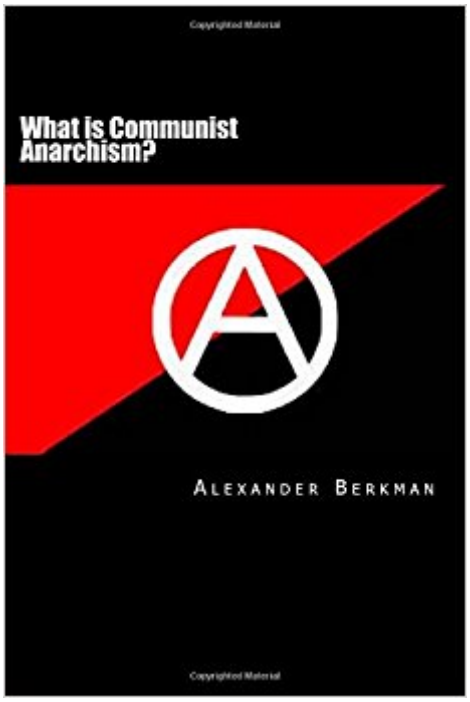
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What Is Communist Anarchism?: An ABC Of Anarchism



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Synopsis

In a clear yet thorough way Berkman assesses what went wrong with the Russian Revolution, while offering a compelling argument for a Communist Anarchist revolution. This is one of the seminal texts in anarchist thought.

Book Information

Paperback: 204 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (March 3, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1508705291

ISBN-13: 978-1508705291

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #290,240 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #74 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Anarchism

Customer Reviews

Alexander Berkman was a leading writer and participant in the 20th century Anarchist movement. The young, idealistic Berkman practiced "propaganda by deed" attempting to assassinate Henry Clay Frick during the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892. While imprisoned, he wrote the classic tale of prison life Prison Memoirs of and Anarchist. After his release, Berkman edited Emma Goldman’s Mother Earth and his own paper The Blast!. Deported from New York City to his native Russia in 1919, were he saw first hand the failure of the Bolshevik revolution and dedicated himself to writing the classic primer on Anarchism, What is Anarchism?. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This is a great book for someone wanting to introduce themselves to Anarchism/Anarcho-Communism. Berkman communicates ideas without making extensive use of jargon. He immediately clarifies or defines anything that the reader may not already understand. Everything Berkman says rings so true - from wage-slavery, origins of crime, patriotism and war, and so on and so forth. Berkman exposes the corruption, greed, and idiocy that exist in society.

Emma Goldman records in her autobiography that Berkman found *What is Anarchism* a difficult

book to write. He wanted to write a book that would explain anarchism to the average American. Given that the average American misunderstood anarchism to be about throwing bombs, Berkman had to begin on a basic introductory level.He pulled it off masterfully. Berkman takes a commonsense and conversational tone throughout the book, and he covers considerable ground. He explains to readers how the capitalism is basically a system of wage slavery and he discusses the other great social harms it produces. He differentiates left anarchism from western European socialism (a system of reformist capitalism) and from Marxist socialism. In fact, Berkman often discusses the Bolsheviks in the USSR, who imposed an oppressive system of, effectively, state-capitalism that he witnessed first hand. Other topics include trade unions, war, religion, violence, revolution and others. Berkman is particularly effective in discussing how an anarchist revolution would not be one given to wanton destruction, that it would try to preserve as much life and infrastructure as possible. And he sketches how an anarchist society would operate.Those who are completely unfamiliar with anarchism will find this book worthwhile. Anarchists will also find this book helpful because Berkman shows how to explain anarchism on an intuitive level.

fast delivery,excellent condition,completely satisfied! veni, vidi,vici? peccavi(i have Scinde). remember these famous quotations?do you think that julius caesar’s succinct report would have been refused because it was too short? after all, is not brevity the soul of wit?

Howard Zinn, years ago, needed a primer to teach his students about anarchism. He chose this one, importing copies from Britain. He praised its "subtle" treatment of the role violence may or may not play, and Alexander Berkman’s pamphlet, written in 1927, addresses workers in America in a clear fashion. Its conversational tone and matter-of-fact rhetoric does not reveal his own experience, as one who witnessed the aftermath of the Soviet Revolution (for he and Emma Goldman were exiled to the USSR in 1919), but it strives to inculcate the reader with a no-nonsense understanding of anarchism, bent on liberty, as allied with "free communism," aiming at equality of access to resources and property. The result gains this book an alternate title of "What is Anarchist Communism?" or the preface of "Now and After: What Is Anarchism," as well as the "ABC of Anarchism" over the years.Regardless of what you call it, Berkman’s summation progresses logically. The first chapters tackle the desires of the common people he addresses to shake free their dependence on capitalism and wage slavery. He raises the flaws of law, government, the system we labor under now as then, lack of work, war, church and school as indoctrinating us to accept the powers that be, the need for justice, the shortcomings of the Socialist parties who call for

reform within the system rather than its replacement, the similar drawbacks of unions (unless the IWW), and the pros and cons of socialism.The next section takes us to the USSR. Berkman in five chapters narrates the good and bad of the Bolshevik rise. He critiques it for using the anarchist goals to manipulate the beliefs of the Russians, and he condemns it as the Party cracked down on dissidents, and claimed to act on behalf of the people. His look at the dictatorship, by the end of the 1920s, is certainly prescient, and already, he fears the coming of a greater war, a decade before it transpired. While this subject might have benefited from the first-person perspective his partner Emma Goldman provides in her works, Berkman prefers to let the theory talk, and he steps away from self-aggrandizement, staying transparent.The final section returns to the vexed debate over violence. He admits that it may play a role, for the anarchist may feel more deeply the injustice he or she fights against. He disagrees with other anarchists, the individualists and the mutualists, but this chapter is too brief to convince those from those positions, and Berkman includes this material almost as an aside. He focuses on the communist version, which avoids crediting a worker for what he or she produces in the form of wages or even barter. He passes over the latter as insufficient rapidly, and this alternative needed more attention in his counter-argument. Likewise, he glosses over the relevant question of how opposition to anarchism will fare in his future, and he reasons that gradually it will be accepted as preferable, for how can the anarchists, logically, resist the bombs and armies of capitalists? The only solution? Change the ideas.That is, get people to think differently. A political revolution alone as in the Soviet Union will fail. Unless people take in the liberty and equality inherent in anarchism as achievable on a small level and then a larger one, adopting it into a social revolution, it will not succeed. He compares this evolution to a tea pot, on the boil. It needs the fire underneath to warm up. Similarly, the fire comes from the people, who unite to allow both their individual talents to take root and their collective organization to build the new structures in the shell of the old. Idealistic, sure, and this can be a continued shortcoming of such utopian ideals. But readers willing to give Berkman a chance will find much in this thoughtful, accessible overview to open up their actions to left-libertarian possibilities.

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