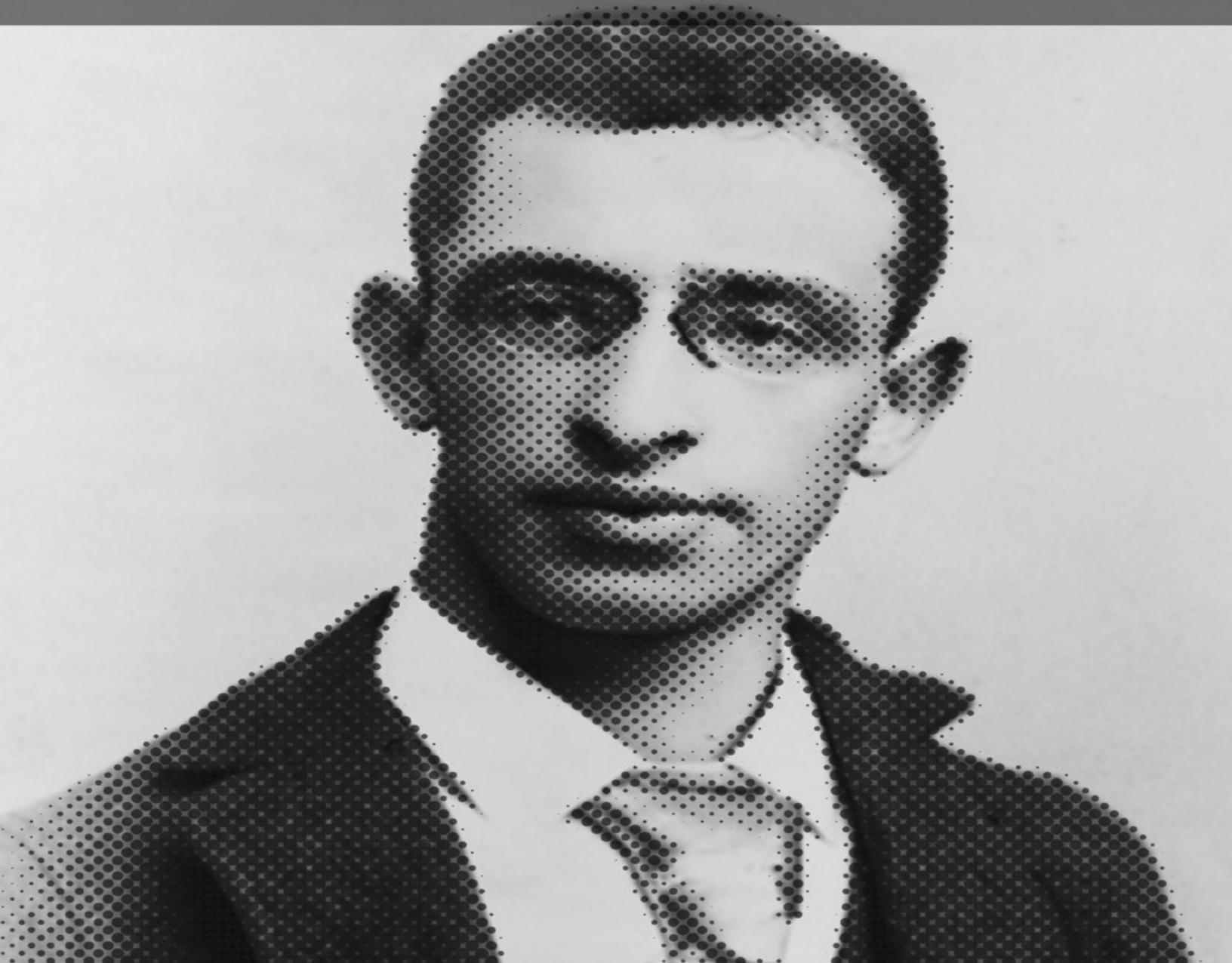


Alexander Berkman



*Now and After:
The ABC
of Communist
Anarchism*

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Introduction

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I want to tell you about Anarchism.

I want to tell you what Anarchism is, because I think it is well you should know it. Also because so little is known about it, and what is known is generally hearsay and mostly false.

I want to tell you about it, because I believe that Anarchism is the finest and biggest thing man has ever thought of; the only thing that can give you liberty and well-being, and bring peace and joy to the world.

I want to tell you about it in such plain and simple language that there will be no misunderstanding it. Big words and high sounding phrases serve only to confuse. Straight thinking means plain speaking.

But before I tell you what Anarchism is, I want to tell you what it *is not*.

That is necessary because so much falsehood has been spread about Anarchism. Even intelligent persons often have entirely wrong notions about it. Some people talk about Anarchism without knowing a thing about it. And some lie about Anarchism, because they don't want you to know the truth about it.

Anarchism has many enemies; they won't tell you the truth about it. Why Anarchism has enemies and who they are, you will see later, in the course of this story. Just now I can tell you that neither your political boss nor your employer, neither the capitalist nor the policeman will speak to you honestly about Anarchism. Most of them know

nothing about it, and all of them hate it. Their newspapers and publications - the capitalistic press- are also against it.

Even most Socialists and Bolsheviks misrepresent Anarchism. True, the majority of them don't know any better. But those who do know better also often lie about Anarchism and speak of it as 'disorder and chaos'. You can see for yourself how dishonest they are in this: the greatest teachers of Socialism - Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels - had taught that Anarchism would come from Socialism. They said that we must first have Socialism, but that after Socialism there will be Anarchism, and that it would be a freer and more beautiful condition of society to live in than Socialism. Yet the Socialists, who swear by Marx and Engels, insist on calling Anarchism 'chaos and disorder', which shows you how ignorant or dishonest they are.

The Bolsheviks do the same, although their greatest teacher, Lenin, had said that Anarchism would follow Bolshevism, and that then it will be better and freer to live.

Therefore I must tell you, first of all, what Anarchism is not.

It is not bombs, disorder, or chaos.: It is not robbery and murder.

It is not a war of each against all.

It is not a return to barbarism or to the wild state of man.

Anarchism is the very opposite of all that.

Anarchism means that you should be free; that no one should enslave you, boss you, rob you, or impose upon you.

It means that you should be free to do the things you want to do; and that you should not be compelled to do what you don't want to do.

It means that you should have a chance to choose the kind of a life you want to live, and live it without anybody interfering.

It means that the next fellow should have the same freedom as you, that every one should have the same rights and liberties.

It means that all men are brothers, and that they should live like brothers, in peace and harmony.

That is to say, that there should be no war, no violence used by one set of men against another, no monopoly and no poverty, no oppression, no taking advantage of your fellow-man.

In short, Anarchism means a condition or society where all men and women are free, and where all enjoy equally the benefits of an ordered and sensible life.

'Can that be?' you ask; 'and how?'

'Not before we all become angels,' your friend remarks.

Well, let us talk it over. Maybe I can show you that we can be decent and live as decent folks even without growing wings.

Chapter 1: What Do You Want Out Of Life?

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What is it that every one wants most in life? What do you want most?

After all, we are all the same under our skins. Whoever you be - man or woman, rich or poor, aristocrat or tramp, white, yellow, red or black, of whatever land, nationality, or religion - we are all alike in feeling cold and hunger, love and hate; we all fear disaster and disease, and try to keep away from harm and death.

What *you* most want out of life, what you fear most, that also is true, in the main, of your neighbor.

Learned men have written big books, many of them, on sociology, psychology, and many other 'ologies', to tell you what you want, but no two of those books ever agree. And yet I think that you know very well without them what you want.

They have studied and written and speculated so much about this, for them so difficult a question, that you, the individual, have become entirely lost in their philosophies. And they have at last come to the conclusion that you, my friend, don't count at all. What's important, they say, is not you, but 'the whole', all the people together. This 'whole' they call 'society', 'the commonwealth', or 'the State', and the wiseacres have actually decided that it makes no difference if you, the individual, are miserable so long as 'society' is all right. Somehow they forget to explain how

'society' or 'the whole' can be all right if the single members of it are wretched.

So they go on spinning their philosophic webs and producing thick volumes to find out where you really enter in the scheme of things called life, and what you really want.

But you yourself know very well what you want, and so does your neighbor.

You want to be well and healthy; you want to be free, to serve no master, to crawl and humiliate yourself before no man; you want to have well-being for yourself, your family, and those near and dear to you. And not to be harassed and worried by the fear of to-morrow.

You may feel sure that every one else wants the same. So the whole matter seems to stand this way:

You want health, liberty, and well-being. Every one is like yourself in this respect.

Therefore we all seek the same thing in life.

Then why should we not all seek it together, by joint effort, helping each other in it?

Why should we cheat and rob, kill and murder each other, if we all seek the same thing? Aren't you entitled to the things you want as well as the next man?

Or is it that we can secure our health, liberty, and well-being better by fighting and slaughtering each other?

Or because there is no other way?

Let us look into this.

Does it not stand to reason that if we all want the same thing in life, if we have the same aim, then our *interests* must also be the same? In that case we should live like

brothers, in peace and friendship; we should be good to each other, and help each other all we can.

But you know that it is not at all that way in life. You know that we do not live like brothers. You know that the world is full of strife and war, of misery, injustice, and wrong, of crime, poverty, and oppression.

Why is it that way then?

It is because, though we all have the same aim in life, our *interests are different*. It is this that makes all the trouble in the world.

Just think it over yourself.

Suppose you want to get a pair of shoes or a hat. You go into the store and you try to buy what you need as reasonably and cheaply as you can. That is your interest. But the store-keeper's interest is to sell it to you as dearly as he can, because then his *profit* will be greater. That is because everything in the life we live is built on making a profit, one way or another. We live in a *system of profit-making*.

Now, it is plain that if we have to make profits out of each other, then our interests cannot be the same. They must be different and often even opposed to each other.

In every country you will find people who live by making a profit out of others. Those who make the biggest profits are rich. Those who cannot make profits are poor. The only people who cannot make any profits are the workers. You can therefore understand that the interests of the workers cannot be the same as the interests of the other people. That is why you will find in every country several classes of people with entirely different interests.

Everywhere you will find:

(1) a comparatively small class of persons who make big profits and who are very rich, such as bankers, great manufacturers and land owners - people who have much capital and who are therefore called capitalists. These belong to *the capitalist class*;

(2) a class of more or less well-to-do people, consisting of business men and their agents, real estate men, speculators, and professional men, such as doctors, lawyers, inventors, and so on. This is the middle class or *the bourgeoisie*.

(3) great numbers of workingmen employed in various industries- in mills and mines, in factories and shops, in transport and on the land. This is the working class, also called *the proletariat*.

The bourgeoisie and the capitalists really belong to the same capitalistic class, because they have about the same interests, and therefore the people of the bourgeoisie also generally side with the capitalist class as against the working class.

You will find that the working class is always the poorest class, in every country. Maybe you yourself belong to the workers, to the proletariat. Then you know that your wages will never make you rich.

Why are the workers the poorest class? Surely they labor more than the other classes, and harder. Is it because the workers are not very important in the life of society? Perhaps we can even do without them?

Let us see. What do we need to live? We need food, clothing, and shelter; schools for our children; street cars

and trains for travel, and a thousand and one other things.

Can you look about you and point out a single thing that was made without labor? Why, the shoes you stand in, and the streets you walk on, are the result of labor. Without labor there would be nothing but the bare earth, and human life would be entirely impossible.

So it means that labor has created everything we have - all the wealth of the world. It is all the *product of labor* applied to the earth and its natural resources.

But if all the wealth is the product of labor, then why does it not belong to labor? That is, to those who have worked with their hands or with their heads to create it - the manual worker and the brain worker.

Everybody agrees that a person has a right to own the thing that he himself has made.

But *no one* person has made or can make anything all by himself. It takes many men, of different trades and professions, to create something. The carpenter, for instance, cannot make a simple chair or bench all by himself; not even if he should cut down a tree and prepare the lumber himself. He needs a saw and a hammer, nails and tools, which he cannot make himself. And even if he should make these himself, he would first have to have the raw materials - steel and iron - which other men would have to supply.

Or take another example - let us say a civil engineer. He could do nothing without paper and pencil and measuring tools, and these things other people have to make for him. Not to mention that first he has to learn his profession and spend many years in study, while others enable him to live

in the meantime. This applies to every human being in the world to-day.

You can see then that no person can by his own efforts alone make the things he needs to exist. In early times the primitive man who lived in a cave could hammer a hatchet out of stone or make himself a bow and arrow, and live by that. But those days are gone. To-day no man can live by his own work: he must be helped by the labor of others. Therefore all that we have, all wealth, is the product of the labor of many people, even of many generations. That is to say: *all labor and the products of labor are social*, made by society as a whole.

But if all the wealth we have is social, then it stands to reason that it should belong to society, to the people as a whole. How does it happen, then, that the wealth of the world is owned by some individuals and not by the people? Why does it not belong to those who have toiled to create it - the masses who work with hand or brain, the working class as a whole?

You know very well that it is the capitalistic class which owns the greatest part of the world's wealth. Must we therefore not conclude that the working people have lost the wealth they created, or that somehow it was taken away from them?

They did not lose it, for they never owned it. Then it must be that it was taken away from them.

This is beginning to look serious. Because if you say that the wealth they created has been taken away from the people who created it, then it means that it has been stolen from them, that they have been robbed, for surely no one

has ever willingly consented to have his wealth taken away from him.

It is a terrible charge, but it is true. The wealth the workers have created, as a class, has indeed been stolen from them. And they are being robbed in the same way every day of their lives, even at this very moment. That is why one of the greatest thinkers, the French philosopher Proudhon, said that the possessions of the rich are stolen property.

You can readily understand how important it is that every honest man should know about this. And you may be sure that if the workers knew about it, they would not stand for it.

Let us see then *how* they are robbed and *by whom*.

Chapter 2: The Wage System

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Did you ever stop to ask yourself this question: why were you born from *your* parents and not from some others?

You understand, of course, what I am driving at. I mean that *your consent was not asked*. You were simply born; you did not have a chance to select the place of your birth or to choose your parents. It was just chance.

So it happened that you were not born rich. Maybe your people are of the middle class; more likely, though, they belong to the workers, and so you are one of those millions, the masses, who have to work for a living.

The man who has money can put it into some business or industry. He invests it and lives on *the profits*. But you have no money. You have only your ability to work, your *labor power*.

There was a time when every workingman worked for himself. There were no factories then and no big industries. The laborer had his own tools and his own little workshop, and he even bought himself the raw materials he needed. He worked for himself, and he was called an artisan or craftsman.

Then came the factory and the large workshop. Little by little they crowded out the independent workman, the artisan, because he could not make things as cheaply as the factory - he could not compete with the big manufacturer. So the artisan had to give up his little workshop and go to the factory to work.

In the factories and large plants things are produced on a big scale. Such big-scale production is called *industrialism*. It has made the employers and manufacturers very rich, so that the lords of industry and commerce have accumulated much money, much capital. Therefore that system is called *capitalism*. We all live to-day in the capitalist system.

In the capitalist system the workman cannot work for himself, as in the old days. He cannot compete with the big manufacturers. So, if you are a workman, you must find an employer. You work for him; that is, you give him your labor for so and so many hours a day or week, and he pays you for it. You sell him your labor power and he pays you *wages*.

In the capitalist system the whole working class sells its labor power to the employing class. The workers build factories, make machinery and tools, and produce goods. The employers keep the factories, the machinery, tools and goods for themselves as *their profit*. The workers get only wages.

This arrangement is called the *wage system*.

Learned men have figured out that the worker receives as his wage only about *one-tenth* of what he produces. The other *nine-tenths* are divided among the landlord, the manufacturer, the railroad company, the wholesaler, the jobber, and other middlemen.

It means this:

Though the workers, as a class, have built the factories, a slice of their daily labor is taken from them for the privilege of *using* those factories. That's the landlord's profit.

Though the workers have made the tools and the machinery, another slice of their daily labor is taken from

them for the privilege of using those tools and machinery. That's the manufacturer's profit.

Though the workers built the railroads and are running them, another slice of their daily labor is taken from them for the transportation of the goods they make. That's the railroad's profit.

And so on, including the banker who lends the manufacturer other people's money, the wholesaler, the jobber, and other middlemen, all of whom get their slice of the worker's toil.

What is left then - one-tenth of the real worth of the worker's labor-is *his* share, his wage.

Can you guess now why the wise Proudhon said that *the possessions of the rich are stolen property*? Stolen from the producer, the worker.

It seems strange, doesn't it, that such a thing should be permitted?

Yes, indeed, it is very strange; and the strangest thing of all is that the whole world looks on and doesn't do a thing about it. Worse yet, the workers themselves don't do anything about it. Why, most of them think that everything is all right, and that the capitalist system is good.

It is because the workers don't see what is happening to them. They don't understand that they are being robbed. The rest of the world also understands very little about it, and when some honest man tries to tell them, they shout 'anarchist!' at him, and they shut him up or put him in prison.

Of course, the capitalists are very much satisfied with the capitalist system. Why shouldn't they be? They get rich by

it. So you can't expect *them* to say it's no good.

The middle classes are the helpers of the capitalists and they also live off the labor of the working class, so why should they object? Of course, here and there you will find some man or woman of the middle class stand up and speak the truth about the whole matter. But such persons are quickly silenced and cried down as "enemies of the people", as crazy disturbers and anarchists.

But you would think that the workers should be the first to object to the capitalist system, for it is *they* who are robbed and who suffer most from it.

Yes, so it should be. But it isn't so, which is very sad.

The workers know that the shoe pinches somewhere. They know that they toil hard all their lives and that they get just enough to exist on, and sometimes not even enough. They see that their employers can ride about in fine automobiles and live in the greatest luxury, with their wives decked out in expensive clothes and diamonds, while the worker's wife can hardly afford a new calico dress. So the workers seek to improve their condition by trying to get better wages. It is the same as if I woke up at night in my house and found that a burglar had collected all my things and is about to get away with them. Suppose that instead of stopping him, I should say to him: 'Please, Mr. Burglar, leave me at least one suit of clothes so I can have something to put on', and then thank him if he gives me back a tenth part of the things he has stolen from me.

But I am getting ahead of my story. We shall return to the worker and see how he tries to improve his condition and how little he succeeds. Just now I want to tell you why the

worker does not take the burglar by the neck and kick him out; that is, why he begs the capitalist for a little more bread or wages, and why he does not throw him off his back, altogether.

It is because the worker, like the rest of the world, has been made to believe that everything is all right and must remain as it is; and that if a few things are not quite as they should be, then it is because 'people are bad', and everything will right itself in the end, anyhow.

Just see if that is not true of yourself. At home, when you were a child, and when you asked so many questions, you were told that 'it is right so,' that 'it must be so,' that 'God made it so,' and that everything was all right.

And you believed your father and mother, as they had believed their fathers and mothers, and that is why you now think just as your grandfather did.

Later, in school, you were told the same things. You were taught that God had made the world and that all is well; that there must be rich and poor, and that you should respect the rich and be content with your lot. You were told that your country stands for justice, and that you must obey the law. The teacher, the priest, and the preacher all impressed it upon you that your life is ordained by God and that 'His will be done.' And when you saw a poor man dragged off to prison, they told you that he was bad because he had stolen something, and that it was a great crime.

But neither at home, nor in school, nor anywhere else were you ever told that it is a crime for the rich man to steal the product of the worker's labor, or that the capitalists are

rich because they have possessed themselves of the wealth which labor created.

No, you were never told that, nor did any one else ever hear it in school or church. How can you then expect the workers to know it?

On the contrary, your mind - when you were a child and later on, too - has been stuffed so full of false ideas that when you hear the plain truth you wonder if it is really possible.

Perhaps you can see now why the workers do not understand that the wealth they have created has been stolen from them and is being stolen every day.

'But the law,' you ask, 'the government -- does it permit such robbery? Is not theft forbidden by law?'

Chapter 3: Law and Government

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Yes, you are right: the law forbids theft.

If I should steal something from you, you can call a policeman and have me arrested. The law will punish the thief, and the government will return to you the stolen property, if possible, because the law forbids stealing. It says that no one has a right to take anything from you without your consent.

But your employer takes from you what you produce. The whole wealth produced by labor is taken by the capitalists and kept by them as their property.

The law says that your employer does not steal anything from you, because it is done with your consent. You have agreed to work for your boss for certain pay, he to have all that you produce. Because you consented to it, the law says that he does not steal anything from you. But did you really consent?

When the highwayman holds his gun to your head, you turn your valuables over to him. You 'consent' all right, but you do so because you cannot help yourself, because you are compelled by his gun.

Are you not compelled to work for an employer? Your need compels you, just as the highwayman's gun. You must live, and so must your wife and children. You can't work for yourself, under the capitalist industrial system you must work for an employer. The factories, machinery, and tools belong to the employing class, so you must hire yourself out to that class in order to work and live. Whatever you work

at, whoever your employer may be, it always comes to the same: you must work for him . You can't help yourself You are compelled .

In this way the whole working class is compelled to work for the capitalist class. In this manner the workers are compelled to give up all the wealth they produce. The employers keep that wealth as their profit, while the worker gets only a wage, just enough to live on, so he can go on producing more wealth for his employer. Is that not cheating, robbery?

The law says it is a 'free agreement'. Just as well might the highwayman say that you 'agreed' to give up your valuables. The only difference is that the highwayman's way is called stealing and robbery, and is forbidden by law. While the capitalist way is called business, industry, profit making, and is protected by law.

But whether it is done in the highwayman's way or in the capitalist way, you know that you are robbed.

The whole capitalist system rests on such robbery.

The whole system of law and government upholds and justifies this robbery.

That's the order of things called capitalism, and law and government are there to protect this order of things.

Do you wonder that the capitalist and employer, and all those who profit by this order of things, are strong for 'law and order'?

But where do you come in? What benefit have you from that kind of 'law and order'? Don't you see that this 'law and order' only robs you, fools you, and just enslaves you?

'Enslave me?' you wonder. 'Why, I am a free citizen!'

Are you free, really? Free to do what? To live as you please? To do what you please? Let's see. How do you live? What does your freedom amount to?

You depend on your employer for your wages or your salary, don't you? And your wages determine your way of living, don't they? The conditions of your life, even what you eat and drink, where you go and with whom you associate, - all of it depends on your wages.

No, you are not a free man. You are dependent on your employer and on your wages. You are really a wage slave.

The whole working class, under the capitalist system, is dependent on the capitalist class. The workers are wage slaves.

So, what becomes of your freedom? What can you do with it? Can you do more with it than your wages permit?

Can't you see that your wage - your salary or income - is all the freedom that you have? Your freedom, your liberty, don't go a step further than the wages you get.

The freedom that is given you on paper, that is written down in law books and constitutions, does not do you a bit of good. Such freedom only means that you have the right to do a certain thing. But it doesn't mean that you can do it. To be able to do it, you must have the chance, the opportunity. You have a right to eat three fine meals a day, but if you haven't the means, the opportunity to get those meals, then what good is that right to you?

So freedom really means opportunity to satisfy your needs and wants. If your freedom does not give you that opportunity, than it does you no good. Real freedom means opportunity and well being. If it does not mean that, it

means nothing. You see, then, that the whole situation comes to this: Capitalism robs you and makes a wage slave of you. The law upholds and protects that robbery.

The government fools you into believing that you are independent and free. In this way you are fooled and duped every day of your life. But how does it happen that you didn't think of it before? How is it that most other people don't see it, either?

It is because you and every one else are lied to about this all the time, from your earliest childhood. You are told to be honest, while you are being robbed all your life.

You are commanded to respect the law, while the law protects the capitalist who is robbing you.

You are taught that killing is wrong, while the government hangs and electrocutes people and slaughters them in war.

You are told to obey the law and government, though law and government stand for robbery and murder.

Thus all through life you are lied to, fooled, and deceived, so that it will be easier to make profits out of you, to exploit you.

Because it is not only the employer and the capitalist who make profits out of you. The government, the church, tend the school - they all live on your labor. You support them all. That is why all of them teach you to be content with your lot and behave yourself. 'Is it really true that I support them all?' you ask in amazement.

Let us see. They eat and drink and are clothed, not to speak of the luxuries they enjoy. Do they make the things they use and consume, do they do the planting and sowing

and building and so on? 'But they pay for those things,' your friend objects.

Yes, they pay. Suppose a fellow stole fifty dollars from you and then went and bought with it a suit of clothes for himself. Is that suit by right his? Didn't he pay for it? Well, just so the people who don't produce anything or do no useful work pay for things. Their money is the profits they or their parents before them squeezed out of you, out of the workers. 'Then it is not my boss who supports me, but I him?'

Of course. He gives you a job; that is, permission to work in the factory or mill which was not built by him but by other workers like yourself. And for that permission you help to support him for the rest of your life or as long as you work for him. You support him so generously that he can afford a mansion in the city and a home in the country, even several of them, and servants to attend to his wants and those of his family, and for the entertainment of his friends, and for horse races and for boat races, and for a hundred other things. But it is not only to him that you are so generous. Out of your labor, by direct and indirect taxation, are supported the entire government, local, state, and national, the schools and the churches, and all the other institutions whose business it is to protect profits and keep you fooled. You and your fellow workers, labor as a whole, support them all. Do you wonder that they all tell you that everything is all right and that you should be good and keep quiet?

It is good for them that you should keep quiet, because they could not keep on duping and robbing you once you open your eyes and see what's happening to you.

That's why they are all strong for this capitalist system, for 'law and order'. But is that system good for you? Do you think it right and just? If not, then why do you put up with it? Why do you support it? 'What can I do?' you say; 'I'm only one.'

Are you really only one? Are you not rather one out of many thousands, out of millions, all of them exploited and enslaved the same as you are? Only they don't know it. If they knew it, they wouldn't stand for it. That's sure. So the thing is to make them know it.

Every workingman in your city, every toiler in your country, in every country, in the whole world, is exploited and enslaved the same as you are.

And not only the workingmen. The farmers are duped and robbed in the same manner.

Just like the workingmen, the farmer is dependent on the capitalist class. He toils hard all his life, but most of his labor goes to the trusts and monopolies of the land which by right is no more theirs than the moon is.

The farmer produces the food of the world. He feeds all of us. But before he can get his goods to us, he is made to pay tribute to the class that lives by the work of others, the profit-making, capitalist class. The farmer is mulcted out of the greater part of his product just as the worker is. He is mulcted by the land owner and by the mortgage holder; by the steel trust and the railroad. The banker, the commission merchant, the retailer, and a score of other middlemen squeeze their profits out of the farmer before he is allowed to get his food to you.

Law and government permit and help this robbery by ruling that the land, which no man created, belongs to the landlord; the railroads, which the workers built, belong to the railroad magnates; the warehouses, grain elevators, and storehouses, erected by the workers, belong to the capitalists; all those monopolists and capitalists have a right to get profits from the farmer for using the railroads and other facilities before he can get his food to you.

You can see then, how the farmer is robbed by big capital and business, and how the law helps in that robbery, just as with the workingman.

But it is not only the worker and the farmer who are exploited and forced to give up the greater part of their product to the capitalists, to those who have monopolized the land, the railroads, the factories, the machinery, and all natural resources. The entire country, the whole world is made to pay tribute to the kings of finance and industry.

The small business man depends on the wholesaler; the wholesaler on the manufacturer; the manufacturer on the trust magnates of his industry; and all of them on the money lords and banks for their credit. The big bankers and financiers can put any man out of business by just withdrawing their credit from him. They do so whenever they want to squeeze any one out of business. The business man is entirely at their mercy. If he does not play the game as they want it, to suit their interests, then they simply drive him out of the game.

Thus the whole of mankind is dependent upon and enslaved by just a handful of men who have monopolized almost the entire wealth of the world, but who have

themselves never created anything. 'But those men work hard,' you say.

Well, some of them don't work at all. Some of them are just idlers, whose business is managed by others. Some of them do work. But what kind of work do they do? Do they produce anything, as the worker and the farmer do? No, they produce nothing, though they may work. They work to mulct people, to get profits out of them. Does their work benefit you? The highwayman also works hard and takes great risks to boot. His 'work', like the capitalist's, gives employment to lawyers, jailers, and a host of other retainers, all of whom your toil supports.

It seems indeed ridiculous that the whole world should slave for the benefit of a handful of monopolists, and that all should have to depend upon them for their right and opportunity to live. But the fact is just that. And it is the more ridiculous when you consider that the workers and farmers, who alone create all wealth, should be the most dependent and the poorest of all the other classes in society.

It is really monstrous, and it is very sad. Surely your common sense must tell you that such a situation is nothing short of madness. If the great masses of people, the millions throughout the world, could see how they are fooled, exploited and enslaved, as you see it now, would they stand for such goings on? Surely they would not!

The capitalists know they wouldn't. That is why they need the government to legalize their methods of robbery, to protect the capitalist system.

And that is why the government needs laws, police and soldiers, courts and prisons to protect capitalism.

But who are the police and the soldiers who protect the capitalists against you, against the people?

If they were capitalists themselves, then it would stand to reason why they want to protect the wealth they have stolen, and why they try to keep up, even by force, the system that gives them the privilege of robbing the people.

But the police and the soldiers, the defenders of 'law and order', are not of the capitalist class. They are men from the ranks of the people, poor men who for pay protect the very system that keeps them poor. It is unbelievable, is it not? Yet it is true. It just comes down to this: some of the slaves protect their masters in keeping them and the rest of the people in slavery. In the same way Great Britain, for instance, keeps the Hindoos in India in subjection by a police force of the natives, of the Hindoos themselves. Or as Belgium does with the black men in the Congo. Or as any government does with a subjugated people. It is the same system. Here is what it amounts to: Capitalism robs and exploits the whole of the people; the laws legalize and uphold this capitalist robbery; the government uses one part of the people to aid and protect the capitalists in robbing the whole of the people. The entire thing is kept up by educating the people to believe that capitalism is right, that the law is just, and that the government must be obeyed. Do you see through this game now?

Chapter 4: How the System Works

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But take a closer look at it and see how the system 'works'.

Consider how life and its real meaning have become turned upside down and topsy-turvy. See how your own existence is poisoned and made miserable by the crazy arrangement.

Wherein is the purpose of your life, where the joy of it?

The earth is rich and beautiful, the bright sunshine should gladden your heart. Man's genius and labor have conquered the forces of nature and harnessed the lightning and the air to the service of humanity. Science and invention, human industry and toil have produced untold wealth. We've bridged the shoreless seas, the steam engine has annihilated distance, the electric spark and gasoline motor have unfettered man from the earth and chained even the atmosphere to do his bidding. We have triumphed over space, and the farthest corners of the globe have been brought close together. The human voice now circles the hemispheres, and through the azure there dart-fleet messengers, carrying man's greeting to all the peoples of the world.

Yet the people groan under heavy burdens, and there is no joy in their hearts. Their lives are full of misery, their souls cold with want and need. Poverty and crime fill every land; thousands are a prey to disease and insanity, war slaughters millions and brings to the living tyranny and oppression.