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Why I am an Anarchist

N. Petrov

October 1917

I am an anarchist because contemporary society is divided into two opposing classes: the impoverished and dispossessed workers and peasants who have created with their own hands and their own enormous toil all the riches of this earth; and the rich men, kings and presidents who have confiscated all these riches for themselves. Towards these parasitic capitalists and ruling kings and presidents there rose in me a feeling of outrage, indignation, and loathing, while at the same time I felt sorrow and compassion for the labouring proletariat who have been eternal slaves in the vice-like grip of the world wide bourgeoisie.

I am an anarchist because I scorn and detest all authority, since all authority is founded on injustice, exploitation and compulsion over the human personality. Authority dehumanises the individual and makes him a slave.

I am an opponent of private property when it is held by individual capitalist parasites, for private property is theft.

I am an anarchist because I subject to unstinting criticism and censure bourgeoisie morality as well as false and distorted bourgeoisie and religion, which shroud the human personality in darkness and prevent independent development.

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I am an anarchist because I believe in the truth of the anarchist ideal, which seeks to liberate mankind from the authority of capitalism and religion.

I am an anarchist because I believe only in the creative powers and independence of a united proletariat and not the leaders of political parties of various kinds.

I am an anarchist because I believe that the present struggle between the classes will end only when the toiling masses, organised as a class, gain their true interests and conquer, by means of a violent social revolution, all the riches of the earth. Having accomplished such an overthrow and having abolished all institutions of government and authority, the oppressed class must proclaim a society of free producers which will endeavour to satisfy the needs of each individual, who must in turn give society his/her labour and his/her concern for the welfare of mankind.

I am not deluded by the loud and vulgar “socialist” phase of “dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry”. Dictatorship is a synonym for authority, and authority is something alien to the masses. Authority always and everywhere corrupts the rulers, who play the role of flies on the horns of an ox in a pasture, poisonous flies which from time to time bite the ox and contaminate its blood, draining its energy and killing its independent initiative.

I firmly believe that the authority will disappear with the disappearance of capitalism. The popular masses themselves will conduct their affairs on equal and communal lines in free communities.

I am an anarchist because I strive by my own personal initiative to impress upon the masses the idea of anarchist communism. I interpret communism in the full sense of the word, for I shall find my own happiness in the common happiness of free and autonomous men and women like myself.