalist Class.



Luxemburgism/Council-Communism

These two Socialist schools are sometimes regarded by leftists as two different ideologies. However, Luxemburgism and Council-Communism advocate the same Governmental system, and both can even trace their origins back to the failed German Revolution of 1918. Rosa Luxemburg's "Spartacus League," and the Trade-Unionists, which attempted that revolution sought to build a system where the Transitional State-Government is composed of worker's councils from the various workplaces and trades. They rejected the "Vanguardism" of Lenin in favor of a mass movement composed of revolutionary unions. These unions would then become the governing councils in the Transitional-State. Like a Leninist system, the State would be a Republican Democracy which would "wither away" as a State by eliminating private ownership over the means of production, giving way to Communism.

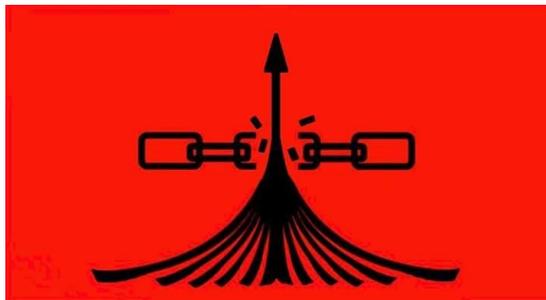


Syndicalism

Syndicalism didn't have a single event or writer that developed it. Rather it evolved naturally out of Anarcho-Communist ideology and agitation, particularly in the revolutionary communities of Spain and Italy in the early decades of the 20th century. This system was used by revolutionary Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930's.

Syndicalism is an Anarchist tendency, but it shares many similarities with Council-Communism. Namely its reliance on revolutionary workers unions which then operate as governing councils in the post-revolution Government. However, Syndicalists reject the transitional State-Government. Meaning that the Government they advocate is a confederation. (Forget the Confederate States of America in the American Civil War. That wasn't a true Confederation. It was a traditional State-Government.) So communities, and even individuals, would have a great deal of freedom to "opt-out" of any decisions made by the Government. And

this Government would have no monopoly on violence. Essentially a syndicalist Government, like all Anarchist Governments, is more of an organizational medium than anything. Enforcement of agreed upon laws and policy is left to the people of the communities themselves.



Communalism

I need to admit my bias once again, as this is the system which I myself advocate. But once again, I will try to give as basic and objective of a description as possible.

Communalism is the newest of all Socialist Schools. It was developed by the Anarchist thinker Murray Bookchin during the 1980's and 1990's. Bookchin had become disillusioned by modern Anarchism. He felt it had lost its Communist roots and had become corrupted by individualism and lifestylism. He also sought to develop a system which could address the mistakes of past Socialist attempts, as well as address the sociological and ecological issues of modern cities.

Communalism is both a revolutionary method and a goal of revolution, much like Syndicalism. However, it rejects creating a Government of worker's councils, which Bookchin criticised as "Collective Capitalism." Instead, Communalism advocates placing political and economic power in the hands of the *whole* citizenry of each municipality, which they exercise through face-to-face assemblies where everyone in the community can voice their opinion, argue their case, and cast their vote. The people of the municipalities collectively control the means of production within their municipality through their assemblies, and their appointed administrators. These assemblies create laws and policies, which are then carried out by those administrators that the assemblies appoint for specific tasks. These administrators do not make policy (outside of the votes they cast as citizens in the assemblies), and they can be recalled by the assemblies at any time.

However, Communalism is not a system that advocates parochial independence of communities, as individualist-anarchist schools often do. The separate municipalities and cities all maintain *interdependent* relationships through a Confederation, much like Syndicalism. This confederation allows communities to share resources, organize civil projects such as highways, and defend each other from both outside powers and any counter-revolutionary forces that may arise from within. Communalism is built around the recognition that the needs of all

communities can only be met through close ties of interdependence, because no single community is capable of providing for all the needs and wants of its citizens purely through its own resources and effort. In order to continue a modern lifestyle, we must engage in mutual-aid on a large-scale between all communities. This is accomplished through the Confederation.

This same system is also used to overthrow the existing Capitalist system. Communalism advocates building these assemblies and confederated networks now. They then operate as both a revolutionary network to undermine and even directly confront the existing Capitalist powers, and a support network to allow communities to better address their needs. This will have the effect of syphoning power from the Capitalist State. Eventually, as Capitalism inevitably collapses and the State has become decrepit, the confederated assemblies will be able to give the final push needed to finally end Capitalism and Government as a State. All the while having a system in place ready to take the place of the old Capitalist system. This plays to the weaknesses of Capitalism, but ensures that no one is left to suffer as Capitalism collapses, nor leaves a power vacuum which would inevitably lead to civil war.

There is a multitude of other Communist ideologies out there, but these are the most common ones, and many of the other ideologies are actually variants of the ones I've described. Anarcho-Communism itself seems to have so many sub-variants that new ones are imagined each day.

I feel that every Communist ideology can be organized into two primary camps: those who advocate for some form of Transitional-State system, and those who believe that Communism can be established directly out of a revolution. Communalism occupies a third more recent category, which straddles this difference, finding a balance between them through a dialectical method of deduction and synthesis. This is possible because, as I will argue: the differences between the two camps are not so great that they cannot be reconciled. In fact, I have found that the differences are primarily ones of rhetoric, not practice. For the sake of brevity, from here on I will refer to the two camps as "Anarchists" or "Anarchism" for the camp that opposes the Transitional-State, and "Leninists" and "Leninism" for the camp that advocates the Transitional-State. I fully am aware of and acknowledge that many of those who advocate a Transitional-State are not Leninists (a.k.a Bolsheviks), as I said: I am using that term in this way simply for the sake of brevity, as Leninists are by-far the largest group in that camp. I avoid calling the Leninist camp simply "Marxism," as Marxism is a method of analyzing Capitalism, and conclusions about the need for Capitalism's abolition. Both Leninists *and* Anarchists rely on Marxism as a basis for their ideas. Remember, the Anarchism of today is not the Anarchism of Marx and Engel's day. It has moved well beyond Proudhon.

The Reconciliation of Anarchism and Leninism

“A house divided against itself cannot stand.”

The issues between Anarchism and Leninism must be dealt with, not ignored and sorted out at a later time, as some “left-unity” advocates preach. Neither can the two camps disregard each other and vie for dominance. Because that’s exactly what they’ve been doing for 170 years. Leading Communists from one defeat to another as energy and revolutionary momentum is wasted fighting between the two camps. And they *are* of the same house! No one of either camp can insist that the other is “not real Communists,” because both camps have the same ultimate goal. When two groups fight for the same thing, they have no choice but to share the same space and fight the same enemies. Enemies which will take advantage of any conflict between the two groups to foil all attempts to obtain the prize by either group. We have to reconcile these two camps, we have to end this conflict permanently. Which isn’t impossible, as the conflict really arises from us throwing around terms that we seldom take the time to look at, to understand what each other means. State, Authoritarian, and whatnot.

The reason Leninists advocate for the establishment of a Socialist Transitional-State, is because of what they define as a State. As I have already pointed out: Engels and Lenin defined it as a type of Government that is held above society, a Government that enforces class-divides. Leninists argue that this physically cannot be eliminated immediately, simply because of the fact of it's nature. The Government established by the Proletariat to eliminate Capitalism and class is, by this definition, a State. But it is a state that eliminates itself as a State through the act of eliminating private ownership and control over the means of production and Capitalist class systems. Engels describes it, as quoted by Lenin in “State and Revolution”:

“The first act by which the state really comes forward as the representative of the whole of society — the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society — is also its last independent act as a state.”

That is what is meant by "Transitional-State." Once such systems are eliminated, once the means of production is fully Democratized, Leninists argue that the Government is no longer a State.

This is a fact that most Anarchists even acknowledge. They readily admit that the State is a Government used to enforce class-divides, and they don't actually believe that Capitalism can be eliminated overnight. It is not a switch that can simply be flipped, making the means of

production Democratically-managed in an instant. Thus neither can the State, as Leninists define it, be eliminated overnight, as even Anarchists wish to prohibit the Bourgeoisie from participating in systems set-up to eliminate their control over political and economic power, and thus eliminate the existence of that class and reducing its members to simply being members of society.

The conflict between Leninists and Anarchists arises over what Anarchists point to when they refer to Authoritarianism: highly centralized and Oligarchical Governmental-Power, which Anarchists argue must be eliminated from any Governmental system. Anarchists recognize the need to empower the *whole* Proletariat in Government through its very structure. Because if the Government is structured in a way that concentrates power in a small group of people's hands, then it will never eliminate itself as a State. Because even after it has eliminated Capitalist systems, it will continue to enforce the class divide of the Governed and the Governors through its very structure; Governance will continue to be alienated from the vast majority of the Proletariat during the revolution, and the people as a whole after Capitalist systems are eliminated.

Interestingly, Lenin himself echoes this in "State and Revolution":

“...the proletariat needs only a state which is withering away, i.e., a state so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away.”

The State cannot wither away if it is structured in a way that continues to hold itself above society. If it is so constituted, then it neither eliminates private ownership and control over the means of production, nor class. Instead merely consolidating both under itself, and holding itself above society, manages both like a monopolistic corporation.

In this we can find common ground between Anarchists and Leninists. Because once we both acknowledge this, we can structure a Government that satisfies both sides. A Government that is structured so that the people, the Proletariat, *are* the government from the very beginning. That way, as the Government eliminates Capitalist systems, it eliminates all class systems as well, and thus eliminates itself as a state.

Those who argue that power must be concentrated in the hands of “the most class-conscious” temporarily, during the revolution, are expressing simple naivety and the very “infantile disorder” that Lenin was so critical of “Left-Communists” for. Because people are resistant to change, always. Especially when there is a fear that such change will empower those they oppose. This is why there will always be people in those positions of power who feel that it is “not yet time” to restructure the Government away from statehood, to give power to the people as a whole. This is why such a Governmental structure will always necessitate a second revolution to overthrow the first Revolutionary-Government. Which is, obviously, absurd and needlessly destructive, and ends up opening the door for Capitalism to reassert itself. Which is exactly what happened in the Soviet Union.

It's doubtful that the majority of people who resisted the KGB coup d'etat wanted to

reinstall Capitalism, but rather felt that they were fighting for the original spirit of Communism. And perhaps even had the noble goal of building a truly Proletarian Government that was not constituted as a State. After all, it was reforms such as “Perestroika,” which privatised many aspects of the Soviet Union’s economy and thus began rebuilding Capitalism, which led to the fall of the Soviet Union’s economic system in the first place. This is further testified by the fact that 71% of the population of the Soviet Union voted to retain its existence. After all, it was in prime condition to install a proper and permanent Government that was not a State. Despite “Perestroika” the major parts of the means of production was not privately owned, and all significant Capitalist class systems had been eliminated.

But by this time, the forces of Capitalism had already taken advantage of the weakened state of the Soviet Union, brought on by the mistakes of the Soviet Union’s Oligarchy, like “Perestroika,” and more importantly by the vacuum in power left by the revolution of 1991. So the desires of the people were ignored, and Capitalism was reinstalled.

This would not have happened if the Soviet Union’s State had been constituted as Lenin had desired, and as the Anarchists advocated it should be. If power was not concentrated in the hands of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (indeed, the Committee should not have existed at all), reducing the Congress of Soviets to a mere rubber-stamp service for the Committee’s decisions, there would have never been the need for a second revolution. The State would have eliminated itself as a State in the early 1920’s as it won the Civil War and eliminated Capitalism. Thus achieving Communism, or as close to Communism as is possible while Capitalism still rules over the rest of the world.

However, we’ve also seen Anarchist systems fail similarly. Because in the past they’ve manifested themselves as parochial and disparate communities and groups, only loosely allied with each other. Allowing any group to “opt-out” whenever they feel like it, making the whole movement weaker and unable to stand against the onslaught of reaction. This also has made them less appealing to large movements, and indeed many Anarchist revolutions even rejected large-scale methods all-together. Leaving them alone and isolated. Anarchists must throw off such inward focus, and build a system that is not only dissipated in political power, but linked through interdependence between all communities and groups. Because even after the revolution, parochial independence isn’t to be desired. As it cannot provide a community with a modern standard of living. We cannot have modern medicine, infrastructure, personal technology, nor goods in regions they do not grow, without large-scale interdependence between communities. This Leninist argument is correct.

We need a large Governmental system (in the way I’ve been using “Government”) to facilitate such things. Otherwise communities will be left after the revolution to be reduced to old ways of backbreaking subsistence farming in antiquated living conditions with inadequate healthcare. And that’s even in the unlikely event that such a loose association of Communities could ever achieve a revolution in the first place.

This is the compromise that both camps need to reach. Both their methods for revolution

and Governance have failed. They must build a system which accomplishes interdependence between all communities, but does so with a Government that is not alienated from the people. Government must be centralized while also being Directly-Democratic. This seems like a contradiction, and it is why it must be carefully planned out, not simply be a statement that is made in hopes that we can figure it out one day. We need concrete plans for systems to ensure this kind of Government can be implemented and sustained.

Anarchists and Leninists both have arguments against such a system, as is expected. It is a synthesis of both ideas, after all. And as such is not a “pure” reflection of either system. But that is the purpose of it: it must give in to the dialectical process of Anarchists Vs. Leninists, which will knock down the parts of both systems which have no basis. Leaving only the parts that work, and allowing them to reconcile each other.

The Leninists argue that such a system leaves the Government susceptible to the forces of reaction. But the pure-Leninist system they propose does the same, as it makes a second revolution a necessity, opening the door to Capitalism reasserting itself. Anarchists argue that power is still too concentrated, and that concentration always leads to Authoritarianism as they define it. But so too does their pure-Anarchism. As the communities and groups fall prey to a “divide and conquer” strategy, but one where their enemies do not need to divide them as they’ve already divided themselves. And it also leaves communities without their needs and goods, because there is no system in place to facilitate the well intentioned and correct philosophy of Mutual Aid.

If we can build a system where there is no central power, no figurehead like a President or a Central Committee, and centralized power is dispersed to separate Governmental groups, groups which are left to Govern themselves in matters that only affect themselves and only require engaging in Parliamentary Government in matters that affect all groups, then we can finally achieve the reconciliation between Anarchism and Leninism. And then, finally, the forces of Capitalism can be overcome, and Communism will be achievable. I believe this system to be Communalism, which I have already touched on. It empowers each community to Govern itself in a Directly-Democratic way, but still has a system in place to facilitate interdependence and allow other communities to Democratically interject when such actions affect them. This accomplishes the needs and desires of both the Leninist and the Anarchists, and finally ends the maladies of Capitalism.

But How?

That's possibly what you're asking. How could any of these Changes actually stop the problems of Capitalism that we've talked about?

For starters they end the contradiction between profit and wages by ending that entire system. No longer is the system built on the necessity of profit. Instead of the need to first make money for a private owner, the needs of the Community are put first. Shelter, food, water, heat in colder environments, and transport. These are all ensured for everyone without the need for anyone to pay for them, and are regarded as human rights. No one is left without simply for not having adequate money. Without profits and wages governing the economy, it no longer lurches from one economic catastrophe to the next, and no one is left wanting.

The details of how this is accomplished vary between the different proposed ideologies, but all of them directly eliminate profit and Capitalist wage systems. Some of them do so through the use of "labor-notes," which I have criticised before. But even though these systems are problematic from a moral and systemic point of view, they are still superior to Capitalist wage-systems. As "labor-notes" are not given based on a private owner's profits, but instead based on the availability of goods and needs. And a "labor-notes" system of wages does not deny anyone what they need to survive, it's really simply a ration method to ensure that goods and needs are distributed fairly, so nothing is hoarded by some and denied to others. Even advocates of it rarely see it as anything more than a temporary measure until the revolution is over and scarcity is fully eliminated. This system was used by the Soviet Union, which certainly stands as a testament to the flaws of such a system, but also it's positive sides. After all: the Great Depression did not have an effect on Russia, which experienced a period of prosperity and expansion of industry during that time.

Others advocate a system where goods and needs are simply distributed to all based on availability and need by a Democratic system, all without the issuance or exchange of any type of currency, even labor notes. This group often points to the region of Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War, where this very system was used to great effect. There was no one lacking any need or good until supply lines were cut off by the Government's forces. War always creates severe scarcity of everything. Were it not for the war, it is difficult to see how anyone would have been without whatever they needed or wanted, despite no money being used.

By eliminating private ownership over the means of production, and profit we liberate everyone from the tyranny of "The Puritan Work Ethic," from tedious and unnecessary work, as well as overproduction. With wage-labor motivated by the need for profit, people have to work a certain amount of hours just to gain enough money to survive, whether or not that work even needs done that much. This creates a system which over-produces everything and reduces all

workers to a life of drudgery. But without profit there is no need to over-produce anything. Products can be made in only as much as is needed or wanted, and distributed for the same reasons. Meaning that no one has to work a set amount of hours beyond the bare minimum to produce what is needed. Leaving everyone With far more free time to pursue their passions, which enriches all of society.

The end of profit also means that the value of someone's work is no longer determined by how wealthy it can make a business owner. Meaning that work which was cast aside by society as “hobbies,” or worse, would be able to flourish under Communism. Art would be in great abundance under Communism, as it would be no longer be restricted by the need for profit or the poverty of the artist. But “hobbies” are not simply artistic pursuits, many such interests are in math, science, medicine, and a myriad of other subjects which greatly benefit all of society, but get tossed aside under Capitalism simply because the individual doesn't have the knowledge or interest in marketing their research to Capitalist investors. Or simply such investors lack interest in investing in pursuits which they cannot turn a profit on, even if it will benefit society. Because Capitalism only gives value to things which can turn a profit for someone. Ending this tyranny of profit would free academia to expand in every direction, and also free its availability up to the entire population.

The elimination of profit and Capitalist wage-labor has another effect which contributes to the end of class divisions: ending the division of labor. As Karl Marx describes it in “The German Ideology:”

“For as soon as the distribution of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in Communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic. This fixation of social activity, this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now.”

This not only increases everyone's happiness, but their productivity as well. Because

people work more efficiently when they're happy, and labor power is no longer being wasted by making anyone work more than is necessary, nor making them work jobs they hate or aren't even the best at. Everyone's talents and interests can be allowed to be applied to their greatest effect. And the general education and capabilities of the population as a whole will be greatly increased. Because under Communism everyone has the opportunity to learn a myriad of different skills and knowledge, but they also have the opportunity to focus on any subject or skill they please in order to become an expert in that field. This is all accomplished by the elimination of profit, Capitalist Wages, and the need for every individual to work a specific number of hours so they personally can acquire enough currency to survive. When these are gone it no longer matters who performs a job or when, because the product of that job benefits all anyway. So who performs that job can be different at different times. All that matters is that the job gets done, not who does it or how long it takes.

This also tackles homelessness and joblessness, allowing everyone access to their rights to shelter and work. Because when profit and private ownership of business no longer exists there is no longer a need to prohibit any one from doing a job. Once again: all that matters is that a job is done, it doesn't matter how many people perform it. There's always work that needs done, and everyone will benefit from the produce of that work, So everyone would be encouraged to perform as many jobs as they want instead of being forced to do a single job for their entire lives, and an employer only hiring as few people as possible in order to increase profits as things are now. As for homelessness: already right now in the U.S. there are more empty homes than homeless people. The problem is not lack of homes or a lack of resources to build homes. The problem is the need for profit and currency. People's needs under Capitalism are not placed first, profit is. And so, those who need a home are denied one simply for lacking currency to purchase one. We have the resources at this very moment to end homelessness in the blink of an eye, all that stands in the way is profit and the Capitalist system which necessitates profit.

The elimination of the necessity for profit also goes very far towards ending the degradation of the environment. As global warming, and other damage to the environment, is almost entirely created through overproduction and the pursuit of profit before everything else. A socio-economic system that is not built on profit would have no reason to keep using practices or making products that damage the environment, because abandoning such practices or products wouldn't have any negative impact on profits since there would be no profits to begin with. Under Capitalism, such destructive behaviors are not only performed in spite of knowledge to their destructive nature, they are continually expanded. Because Capitalism necessitates that a business continually expands to continually generate profit. As Edward Abbey wrote in "The Second Rape of the West:"

“Growth for the sake of growth *is* the ideology of the cancer cell.”

And as Murray Bookchin put it in his book “Remaking Society:”

“To speak of ‘limits to growth’ under a capitalistic market economy is as meaningless as to speak of limits of warfare under a warrior society. The moral pieties, that are voiced today by many well-meaning environmentalists, are as naive as the moral pieties of multinationals are manipulative. Capitalism can no more be ‘persuaded’ to limit growth than a human being can be ‘persuaded’ to stop breathing. Attempts to ‘green’ capitalism, to make it ‘ecological’, are doomed by the very nature of the system as a system of endless growth.”

Ending the pursuit of profit, ending Capitalism, allows us to have a system that is sustainable. Because when profit no longer governs our lives or our socio-economic system, any and all practices or products that damage our environment can be abandoned without economic repercussions, and they can be replaced by sustainable ones. Because ending profit and the division of labor also means that no potential “green” technology would lack funding or people to undertake it, nor would it ever be deemed “too expensive” to pursue, as that very concept wouldn’t exist anymore as a fact of society.

Then there is the issue of Democracy. As I’ve already pointed out: Democracy cannot exist under a Capitalist system. The only thing it can ever be is a Plutocratic-Oligarchy. When the ownership and control over the means of production is removed from private hands and placed into the hands of the people through a Democratic system that is composed of the people rather than held above them as a State, then and only then can Democracy exist. With the end of this ends the accumulation of gross personal wealth and political power, ending the influence of such things over the Governmental process. Power resides with the means of production, it always has, and always will. It is, after all, the single greatest influence on our lives, because it is the things which we all need and rely on for a modern life. And so, once again: whoever controls the means of production controls society and the organization of society; whoever controls the means of production controls the Government. So, in order to have a Democratic Government, a Government “Of the people, by the people, and for the people,” the means of production must be Democratically controlled by the people, not private owners, nor controlled by an alienating State-type-Government. This is what Communism accomplishes.

Of course, as I’ve said before: this is not a guarantee simply because private ownership over the means of production has been eliminated, eliminating the constitution of Government as a State is just as integral. Because the best any State-type-Government can ever be is an Oligarchy. But the institution of Socialism is integral to that process, because as long as private ownership over the means of production is continued, then Government will continue to be

dominated by those private owners.

I am by no means making the assumption that an actual perfect system can be achieved by implementing these changes. A perfect society is impossible. But we can and should always strive for a better society than what we have, especially when the current society is so oppressive and exploitative, as it is now. If no one ever attempted to correct the flaws of society simply because perfection was unobtainable we would certainly be living in a much worse world than even now, and we absolutely wouldn't have even a semblance of Democracy. Neither are any of these changes a guarantee that things could never become worse, more tyrannical. No system can serve such a guarantee. Just look how many Capitalist Republics have fallen to totalitarian regimes every bit as horrendous as what everyone imagines the totalitarian systems of past Communist regimes to have been. Still, even a skeptic can see how a Governmental and economic system which prohibits any single person or group from having control over it would be much more difficult to turn towards totalitarianism and oppression. The most vulnerable that such a society can be is when it is first being built, and it is during that time when our society must be more vigilant than ever at resisting those elements which will seek to end Democracy. That is really what it comes down to, and always has: the vigilance of the people to build and protect their Democracy. Even the United States while it was in its infancy nearly fell to a Dictatorship. The leadership of the military, a mere weeks after defeating the British forces, approached George Washington with a plan to seize power and establish an American Monarchy. The only thing which stopped the plan was the fact that Washington had no desire for it. The battle for Democracy never ends, but it always begins with our desire to realize it.

The only way to realize Democracy, the only way to end the greatest problems of our society: poverty, homelessness, slave-like wage-labor, over-production, environmental degradation, and undemocratic Government, is to place ownership and control over the means of production into the hands of the people as a whole through a truly Democratic system, and the only way to have a truly Democratic system is to end all class systems. Otherwise Government will simply be an Oligarchy of whatever ruling class exists. The only way to do that is to structure Government so that it is not elevated above the people, so that it is instead composed of the people themselves, so that it is a proper Communist Government. Communism is the cure to the maladies of Capitalism, and the maladies that continue to plague us from past systems, it is the only cure to them, and the only system to finally realize a truly Democratic society.

But, of course, this system will still be opposed by those unconvinced of Communism. They, and perhaps even you, have their own arguments against it, which have been repeated ad-nauseum for the last one-hundred and seventy years. Still, they keep being given an undead kind of life by Capitalists, continually raised from the grave to do battle against Communists once more. As such I am compelled to address them. Let's try and tackle those arguments.

3

The Critique

Communism Kills Innovation **and Makes Everyone Lazy**

This is probably the oldest and most repeated of these zombie arguments. It generally goes something like this: "If you don't have to work, you won't. Why would you work when you could just sit around and let other people work?" Of course the most common sense answer is: because you like having things and doing things. Communism, as we've argued before, starts with the culture recognizing that we all still need to accomplish work in order to have a modern life. But no one should nor needs to be exploited to accomplish that work, and everyone should receive the entire benefit from the the work they do. Its also a democracy, meaning that if you don't contribute to your community, but lazily reap what your community produces, you're likely to be ostracized by your community and no one is going to want to help you when you need help. The Capitalist argument is also based on a fallacious definition of what constitutes "work," As I've pointed out before: Capitalism only calls activities "work" if they can produce profit for an owner. Communism ends that concept, recognizing that almost all activities can qualify as work, as they all enrich society in some way, and we cannot quantify the value of anyone's work anyway.

There is also the fact that, once again: Communism ends the division of labor. Absolutely no one is truly "lazy," just wanting to sit around and do literally nothing all the time. There is an activity that we all want to perform that benefits society, but we are more often than not prohibited from doing that activity under Capitalism for many reasons. And look how many people perform such tasks anyway. How many people enjoy working on cars as a recreational activity, and not even a part of the job they perform for their livelihood? Or carpentry, or construction, or any activity which even qualifies as work now under Capitalism? My own Grandfather spent his entire life building houses, furniture, electrical work, rebuilding and repairing cars, and nearly every other construction and carpentry related activity, but never as his job, because he never had the knowledge nor the desire to be a businessman. He worked as a State employee at a mental Hospital, and then as a truck driver. He hated those jobs, but was required to perform them for the majority of his life, because that's how Capitalism works. If you aren't a business s savvy person, it doesn't matter how beneficial your skills are for society, or how much you enjoy doing that work. You can't do that work for a living without also being good at capitalist business, you can't make money off any skill if you aren't also a good salesman, or you find someone hiring for that job. Communism has no such restrictions. It allows you and everyone to pursue those passions that you enjoy, because all your needs are provided by everyone else doing the same thing in a society. If my Grandfather had lived in a Communist society, he could have spent his entire life doing carpentry, working on cars, building houses, doing electrical work, as his livelihood, and so could everyone else who wants

to. Him and society could have benefitted from the work he already wanted to do for a living.

On this subject, I want to turn once again to the words of Peter Kropotkin in his seminal Work, "The Conquest of Bread." This will be a long section, and I apologize for that. But Kropotkin makes the most thorough rebuttal against this Capitalist argument, and I feel it is worth quoting in as close to its entirety as possible. Still, this is an abridged version of the entire rebuttal. The complete essay is from chapter 12 of "The Conquest of Bread," and I highly encourage everyone to read it.

"The objection is known. 'If the existence of each is guaranteed, and if the necessity of earning wages does not compel men to work, nobody will work. Every man will lay the burden of his work on another if he is not forced to do it himself.' Let us first remark the incredible levity with which this objection is raised, without taking into consideration that the question is in reality merely to know, on the one hand, whether you effectively obtain by wage-work the results you aim at; and, on the other hand, whether voluntary work is not already more productive to-day than work stimulated by wages.

...They fear that without compulsion the masses will not work. But during our own lifetime have we not heard the same fears expressed twice? By the anti-abolitionists in America before Negro emancipation, and by the Russian nobility before the liberation of the serfs? 'Without the whip the Negro will not work,' said the anti-abolitionist. 'Free from their master's supervision the serfs will leave the fields uncultivated,' said the Russian serf-owners. It was the refrain of the French noblemen in 1789, the refrain of the Middle Ages, a refrain as old as the world, and we shall hear it every time there is a question of sweeping away an injustice. And each time actual facts give it the lie. The liberated peasant of 1792 ploughed with a wild energy unknown to his ancestors, the emancipated Negro works more than his fathers, and the Russian peasant, after having honoured the honeymoon of his emancipation by celebrating Fridays as well as Sundays, has taken up work with as much eagerness as his liberation was the more complete. There, where the soil is his, he works desperately; that is the exact word for it. The anti-abolitionist refrain can be of value to slave-owners; as to the slaves

themselves, they know what it is worth, as they know its motive.

Well-being, that is to say, the satisfaction of physical, artistic, and moral needs, has always been the most powerful stimulant to work. And when a hireling produces bare necessities with difficulty, a free worker, who sees ease and luxury increasing for him and for others in proportion to his efforts, spends infinitely far more energy and intelligence, and obtains first-class products in far greater abundance. The one feels riveted to misery, the other hopes for ease and luxury in the future. In this lies the whole secret. Therefore a society aiming at the well-being of all, and at the possibility of all enjoying life in all its manifestations, will supply voluntary work which will be infinitely superior and yield far more than work has produced up till now under the goad of slavery, serfdom, or wagedom.

...to do manual work now, means in reality to shut yourself up for ten or twelve hours a day in an unhealthy workshop, and to remain riveted to the same task for twenty or thirty years, and maybe for your whole life. It means to be doomed to a paltry wage, to the uncertainty of the morrow, to want of work, often to destitution, more often than not to death in a hospital, after having worked forty years to feed, clothe, amuse, and instruct others than yourself and your children. It means to bear the stamp of inferiority all your life, because, whatever the politicians tell us, the manual worker is always considered inferior to the brain worker, and the one who has toiled ten hours in a workshop has not the time, and still less the means, to give himself the high delights of science and art, nor even to prepare himself to appreciate them; he must be content with the crumbs from the table of privileged persons.

We understand that under these conditions manual labour is considered a curse of fate. We understand that all men have but one dream — that of emerging from, or enabling their children to emerge from this inferior state; to create for themselves an ‘independent’ position, which means what? — To also live by other men’s work! As long as there will be a class of manual workers and a class of ‘brain’ workers, black hands and white hands, it will be thus.

...It is precisely to put an end to this separation between manual and brain work that we want to abolish wagedom, that we want the Social Revolution. Then work will no longer appear a curse of fate: it will become what it should be — the free exercise of *all* the faculties of man.

...Moreover, it is time to submit to a serious analysis this legend about superior work, supposed to be obtained under the lash of wagedom...”

Here, Kropotkin lists conditions that he observed in workplaces throughout the world, which were horrendous, and exceedingly inefficient at the time of his writing (the mid-19th century.) Certainly conditions have improved, but they also have remained the same in the ways that matter: profits are held above the health and safety of workers consistently. And then there is the simple fact that a wage-worker has no incentive to work harder than the bare minimum, as they do not reap the rewards of their harder work, the owner of the business does. Peter Kropotkin continues on this line:

“...And if you talk to the workmen themselves, you will soon learn that the rule in such factories is — never to do entirely what you are capable of. ‘Shoddy pay — shoddy work!’ this is the advice which the working man receives from his comrades upon entering such a factory. For the workers know that if in a moment of generosity they give way to the entreaties of an employer and consent to intensify the work in order to carry out a pressing order, this nervous work will be exacted in the future as a rule in the scale of wages. Therefore in all such factories they prefer never to produce as much as they can. In certain industries production is limited so as to keep up high prices, and sometimes the password, ‘Go-canny,’ is given, which signifies, ‘Bad work for bad pay!’

Wage-work is serf-work; it cannot, it must not, produce all that it could produce. And it is high time to disbelieve the legend which represents wagedom as the best incentive to productive work. If industry nowadays brings in a hundred times more than it did in the days of our grandfathers, it is due to the sudden awakening of physical and chemical sciences towards the end of last century; not to the capitalist organization of wagedom, but in spite of that organization.

... 'But the danger,' they say, 'will come from that minority of loafers who will not work, and will not have regular habits in spite of excellent conditions that make work pleasant. To-day the prospect of hunger compels the most refractory to move along with the others. The one who does not arrive in time is dismissed. But a black sheep suffices to contaminate the whole flock, and two or three sluggish or refractory workmen lead the others astray and bring a spirit of disorder and rebellion into the workshop that makes work impossible.'

...To begin with, is it not evident that if a society, founded on the principle of free work, were really menaced by loafers, it could protect itself without an authoritarian organization and without having recourse to wagedom? Let us take a group of volunteers, combining for some particular enterprise. Having its success at heart, they all work with a will, save one of the associates, who is frequently absent from his post. Must they on his account dissolve the group, elect a president to impose fines, or maybe distribute markers for work done, as is customary in the Academy? It is evident that neither the one nor the other will be done, but that someday the comrade who imperils their enterprise will be told: 'Friend, we should like to work with you; but as you are often absent from your post, and you do your work negligently, we must part. Go and find other comrades who will put up with your indifference!'

This way is so natural that it is practiced everywhere nowadays, in all industries, in competition with all possible systems of fines, docking of wages, supervision, etc.; a workman may enter the factory at the appointed time, but if he does his work badly, if he hinders his comrades by his laziness or other defects, and they quarrel with him on that account, there is an end of it; he is compelled to leave the workshop.

...Then, why should means that are used to-day among mates in the workshop, traders, and railway companies, not be made use of in a society based on voluntary work?

Take, for example, an association stipulating that each of its members

should carry out the following contract: ‘We undertake to give you the use of our houses, stores, streets, means of transport, schools, museums, etc., on condition that, from twenty to forty-five or fifty years of age, you consecrate four or five hours a day to some work recognized as necessary to existence. Choose yourself the producing groups which you wish to join, or organize a new group, provided that it will undertake to produce necessaries. And as for the remainder of your time, combine together with those you like for recreation, art, or science, according to the bent of your taste. Twelve or fifteen hundred hours of work a year, in a group producing food, clothes, or houses, or employed in public health, transport, etc., is all we ask of you. For this work we guarantee to you all that these groups produce or will produce. But if not one, of the thousands of groups of our federation, will receive you, whatever be their motive; if you are absolutely incapable of producing anything useful, or if you refuse to do it, then live like an isolated man or like an invalid. If we are rich enough to give you the necessaries of life we shall be delighted to give them to you. You are a man, and you have the right to live. But as you wish to live under special conditions, and leave the ranks, it is more than probable that you will suffer for it in your daily relations with other citizens. You will be looked upon as a ghost of bourgeois society, unless some friends of yours, discovering you to be a talent, kindly free you from all moral obligation towards society by doing necessary work for you. And lastly, if it does not please you, go and look for other conditions elsewhere in the wide world, or else seek adherents and organize with them on novel principles. We prefer our own.’

That is what could be done in a communal society in order to turn away sluggards if they became too numerous.”

I’ve pointed out this solution at times, and been met with the rebuttal: “So you make people choose between working or being ostracized and even exiled from society?” First, I think anyone can see how that is preferable to the “be a wage-worker or starve” threat that Capitalism makes to all of us. Second: that is not even what is being argued. This is a possible solution to the hypothetical problem of a Communist society that is fraught with “laziness.” It is not suggested as a pillar of Communism that would exist everywhere, and it is not forcing such a choice on anyone, it’s merely pointing out that a society is not likely to decide to provide you with the fruits of its produce if you choose to not contribute to that produce in any way. That

does not mean you are left to starve, or without shelter, or barred from having anything. Because the only people who are likely to ever make the decision to not contribute to society, are those who are able to meet all their needs without society to begin with. Meaning that they've already ostracized themselves from society, and they already have everything they need and want to live. Also, as I've pointed out: this "laziness" problem isn't one that will even exist. Kropotkin continues on this theme:

"We very much doubt that we need fear this contingency in a society really based on the entire freedom of the individual. In fact, in spite of the premium on idleness offered by private ownership of capital, the really lazy man, unless he is ill, is comparatively rare.

...As to the laziness of the great majority of workers, only philistine economists and philanthropists say such nonsense. If you ask an intelligent manufacturer, he will tell you that if workmen only put it into their heads to be lazy, all factories would have to be closed, for no measure of severity, no system of spying would be of any use.

...So when we speak of a possible idleness, we must well understand that it is a question of a small minority in society; and before legislating for that minority, would it not be wise to study its origin? Whoever observes with an intelligent eye sees well enough that the child reputed lazy at school is often the one which does not understand what he is badly taught. Very often, too, it is suffering from cerebral anæmia, caused by poverty and an anti-hygienic education. A boy who is lazy at Greek or Latin would work admirably where he taught in science, especially if taught by the medium of manual labour. A girl reputed nought at mathematics becomes the first mathematician of her class if she by chance meets somebody who can explain to her the elements of arithmetic she did not understand. And a workman, lazy in the workshop, cultivates his garden at dawn, while gazing at the rising sun, and will be at work again at nightfall, when all nature goes to its rest.

Somebody said that 'filth is matter in the wrong place.' The same definition applies to nine-tenths of those called lazy. They are people gone astray in a direction that does not answer to their temperament nor to their capacities. In reading the biography of great men, we are struck

with the number of 'idlers' among them. They were lazy as long as they had not found the right path, and afterwards laborious to excess. Darwin, Stephenson, and many others belonged to this category of idlers. Very often the idler is but a man to whom it is repugnant to make all his life the eighteenth part of a pin, or the hundredth part of a watch, while he feels he has exuberant energy which he would like to expend elsewhere. Often, too, he is a rebel who cannot submit to being fixed all his life to a work-bench in order to procure a thousand pleasures for his emulover, while knowing himself to be far the less stupid of the two, and knowing his only fault to be that of having been born in hovel instead of coming into the world in a castle.

Lastly, a good many 'idlers' do not know the trade by which they are compelled to earn their living. Seeing the imperfect thing made by their own hands, striving vainly to do better, and perceiving that they never will succeed on account of the bad habits of work already acquired, they begin to hate their trade, and, not knowing any other, hate work in general. Thousands of workmen and artists who are failures suffer from this cause. On the other hand, he who since his youth has learned to play the piano well, to handle the plans well, the chisel, the brush, or the file, so that he feels that what he does is beautiful, will never give up the piano, the chisel, or the file. He will find pleasure in his work which does not tire him, as long as he is not overdriven.

Under the one name, idleness, a series of results due to different causes have been grouped, of which each one could be a source of good, instead of being a source of evil to society. Like all questions concerning criminality and related to human faculties, facts have been collected having nothing in common with one another. They say laziness or crime, without giving themselves the trouble to analyse their cause. They are in haste to punish them, without inquiring if the punishment itself does not contain a premium on 'laziness' or 'crime.'

This is why a free society, seeing the number of idlers increasing in its midst, would no doubt think of looking for the cause of laziness, in order to suppress it, before having recourse to punishment. When it is a case,

as we have already mentioned, of simple bloodlessness, then, before stuffing the brain of a child with science, nourish his system so as to produce blood, strengthen him, and, that he shall not waste his time, take him to the country or to the seaside; there, teach him in the open air, not in books — geometry, by measuring the distance to aspire, or the height of a tree; natural sciences, while picking flowers and fishing in the sea; physical science, while building the boat he will go to fish in. But for mercy's sake do not fill his brain with sentences and dead languages. Do not make an idler of him!... Such a child has neither order nor regular habits. Let first the children inculcate order among themselves, and later on, the laboratory, the workshop, work done in a limited space, with many tools about, will teach them method. But do not make disorderly beings out of them by your school, whose only order is the symmetry of its benches, and which — true image of the chaos in its teachings — will never inspire anybody with the love of harmony, of consistency, and method in work.”

It's worth noting that these assertions that Kropotkin makes here are already being confirmed and accepted by our current society. Our education system has had to drastically adapt in recent years after realizing what Kropotkin wrote about one hundred and sixty years ago: that some children need to be taught differently. And anyone would admit that we all work better when we are working at jobs that we enjoy and believe in. But we can't live in a society that allows everyone to do that as long as we have such unnecessary restrictions on us as the division of labor and the necessity of profit, and the only way to rid ourselves of these diseases of society is Communism.

We can also look at all the Scientific and engineering achievements made by the Soviet Union and Cuba as testaments to the argument “Communism makes everyone lazy and kills innovation” being wrong, despite the Soviet Union and Cuba only being a State-Socialist systems with a lot of flaws. If the Soviet Union can be that, and yet still be the first country to put a satellite in orbit, the first human in space, the first woman in Space, the first space-walk, the first full orbit of the earth, the first space station, the first probe on the moon, the first probe on venus (which was also the first manmade object to land on another planet), the first cell phone, and a very long list of other achievements, then how much can a truly Communist society achieve? If Cuba can eliminate illiteracy, have more doctors per-capita than any other country, eliminate homelessness, and end famine *despite* enduring a blockade and economic sanctions for 50 years which make it extremely difficult for the small island nation to engage in trade for necessities, how much more could a Communist society that is open and free to trade with the world achieve?

This is not to sound like I am using a double-standard, leaving the flaws and mistakes of the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other Socialist-States to its Government while claiming the achievements as ones of Communism. The achievements and failures of these countries are their own, and no one else's. But we can and should learn from both of them. A Communist system is not guaranteed to be free from problems, but it's also not guaranteed to fail. Whatever governmental system we put in place to achieve the goals of Communism, like any other system, is capable of failing in some ways and making great achievements in others, and it certainly will do both. Because these are systems composed of and made by people, and we aren't perfect. But as I said before: a system based on and composed of Democratic principles is sure to make it far more difficult for it to fail in regard to providing for everyone and allowing everyone to pursue their interests. Because those are the things everyone wants, and when the people as a whole are the Government, when the people control the systems they rely on to live, they can use those systems to provide all that they want and need while living their lives how they want.

This inevitably causes critics of Communism to make the age-old argument, loved by Kings and other Monarchists: "This is mob-rule." Despite this argument being actually and purely an anti-Democracy argument, it is still repeated by supposed Democracy advocates, and so I must address it.

“That’s Mob-Rule”

As soon as any conversation about direct-democracy comes up, or even just a Democratic system that includes the participation of the populace in the lawmaking process in some other way, inevitably it is opposed by someone claiming that it is “mob rule,” or decrying the “tyranny of the majority.” The idea is that if the population votes directly on laws and regulations, instead of elected politicians, Society will devolve into chaos or will oppress the minority of the population.

This belief actually originated with people who opposed Democracy in the previous centuries, when the people were trying to overthrow the various monarchies throughout Europe. It's based on the classist ideas that the majority of the population are dumb, brutish, and violent needing to be governed by the “enlightened” minority, usually a ruling class like the old Nobility of Europe, the Bourgeoisie of Capitalism, or some academic aristocracy. It is built on the basic idea that the masses are actually incapable of being educated, rational, and even incapable of knowing what they want. This idea not only has no material basis, but flies in the face of all existing evidence, and even the very principles of Republican Democracy.

Republicanism is a system of Government where the population, instead of voting directly on laws and regulations, vote for “Representatives” who then make and vote on laws and regulations. It trusts the masses to choose Representatives, people who are supposed to vote how the people that elected them want them to, but it does not trust the masses to be able to vote on those laws and regulations directly, or to be able to compose those laws and regulations. It's a completely contradictory concept. If the people are capable of choosing a Representative, they are capable of voting on laws and regulations directly. And after all: those representatives are supposed to vote how the people want them to anyway. It's an unnecessary “middle-man” relationship which allows the possibility of those “representatives” to abuse their power and vote directly in opposition to the desires of their constituents, which is undemocratic.

But that last part is why a lot of proponents of Republican systems support it to begin with. They believe that directly-Democratic systems allow for the “tyranny of the majority,” which needs to be counteracted by Politicians being free to vote in opposition to the will of their constituents when that will is oppressive to minorities. As an example, the argument is often made: “what if the majority of the population is racist? They will simply make laws to oppress the racial minorities.” This argument can only be taken seriously if it existed in a vacuum devoid of historical understanding. Because we have seen for 400 years Republican “Democracies” do exactly that to racial minorities, or even racial majorities as was the case in apartheid South Africa. In fact, the very reason we understand how Governments can oppress people in this way is because of so many actions by Republican Governments doing exactly this. Republicanism is not, and never has been, a protection against tyranny and oppression. In fact, Republicanism

more easily facilitates that tyranny and oppression.

That undemocratic flaw of Republicanism, that “Representatives” can vote in direct opposition to their constituents desires, allows the possibility that they can create laws that actually bring any semblance of Democracy to an end. Republican Government places all the power to make laws into the hands of a small group of people. All the masses can do is try to pick good representatives and hope they use this power responsibly. These “Representatives” can, and very often do, use the power instead to increase their own power, wealth, and oppress groups they hate or that oppose their actions. However, they don't need to even do this to violate the assumption made by the “tyranny of the majority” argument. If republican government behaves as it's supposed to, with the Representatives voting and enacting laws reflective of the people's desires, and the majority of the population is bigoted and racist. Then that is what those laws will reflect, and it is exactly what they have reflected in the past. Such as the Jim-Crow laws and the well as the “one drop” rules of the U.S. Republicanism even exacerbates this fact, because it's much easier to push a minority dissenting voice to the Side so that it's arguments aren't even heard.

A Republican Government brings the majority voice to the front through the “winner takes all” Representative system. That representative will vote and voice the opinions of the majority of people (if they behave how they are supposed to in such a system.) They won't voice the arguments or vote how the minority of the population votes, because that's not the purpose of this system. So often the arguments of the minority aren't ever even heard in the lawmaking process. Whereas, in a Direct-Democracy, or a similar system, there are no such representatives, so the minority of the population is involved in the lawmaking process directly, their arguments are heard and their votes are cast. This increases the possibility that they can influence the majority to avoid being persecuted and marginalized.

“I do not like the thought of the community telling me what to do with my property.” Is another argument I've heard often, and I am always left wondering: why is community governance worse than the dictatorship of owners and politicians? In a Direct-Democracy, you have as much of a voice as anyone else, and an equal vote. If you do not like a proposition, then voice your opinion, argue against it, and vote against it. That's more power than you have under any Republican Democracy, where you simply have to hope that your “Representative” votes the way you want, and you only have the empty threat to not vote for them in the next election. Besides, I can assure you that no one in a directly-democratic assembly would want to take your personal property from you. What use would they have for a house, or car, or any other personal item, which they all already have? We're talking about Communism, a system that provides all these things to you as a right, and that has abolished monetary wealth. No one has any means of benefiting themselves by taking these things away from others. Especially since we're talking about a directly-democratic assembly, a group of equal citizens acting together for mutual benefit, not a dictatorship of any single person. There is no way that such a group could take the

personal property of you in a way that would satisfy the greed of everyone in the community. And there would be your own family and friends in the assembly who would also have the same vote as you, who could help you stop such actions.

The one argument in defense of Republicanism that has some merit, is the one that argues: “the people do not have time to vote on every law and regulation, to make and hear every argument. The whole population cannot be full-time Governors.” This was certainly true when Republican Government was first conceived, and when it reemerged several centuries ago. But that was before technology that has connected all of us, allowed us to span continents in a matter of hours, and made the need to do so obsolete through the use of electronic communication. In the 18th century, when Republicanism became so popular, it took weeks to travel only a few hundred miles, and all original documents had to be hand-written, not to mention that even printing presses were hand operated. Governance was a slow process, and popular votes even slower. Now, technology has made the process, and the process of dispensing and discussing information, all happen at the speed of thought, all without requiring anyone even leaves their homes. It is possible for everyone to be engaged in Government while performing their jobs. The argument that the populace has no time to govern themselves is also rooted in the assumption that governance must be a fulltime job, that laws must be constantly passed. This is because that's how our current government works. This is mostly due to useless politicians trying to justify their careers, and also due to the nature of Capitalism, which requires constant interference from the State in order to continue limping along.

A Communist society would provide for everyone's needs inherently through the nature of the system, meaning there is no need for Social-welfare systems, and no constant adjustment of regulations. The people wouldn't even need to engage in any governing activities more than on an annual basis, or to meet an emergency need. Government could be small, with little bureaucracy. And a system that is uncomplicated is less alienating to the populace, which encourages participation, making for a healthy Democracy.

But, of course, a healthy Democracy is no longer the goal of Republicanism. What I have been pointing out is readily apparent to everyone, and far more than Communists see the flaws in Republicanism. Even many opponents to Communism are just as critical of Republican Government as I have been. Republicanism is perpetuated by the Bourgeoisie precisely because it allows them to maintain control in an undemocratic way. Not as individuals, but as an Oligarchy. Because the wealthy realized long ago what I am trying to tell you: that the only way to end conflict among them, the constant attempts by them to individually take power, was to ensure no single one of them had power. That was the purpose of Republican “Democracy:” it was meant to be, from the beginning, an Oligarchy of the wealthy. Republican “Democracy” is Democracy for the rich, the owners of the means of production, and subjugation of the poor, the workers. They maintain the facade of Democracy by letting you pick your tyrants from time-to-time. They can rest easy in this process, because so long as the means of production is

privately owned, one of their own will always be picked for these offices, these “Representatives.” Because the owners of the means of production will always have the most influence, and the most wealth, so they can reach more people, more of the population will always know the names of the wealthy Bourgeois politician and what they say. Any working class citizen who attempts to compete simply won’t have the funding, or the political influence, to match the Bourgeoisie. So in all but a few rare and token instances, the working class person will lose the political race.

But what about a Communist Republican system, like so many Leninists advocate, why can't that work? I will readily admit that a Socialist Republican Government is much superior to a Capitalist one, and preferable. It cannot be dominated by the Bourgeoisie, because they don't exist under a Socialist System. However, as we've discussed, there isn't even a need for it anymore, and the more the populace participates in the Governmental process the more faith they have in it, keeping it healthy and perpetuating it. No system facilitates this better than a directly-Democratic one. And even a Socialist Republican Government is capable of developing an oligarchical group. Because those in power have an advantage in elections over any challengers. There is also simply the fact that they can, once in office, behave undemocratically by voting in opposition to their constituents’ desires, and even changing laws to end Democracy. The only sure way to avoid this, is to not have such “Representatives,” to not have lawmakers, and instead make the people as a whole the lawmakers. It entails the same risks towards “the tyranny of the majority” as Republicanism, and thus requires the same diligence of the population to oppose it. But, Direct-Democracy lacks the systems which make the “tyranny of the majority,” or the destruction of Democracy, more likely to happen.

But of course, there is another argument that often comes up at this point: “if all is held in common, even the Government, how can you avoid the ‘tragedy of the commons?’” It’s a very common argument laid against Communism, but it is a flawed one that is based on a demonized caricature of Communism, not what Communism actually is.

The Tragedy of the Commons

First, this argument is based on a misunderstanding of what “the tragedy of the commons” points to. It is thrown around by anti-Communists as an “example” of what is “inevitable” in such a society where resources are shared. They use it to suggest that mutually controlling resources inevitably leads to famine, as the resource is misused. But this is not ever what “the tragedy of the commons” pointed to. It points out a situation where a mutually shared resource will be wasted by everyone because they are in competition, and thus always act in their own selfish-interests, which leads to the squandering and waste of the resource, ending its existence for everyone. That, as you can see, is what we have now. That is pointing to the flaw of Capitalism, not Communism. Because Communism regulates resources mutually for everyone’s benefit, and actively ends competition through the end of the necessity for profit, and providing for everyone’s needs.

The second issue is that the recent popularization of the very phrase “the tragedy of the commons” comes from a 1968 scientific essay written by Garrett Hardin. In this essay he points to the theoretical problem with “the tragedy of the commons” being caused by overpopulation. A problem that is certainly possible, as I pointed out in this very book: infinite growth is not possible on a planet with finite resources. That rule applies to population as well as business. But, overpopulation is not as immanent of a threat as Hardin and others would have you believe. I will not go into the deep details of this fact, as this book is not meant to be a scientific work, and also because Communism addresses this problem anyway.

An ever increasing population is necessitated by Capitalism, because as I’ve pointed out already: Capitalism necessitates constant and ever-increasing growth of business. This necessitates an ever increasing workforce, which necessitates an ever increasing food source, which necessitates an ever-increasing force of laborers to cultivate food sources. Capitalism continues and promotes the almost universal cultural aspects which encourage everyone to marry and reproduce (a carry-over from the days of agrarian society, where a family had to supply its food for itself, and thus needed as many children as possible to work their food source) in order to fulfil this need. Communism is the diametric opposite of Capitalism, being based on sustainability and fulfilling for everyone’s needs first, rather than profit and growth of business. And without the need for profit, nor the need for the populace to purchase goods to move Capital, there is no need for everyone to work at all if it is possible. We can replace the workforce with automation entirely if possible, without any negative economic side-effect. All of this means that no one would be encouraged to reproduce at all if they don’t want to. Because we don’t need a constantly growing workforce, or a workforce at all if we continue developing automation as it has been developed over the last two centuries. Even without automation, the same need for an ever increasing workforce is non-existent in a Communist system, because only meeting people’s needs in a sustainable manner is considered. There is no profit in Communism,

no requirement to move Capital. Such a system does not require a large workforce to begin with, nor does it require there to be jobs for everyone. As I said earlier: it doesn't matter who performs a job, only that the job gets done. So if we can provide for everyone's needs without everyone performing a job on a regular basis, that is a win for everyone, and drastically reduces the size of the workforce, reducing the stress on the commonly held resources that we already rely on.

Without encouraging or necessitating an ever-increasing workforce, the cultural traditions which encourage everyone to reproduce would quickly fade away, ending any potential overpopulation problems before they even occur.

But let's return to what the opponents to Communism mean when they refer to "the tragedy of the commons." They argue that if all is held in common, then people will squander our shared resources, and ruin them for everyone. This, they argue, is why famine is inevitable under Communism. As I said, this based on a misunderstanding of Communism, a strawman. Communists recognize that if a shared resources is available to all without any regulation, it would certainly be ruined and exhausted by modern consumption. In fact, this is a major cornerstone of Communism, because that is exactly what Capitalism is doing. It allows the resources that we all need to be privately owned and wasted by those private owners. Communists see this and recognize that in order to prevent such a situation, we must democratically manage our resources. They must be regulated as a part of the socio-economic system, we must end competition over these resources to avoid them being squandered and wasted.

But, of course, this is not a guarantee that famines will not occur under a Communist system. They are, after all, caused by natural events all the time. And there were famines under past attempts at Communism. So, we must learn from those mistakes. And mistakes they were, not inherent aspects of Communism, but rather a result of the specific organization of the Governments that they occurred under. Mao's "Great leap Forward" and the Ukrainian famine often called "Holodomor" occurred under highly centralized systems managed by a central committee, which over saw and mandated organization over the whole country. This system organized the whole country into districts of specific production. Meaning one or two regions of the county often were left to produce the food for the entire country. This left the country susceptible to famine, as often one area of a country can be subjected to a drought while another experiences an abundance of rain. A new Communist system must learn from this, production must not be so highly centralized. We must leave each municipality to organize its own production systems according to its specific needs, as only the people in that region can understand how to manage it best. But, at the same time, we must prohibit parochial independence of municipalities, and instead maintain a system to ensure that no community is left to endure hardships due to natural disaster, as the different regions of the country that are not subjected to the disaster can provide their access to the region that has been hit by drought, or hurricane, or some other event, until it can recover. This will prevent such famines from

occurring, and is similar to the precautions that the Soviet Union and China took after their famines, which ended famines in those regions for the first time in thousands of years. Neither China nor the regions that composed the Soviet Union have experienced famines since “Holodomor” and “the Great Leap Forward,” prior to which they experienced famines on a regular basis for millenia. China had previously experienced a famine almost every year for the last 2,000 years.

However, there is a possibility at least that “Holodomor” and “The Great Leap Forward” were deliberate malicious attempts to exterminate portions of these countries’ populations by their rulers. It is not something that I believe it was, I do not see the evidence of such an act. Rather I believe they were a failure in Governmental composition and management, and at the most a degree of apathy or ignorance about malicious intent within the lower ranks of the Soviet Union’s and Maoist China’s bureaucracies. Still, if this claim was true it would not be a criticism of Communism, but rather another criticism of Republican Government, and yet another example of its flaws. As is testified by the fact that Capitalist Republican Governments have done the same. Particularly the United States and the United Kingdom. In fact, the U.K. performed this exact method of attempted genocide in both Ireland and India. Since the only common factor between China, the Soviet Union, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, is the fact that they are/were all some form of Republican Government, we must conclude that this Governmental system is the source of the problem. Especially since the claim is that these famines were intentional and malicious. Only a country that has rulers would even attempt something like that. The solution is to not have rulers, to have a Communist Participatory-Democracy. Because the people aren’t going to enact a genocide on themselves.

Of course, many will point out that such management is possible without totally abandoning Capitalism. And they often point to countries like Sweden, Norway, and Denmark as successful Capitalist Social-Democracies. These countries and their “Nordic model” of Capitalism are hailed as proof that Capitalism can be regulated into an ethical system. As we will discuss, that is not the case, at all. It is, in fact, impossible and undesirable.

“Communism Goes Too Far. We Can Regulate Capitalism”

This argument is well known, and has gained even more frequent use in recent months largely due to the rise in popularity of Bernie Sanders and what he mistakenly calls "Democratic-Socialism." It's really nothing more than a reemergence of the “New Left” of the 60’s and 70’s. These people argue that it is not necessary to abolish Capitalism, but rather they advocate for what they call “a mix of Capitalism and Socialism.” Which shows a gross misunderstanding of what both Capitalism and Socialism are. But their misuse of these terms is not what I want to talk about. What they really want is highly regulated Capitalism. They believe this is preferable to Communism; “don't throw the baby out with the bathwater,” they say.

Well, we aren't talking about babies or bath water, I am not interested in hollow platitudes or idioms. We need to make decisions on our society based on material conditions and facts instead. And the fact is that Capitalism is inherently flawed. Even if greed and lust for power were non-existent, and we didn't even need any kind of regulation, Capitalism would still be immoral and unstable. For these reasons alone it should be abolished. And if it were even possible to regulate Capitalism into a moral and stable system, it wouldn't even be desirable. Because this system would be so bloated with bureaucracy that it would be expensive and alienating to the population, exacerbating the very problems you hoped to eliminate. This is why it is not possible to regulate Capitalism, to rely on Social-Democracy to make Capitalism an ethical and stable system; the more you try to make Capitalism better, the worse it makes the system, compounding the problems of Republican Government and even Capitalism, because Capitalism benefits from greater bureaucracy.

Capitalists thrive in bureaucracy, they don't recoil from it. Bureaucratic Republican systems become slaves to their structure, they cannot adapt easily and quickly to changing conditions, allowing them to be exploited by Capitalists to retain power and expand their wealth. It's why they've always built such bureaucratic Governments to begin with. We even saw this happen in the wholly anti-Capitalist Soviet Union, whose massive and complex bureaucracy was skillfully used by Capitalists to turn the system in their favor through programs like “Perestroika,” which allowed private ownership and management of businesses for the first time in the Soviet Union, and eventually brought an end to the Soviet Union. How much more so do you believe they can influence a system that isn't even opposed to Capitalism? Political power resides with those who control the means of production. If you want the people to have political power, if you want a healthy Democracy, then the people need to control the means of production.

“But look at the ‘Nordic Democracies,’ they prove that you’re wrong.” This is the

common argument from the Social-Democrats today. They are right that Social-Democracies like Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, are better than a system like that of the United States, because they aren't quite as brutal to their populations. But also keep in mind that these systems have only been in place for a few decades, not quite long enough for the inherent flaws of Capitalism to catch up with them as hard as they have in other countries. And we know that these contradictions *will* catch up with them, because we saw in 2008 that even these countries are not immune to financial depression. They were affected just as badly as the United States and the U.K., they just had better social-welfare programs to offset some of the pain for the majority of the population. But still, homelessness, poverty, and severe financial inequality, all still exist in these countries. Because the labor of the working-class, the Proletariat, is still exploited, and it is still a Capitalist system that is subject to the contradiction between wages and profits. Just because it's slightly less oppressive, doesn't make it a solution. Would it have been acceptable if the United States had merely imposed laws that required slaves be treated humanely, instead of abolishing the institution altogether? Of course not! An immoral and oppressive system is still that, even if you force those being exploited to be treated a little nicer. It must not be tolerated in any form, but instead must be ended altogether.

Anyone can see the problems with trying to regulate a Monarchy, or a Dictatorship, into an ethical system. Without abolishing the Monarchy or the Dictatorship, the only effective method is to denude the Monarchy or Dictatorship of all power, transferring it to a Democratic body. Meaning it's no longer a Dictatorship or a Monarchy, but rather a Democracy with an expensive and pointless figurehead that has no actual power (yes, the U.K., I'm looking very judgmentally in your direction.) The same rule applies to Capitalism, because it's the same situation. The only way to effectively "regulate" it is to make it not be Capitalism. Any talk of allowing the private owners, the Bourgeoisie, to remain in control of the means of production, but forcing them to behave ethically, is no different than arguing a King should remain in power but be forced to behave ethically. The only means of accomplishing this changes the system into something else, something Democratic, something Socialist, and renders the Bourgeoisie without any actual power. At that point, wouldn't it make more sense to just abolish their position and make the means of production mutually owned as well as Democratically controlled? Our ancestors realized this in regards to monarchies two hundred years ago when they threw off monarchies in America and across Europe, replacing them with Democracies (or at least attempts at Democracy.) It's time we realize the same thing in regards to Capitalism.

“It’s Never Worked before”

Thank god no past advocates of Democracy gave any serious attention to such small-minded arguments like the one attempting to point out that Communism has “never worked before.” Because that very same accusation could be made against Democracy itself two centuries ago. After all they called the United States “The Great Experiment.” Before the United States and the Parliament of the U.K., the history of Democracy was filled with failures. From ancient Athens being conquered by the Kingdom of Macedonia, to the Roman Republic being controlled by Slave-owning nobles and later devolving into a Monarchical Empire, to the French Republic falling under the Dictatorship of Napoleon who crowned himself a new Emperor. Everywhere you turned you could see Democracies failing and Monarchies prevailing. There are also just as many Dictatorships and Oligarchies which profess to be Democracies but are nothing even close to a Democracy. We can even see right now how the United States has devolved into a Plutocratic Oligarchy (really it never was anything else.) If you are an American reading this, do you feel like you have any power in this “Democratic” Government? Still, Democracy advocates are undeterred by this history of Democracy “never working” and continue to press forward, as they should

Communism is no different because it is the continuation of the principles of Democracy, and thus it is an imperative. Even if every past attempt at Communism was wholly and irredeemably a collection of total failures, we must still press on to establish Communism. Because all those failures show is that those attempts were flawed, that their methods to attempt Communism were not the right path; their failures do not detract from the goals of Communism itself. Because Communism is the goal, the methods thus far used to attempt to reach Communism are other “isms” meant for that purpose, not Communism itself. The Soviet Union's system was not the only way to achieve Communism any more than the United State's system is the only way to achieve Democracy. And like those past failures at Democracy, we must look at the past failures of Communism, learn from what they got right and what they got wrong. We must develop systems to avoid making the mistakes of these past attempts at Communism, and to repeat or even improve on the areas that they succeeded in.

“That sounds nice,” many argue, “but you can't change people. You can't legislate people into being moral. That's why Communism will always fail.” This shows another misunderstanding of what Communism is and its goals, as well as Capitalism's. Because both Communism and Capitalism are the opposite of what this argument assumes them to be. Human behavior can and does change, it is constantly being altered by its material and cultural conditions. Still, yes, it cannot be changed overnight, and this is not the goal of Communism anyway. Communism Seeks to prohibit people from acting out their most destructive and exploitive habits by destroying the existing system and replacing it with one based on cooperation and providing for everyone’s needs, instead of profit for individual owners. A

Capitalist system not only allows such self-centered and exploitive behavior, it *encourages* it. Capitalism necessitates profit and the exploitation of labor. Thus greed and apathy towards laborers is a positive force to the Capitalist system. This is why the Character of “Gordon Gekko,” and the real life wall street billionaire that inspired the character, Asher Edelman, both declared that “Greed is good.” It's even become a philosophical concept that is taken seriously in the intellectual community. This is the profound impact that Capitalism has had on culture, and the very reason people make the argument above, as well as the assumption that “Capitalism is human nature.” All in direct contradiction to 170 years of scientific study that has consistently proven otherwise. Archaeology and History has shown that this kind of culture is not normal, it is not even prevalent in the historical record. Humans have existed for nearly 200,000 years, and until 5,000 years ago, all human societies were Hunter-gatherers. The system of Hunter-Gatherer subsistence is dependant upon cooperation and mutual ownership over the natural resources that the society depends on. The bounty of which is shared equally. There was no profit, no greed, in fact the cultures of Hunter-Gatherers have universally developed traditions that severely discourage any kind of greed and necessitate sharing and cooperation. That is the society that Humans evolved in, and existed in exclusively for 98% of our existence. If you want to make an argument about human nature, the evidence supports Communism as being Human nature, not Capitalism. Even the great Charles Darwin noted:

“Those communities which included the greatest number of the most sympathetic members would flourish best and rear the greatest number of offspring.”

Human culture changes based on the Systems that manage society, on our material conditions. If we want a society that is built on and Organized around cooperation and mutual-aid, then that is the kind of socio-economic system that we need. If you want the “greed is good” mentality to die, then we need to end the socio-economic system that not only allows people to indulge their greed, but actively promotes greed and abuse of power. If you want a Government that doesn't abuse its power, then we need a Governmental system that doesn't allow individuals to have that power in the first place.

It is not that Communism has failed every time, no society has succeeded in establishing Communism in modern history, because what has failed continuously are the different attempts to achieve Communism. We must have the courage to keep trying, because Communism is the imperative. Humanity must progress into a Communist society if we are to survive, because Capitalism is destroying the planet and our species. Capitalism is pushing us into Nuclear war, degrading our population's health and survival, and drastically changing the planet's climate. Capitalism is an existential threat to all of us, and so we must have the courage to attempt new systems, to learn from the past mistakes of previous attempts to build Communism and build something new. We must have the courage of those first advocates of Democracy across America and Europe, the courage to begin the next great experiment in Democracy.

Perhaps the methods of past Communist attempts were not the right path, but if you aren't promoting some kind of solution to Capitalism and class, then you aren't working to improve society. And not a "fix" for them, because Capitalism isn't broken, Capitalism is inherently flawed and must be replaced, and class systems are inherently immoral and unnecessary. Whatever system we come up with to end both Capitalism and Class Society, that system will be Communist, because that is what Communism is: a classless society.

For generations we have professed our courage as a society, our bravery. We have manifested this in imperialist wars and conquest, all to "defend freedom and Democracy." But now we must cultivate a new kind of bravery if we want to move forward, a social-bravery. The bravery to trust that when no one is suffering in poverty, or drudgery, or imprisonment, that their happiness will invigorate society as a whole and uplift everyone. Such a society is not possible if we simply rely on what we've been calling "charity": the actions of individuals, simply hoping people will behave benevolently, and perpetuating a socio-economic system that allows people to enrich themselves through greed and exploitation. We must build a system for providing people's needs so that no one requires individual charity to begin with. That is a truly charitable society. And we will not have those systems so long as we tolerate and promote social cowardice. We must be socially brave in a way that we have always been militantly brave. Poverty, bigotry, exploitation, and the systems which create them, are every bit as insidious an enemy as the Axis Powers of World War Two. We must have a courage to attack them with equal fervor and solidarity. Until our society becomes one that promotes social-bravery, it will never be a free and Democratic society.

Small Arguments

These are arguments that I have encountered with depressing regularity. They have absolutely no material basis, and are almost always arguing against the strawman of Communism that Capitalist propaganda has created, not what Communism actually is. But they are thrown around so frequently that I feel compelled to mention them.

“You don’t understand economics. This is too expensive, you’ll run out of other people’s money.”

No, you don’t understand that existing economics are not universal laws of nature. They’re products of Capitalist property laws, culture, and monetary systems. They were deliberately created, and can be deliberately changed, and that is what Communists propose to do. You’re not arguing against Communism, you’re arguing against Social-Democracy, and some imagined system that still operates on the rules of Capitalism but tries to act like it’s Communist. The entire argument is based on a complete misunderstanding of what Communism, and even Capitalism, are. You’re arguing against a strawman. But please at least understand this: we Communists oppose the “welfare state” of Social-Democracy as well. Communism is a completely different socio-economic system. Communism doesn’t “take money from the rich and give it to the poor” like you’re imagining. Communism doesn’t have “rich and poor,” it doesn’t even have money in any traditional sense. Communism removes individual owners of the means of production, and instead makes the means of production Democratically owned and managed by the society itself. Meaning that the people distribute goods and needs directly to themselves, instead of being barred from them until they can pay for them with currency. This means that Communism doesn’t have any “welfare” systems, like a Social-Democracy. Instead, everyone’s needs are provided for inherently through the systems they participate in.

“So everyone is mutually poor then?”

What does “poor” mean? Is someone who has a house, never lacks food, has all the comforts of modern life, a car or at least access to good and safe free public transport, is this person poor? When such things are regarded as human rights, and freely available to all by giving the people direct power over the economic and governmental systems they need, then no one is poor. This eliminates the entire “rich” and “poor” dichotomy, instead making the whole society as wealthy as it makes itself. Because Communism is built on the understanding that none of us are “islands unto ourselves.” We all need and benefit from society as a whole, and as such the best way to make our own lives better, is to better society. When we have direct access to the entire fruits of society, and our lives are uplifted by it, then we can see immediately an

improvement in our lives as we improve society and everyone else's lives, which encourages everyone to engage in such activities.

Let's say you have potholes on your street. In our current society, you have to petition your city council, make an argument to them, make a big noise, until weeks, and maybe even months or years later, they finally get a resolution through all the bureaucracy to get out a work order and fix the potholes. But your misery doesn't end there, because it's not just your street that has potholes. After the cost of all the potholes being fixed comes in, the city council realizes that it needs to raise taxes to pay for it. But in a Communist Society, there is no City Council held above the people like this, you and your fellow citizens directly manage your community yourselves. You present your pothole problem to your fellow citizens directly, and come to an agreement to fix them. Those who have experience doing this work step forward to do it, as well as a few who want to learn. Then that work crew simply takes the equipment to fix the potholes and does it, because you all mutually and democratically own that equipment. Maybe the work crew fixes all the potholes in the community, or maybe they pass off the equipment to another work crew that wants to fix the potholes on their street or their neighborhood. And that's it, done. Because there are no taxes and there is no money as it exists under Capitalism. This entire process would take only a day. Which sounds more like a "poor" society? The one where the potholes don't get fixed for months and then charges you all more for the repair, or the one where your community fixes them immediately at no extra cost to anyone?

“Wage Labor is a voluntary exchange. So it's ethical”

There is nothing voluntary about being given the choice of selling your labor or being homeless and hungry. As I've already argued in the essay on slavery and wage labor: even the choice of who to work for isn't one that a worker actually has, but rather it is the Bourgeoisie who choose which supplicants they want to exploit. The poor worker has little choice but to take the first job they can get, and no choice but to simply accept the poverty wages, because it is still better than being homeless and hungry.

And on top of this the vast majority can't even simply choose to not engage in this system, because we can't be subsistence farmers since that takes a lot of land to begin with, which must be paid for with money, and we must continually pay taxes which must always exist in a Capitalist system. And we can't all be small-business owners with no employees, it's physically impossible to have 7 billion small businesses. Even cooperatives aren't a viable alternative, since they cannot compete with Capitalist business for the same reason that a Capitalist business can't compete with a business who's workforce is composed of slaves. Cooperatives and Capitalist businesses have completely and diametrically opposed goals. Cooperatives are about providing for people's needs and wants, without exploitation, in a sustainable manner. Capitalist business is the exact opposite of all that, and thus is able to exploit, expand, and out produce cooperatives, in every way.

“Communism is anti-religion.”

This is the most absurd claim of them all. It is based on some decidedly oppressive laws towards organized religion under several Leninist Governments. But as I pointed out before: those were the wrongs of those specific Governments, not inherent aspects of Communism. It was wrong for the United States to persecute native Americans and enslave Africans, but no one ever assumes these actions are inherent to Republican-Democracy. Communism is an ideology that is indifferent to religion beyond the basic idea of prohibiting anyone from forcing others to adhere to their religion. Largely the reason it is perceived as being militantly atheist is because of the writings of early Communists who denounced state religion. But that is the crux of it: religion at their time was a branch of the Capitalist State, and it was that kind of religion they were denouncing, something even most pro-Capitalists today would agree with.

This argument is most easily debunked by the mere existence of millions of religious Communists all over the world. An individual which comes to my mind is Herbert McCabe, who is accurately described as a “Marxist-Theologian” who famously wrote “The class struggle and Christian Love,” which argues for the very concept of Christian Marxism.

There are a myriad of other small arguments that are often made, but no more worth mentioning. The rest can be plainly seen as having no substance by anyone. But I am sure that I will spend the the remainder of my life arguing against the points I made here. Most will be simply re-hashed versions of the critiques I have already mentioned. That’s how these arguments go, and why this very book sounds rather repetitive at times; pro-capitalists are entrapped by illogical propaganda, the “trashcan of ideology” as Slavoj Žižek has described it. This “pure-ideology” creates a painful and fierce kind of cognitive dissonance when it’s challenged, making the person refuse to accept when their arguments are defeated, which causes them to simply repeat those arguments over and over again. I know this because I was them, I was an ardent advocate of Capitalism once. I know all these arguments because I made them, it wasn’t until I deployed to Afghanistan and was forced to see all the evils of Capitalism on full display in a way that I could not ignore it or challenge it. Rosa Luxemburg once said that “Those who do not move, do not notice their chains.” But some people, like I was, need their chains lifted in front of their face before they acknowledge the existence of them.

4

What Now?

What Can Be Done?

Where do we go from here? What can I do? These are what I constantly asked myself for a long time when I first realized the things I have discussed in this book. It's frustrating to realize that society has gone so wrong, and not have any cause actively working to right this great wrong. So that is what we need to do: build that group.

That begins by simply talking. Make Communism, and critiques of Capitalism, regular conversation again. Talk to everyone who will listen, and organize discussion groups. That is the only way to accomplish anything; dismantling Capitalism is a societal effort, so the first things we need to do is build networks to directly confront the forces and ideas of Capitalism. The seeds of such a movement are planted by holding open discussions.

Start by simply talking to friends, when you convince enough of them, hold formal discussion groups. Advertise them, and encourage anyone and everyone to join them. When these grow large enough they can branch out, other chapters can be started in other neighborhoods and cities. Eventually the scale will be large enough that they can be transformed into a network of confederated assemblies which can begin to work in their communities to make people's lives better, and eventually to directly confront the existing Capitalist Governments, syphoning political power from them, and eventually replacing them and taking control of the means of production.

But that is very long term. Right now you, and every other Communist, simply needs to build a network of support for each other, and to work constantly to raise the class consciousness of those around you. "Democracy dies in darkness" the liberals like to say. Throw this at them when they scoff at criticism of Capitalism. If they love discourse so much, to the point that they are willing to "hear out" fascists, then why do they shut down dialog when we attempt to talk about the immoral nature of Capitalism and Class-Society? Dialog must be open and constant on this, push every opportunity to point out the flaws of Capitalism and Class-Society, and constantly bring the discussion back to Democracy, because that is what Communism is about: Democracy finally realized.

But when you are talking to people, even other Communists, keep what I call "the Robin Hood Effect" in mind. I am not talking about the concept in economic and political circles of "taking from the rich and giving to the poor." What I am talking about is the effect of a past person being seen more favorably by people later on, and perhaps even taking on symbolism for ideas that the historical figure may have even been opposed to.

I call this "The Robin Hood Effect" because the actual historical figure called Robin Hood is perhaps the earliest and best documented figure for this phenomenon to occur around. You see, the actual Robin Hood was simply a common bandit, or perhaps several different

bandits. (Some historians believe that Robin Hood was a title given to the leader of a group of bandits, rather than a single person.) This person didn't care about the plight of the poor, and would rob and kill them as much as the wealthy, perhaps even more so due to the poor being easier targets. Attack the poor and the Feudal lord won't care. Attack the nobility and you're likely to face down an army that's come to kill you. And yet, despite this, only a few years after the disappearance of the real Robin Hood, we see romantic tales being told about the champion of the poor who "stole from the rich and gave to the poor."

It is that image of Robin Hood that has endured, not the real one. No one cares about how the real Robin Hood was horrible towards the poor, and they don't think anyone is a monster for idolizing Robin Hood. Because it's understood that no one idolizes Robin Hood the bandit that robbed and killed anyone. They idolize the image of Robin Hood the champion of the poor and the oppressed.

This phenomenon didn't Stop With Robin Hood, it even continues today with more contemporary figures. By far the most well known and controversial, is Stalin. Whether or not Stalin committed the atrocities he is accused of is no longer relevant, because those who look to him do not see that, nor support anyone doing such things. Indeed, they don't believe Stalin did them at all. For them, Stalin is that champion of the poor and the oppressed, an advocate of democracy and justice. People who look to Stalin for inspiration do not advocate for mass-murder, homophobic oppression, or suppression of criticism towards the Government. In fact they are, in the vast majority of cases, staunch opponents to all those things. Many of them are even LGTBQA!

In a person's life, their actions and beliefs are important. What living people an individual looks to for inspiration matters, because those people are still alive, they still lead groups and take actions. But what dead leaders a person looks to for inspiration doesn't matter at all. These historical figures can come to represent anything. All that matters is what inspiration an individual finds in that historical figure, what ideas the individual advocates as a result of their admiration for the historical figure. Don't recoil from someone because they admire an historical figure that you think was a monster, or allow the conversation to get caught up on what that figure did or didn't do. Instead, listen to the ideals and principles that the person advocates, because that's all that matters.

Spreading class consciousness is a slow and often agonizing process and it's likely that we will never see Communism realized within our lifetimes. But we must begin that process, we must plant these seeds. They will take many years to germinate, but no Communist ever promised that this would be a fast process. I stumbled upon a poem that spoke to me on this subject just the other day. It is by Josiah Gilbert and titled "Gradatim:"

“Heaven is not gained at a single bound;
 But we build the ladder by which we rise
 From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
 And we mount to its Summit round by round.

I count this thing to be grandly true,
 That a noble deed is a step toward God-
 To a purer air and a broader view.

We rise by that are 'neath our feet;
 By what we have mastered of good and gain;
 By the pride deposed and the passion slain,
 And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet.

We hope, we aspire, we resolve, we trust,
 When the morning calls us to life and light,
 But our hearts grow weary, and, ere the night,
 Our lives are trailing the sordid dust.

We hope, we resolve, we aspire, We pray,
 And we think that we mount the air on wings
 Beyond the recall of sensual things,
 While our feet still cling to the heavy clay.

Wings for the angels, but feet for men!
 We may borrow the wings to find the way-
 We may hope, and resolve, and aspire, and pray,
 But our feet must rise, or we fall again.

Only in dreams is a ladder thrown
 From the weary earth to the sapphire walls;
 But the dream departs, and the vision falls,
 And the sleeper wakes on his pillow of stone.

Heaven is not reached at a single bound:
 But we build the ladder by which we rise
 From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
 And we mount to its summit round by round.”

Rome wasn't built in a day, and Communism will take even longer. Because we are not simply trying to evolve the existing socio-economic system into another form, as Feudalism did to become Mercantilism, and then Capitalism. Instead we are proposing a revolution; we seek a complete change to something else. That takes patience, and determination. "Heaven will not be reached at a single bound, But we must build the ladder by which we rise."

That ladder to Communism is built by talking, by talking often, and by helping each other. "The propaganda of the deed" is powerful. If we can build Communist assemblies in every city that improve their Communities, as groups like the Black Panthers did, then we will have a power that the Capitalists never even thought to tap into: the power of Solidarity, of mutual aid, and of mutual love.

Capitalists maintain power through fear. Fear of arrest, fear of homelessness, fear of hunger and poverty. But fear is a weak motivator. Make a man afraid of you, and he will do what you say only as far as is necessary, beyond that his contempt will make him look for a way to defeat you. But work to make a man love you, and they will gladly throw themselves upon the gates of hell for you. We must cultivate that kind of love with each other and with our Communities.

This is how we build the ladder to Communism. With each word spoken to raise class consciousness, another rung is added. With each homeless person sheltered and fed, another rung is added. With each meeting held to teach about Communism, another rung is added. Slowly and gradually we will build our ladder, until one day the people will gladly raise the red banner above every rooftop, and we can finally greet each other as equals in a Democratic Society.

"Workers of the world, unite."

Further Reading

“The Manifesto of the Communist Party” - Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx

“Principles of Communism” - Friedrich Engels

“Capital” Volumes 1-3 - Karl Marx

“The State and Revolution” - V.I. Lenin

“The Conquest of Bread” - Peter Kropotkin

“Mutual Aid” - Peter Kropotkin

“Capital as Power” - Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler

“Urbanization Without Cities” - Murray Bookchin

“The Murray Bookchin Reader” - Murray Bookchin, edited by Janet Biehl