A SHORT ANTICAPITALIST MANIFESTO

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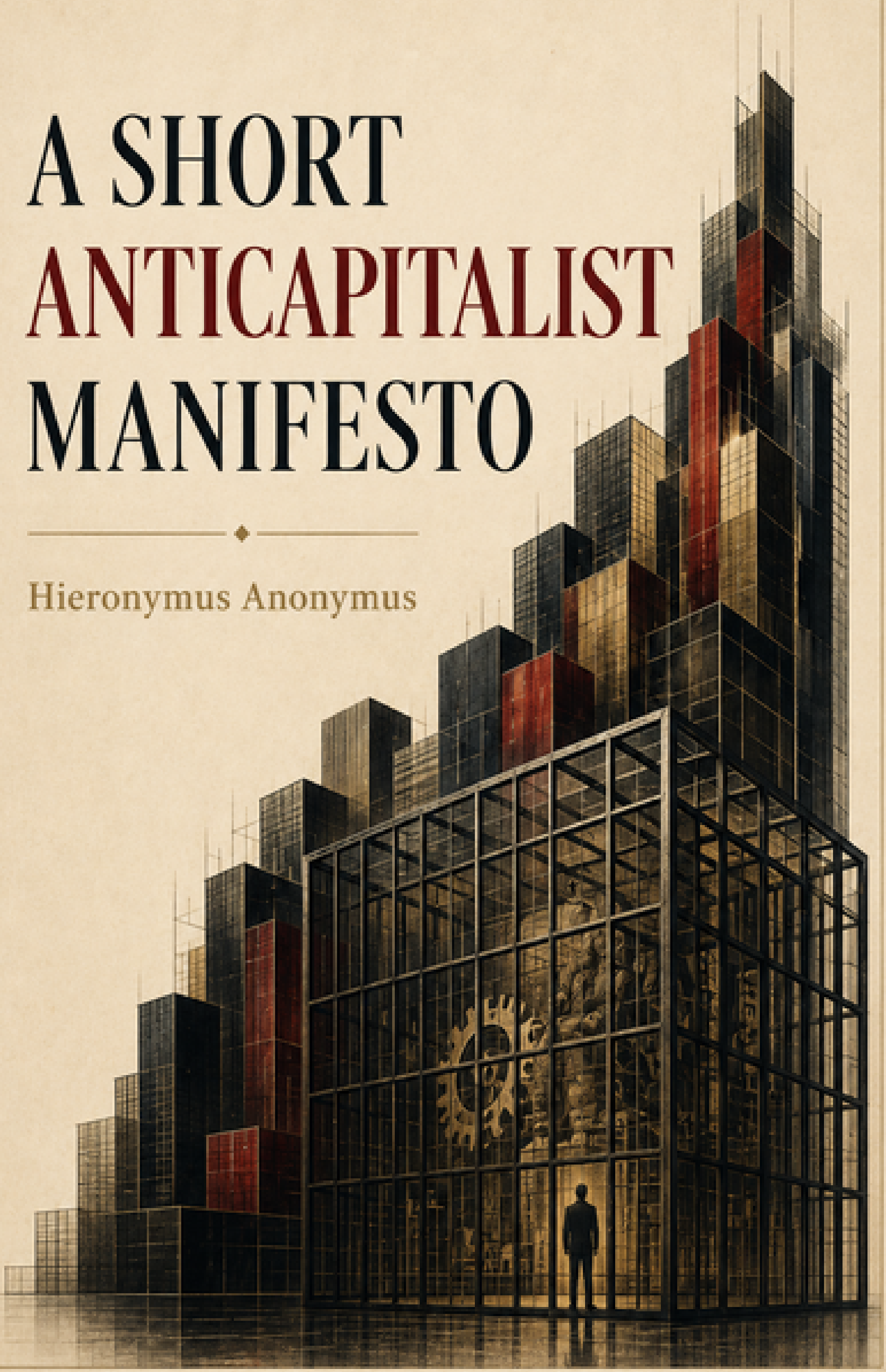

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CHAPTER 1

Capitalism Is Not Simply the Market

One can be anticapitalist and buy bread. One can criticize capitalism without wanting to abolish money, trade, individual initiative, or the possibility of starting a business. This clarification may seem elementary, but it is decisive. A large part of the debate about capitalism begins with a confusion: the market, exchange, property, business, and capitalism are treated as synonyms. As a result, any criticism of capitalism appears to target the entire set of mechanisms through which human beings produce, exchange, own, and organize their activity. Anticapitalism then becomes easy to caricature: it supposedly seeks to eliminate shops, ban exchange, collectivize personal belongings, and hand every economic decision over to a central administration.

This manifesto begins from a different definition. Capitalism is an economic and social order in which a decisive share of the means of production is controlled as capital - that is, as wealth committed to a process in which its reproduction and expansion constitute a structuring purpose. The existence of markets is therefore not enough for capitalism to exist. Productive property, wage labor, investment, profit, competition, and accumulation must also be articulated in a sufficiently dominant way to shape the organization of production and distribute a significant share of economic power.

The problem is not that exchange exists. The problem begins when the accumulation of capital acquires the power to organize, over the long term, the conditions of exchange, work, and production.

A Market Is Not Yet Capitalism

Markets have existed in many societies that were not capitalist in the modern sense. Peasants, craftspeople, merchants, or towns could exchange goods, use money, extend credit, and seek commercial advantage without society as a whole being organized around the private accumulation of productive capital. The existence of a price therefore does not yet tell us who owns the workshop, the land, the machine, or the platform; who decides how they are used; who must sell their labor power; who receives the surplus; or according to what logic that surplus will be reinvested.

A market refers first of all to a mechanism of coordination through exchange. Capitalism refers to a broader structure of property, power, and economic reproduction. The two are often combined, but they are not the same thing. It is even possible to imagine markets composed mainly of self-employed workers, cooperatives, small-scale use-based property, or public enterprises. Conversely, a highly capitalist economy may contain vast internal organizations that do not themselves operate as markets: within a large corporation, a considerable share of resources is allocated through decisions, budgets, procedures, and hierarchies.

This distinction has an important political consequence. If capitalism is identified with the market, every alternative appears forced to choose between two blocs: the market or planning, private enterprise or the state, freedom or bureaucracy. This false choice closes the debate before it has even begun. A society can combine markets, public services, cooperatives, commons, small private businesses, public monopolies in certain sectors, binding ecological rules, and different forms of collective ownership. The real question is not: market or no market? It is: which mechanisms should govern which domains, with what rights, what limits, and what countervailing powers?

Owning a Thing Is Not the Same as Owning the Power It Gives

The second confusion concerns property. Criticizing capitalist property does not necessarily mean challenging the right to have a home, clothes, tools, a car, a computer, savings, or objects to which one is attached. We must distinguish property for use from property that confers lasting power over the activity of others and over essential productive resources.

A guitar I use does not have the same social function as a portfolio of thousands of rental homes. A workshop in which I work does not have the same function as a financial stake entitling its owner to a share of the profits of a company where others work. A savings account does not have the same reach as a fund capable of acquiring companies, imposing restructurings, and moving billions from one sector to another. In every case, the law speaks of property; but the practical consequence is not the same.

The anticapitalist question therefore does not primarily concern the fact that a person can say, "this is mine." It concerns the point at which property becomes a title to economic command: the right to decide how a productive asset is used, the right to exclude others from it, the right to draw income from it, the right to sell or shut down the activity, the right to determine a strategy that will affect workers, residents, or a territory. The more this property is concentrated, the more it concentrates decision-making capacity along with it.

Not all property is domination. But some forms of property distribute power over the lives of others, and that power must be politically questioned.

Capital Is Not Simply Money

Money becomes capital when it is committed to a process intended to return in an enlarged form or to maintain a productive economic position. Buying a meal is not accumulating capital. Buying a machine to produce goods for sale, financing a company in exchange for an expected return, acquiring a building as an income-producing asset, or investing in infrastructure in order to derive future revenue streams from it: these are uses in which wealth becomes capital.

Capital has a particular feature: it is both a resource and a relation of power. It makes it possible to buy means of production, finance time, wait for a future return, absorb certain losses, acquire competitors, relocate an activity, and choose between several projects. Whoever has capital therefore has a capacity for action that someone who depends solely on their next paycheck does not possess.

This asymmetry does not mean that every holder of capital is personally malicious. It means that a system distributes different possibilities according to the position one occupies. A small business owner may be under pressure from her bank, suppliers, and customers. A highly skilled employee may have strong bargaining power. Concrete positions vary. But this diversity does not erase the general structure: control over productive assets opens rights of decision that do not follow simply from working in the activity concerned.

Wage Labor: Legal Freedom, Material Dependence

Modern wage labor contains a real historical achievement. The employee is not legally the property of the employer. In principle, employees can leave their jobs, negotiate a contract, change companies, and freely dispose of their wages. Compared with serfdom, slavery, or many traditional forms of domestic dependence, this status represents a major transformation. A serious anticapitalism must not erase that break.

But legal freedom is not enough to describe the material relationship. For most people, access to housing, food, energy, and a large part of social life depends on a regular income. Someone who does not own sufficient resources must therefore sell their capacity to work to an organization that controls the means of production. They may be able to choose among several employers when the labor market allows it, but they cannot always choose not to be employed.

This is where structural criticism differs from a moral accusation against a particular boss. The problem is not necessarily that the employer consciously seeks to dominate. The problem is that one party owns or controls the productive organization while the other depends on access to that organization in order to obtain an income. Their contract may be legal and voluntary while resting on very unequal capacities to refuse.

The freedom of a contract also depends on the alternatives available. Refusing a job when one has savings, stable housing, social protections, and rare skills does not carry the same cost as refusing when one is at immediate risk of being unable to pay the rent. Two identical signatures can therefore conceal very different bargaining powers.

Profit Is Not Just an Individual Vice

A superficial critique of capitalism often imagines profit as proof of personal greed. That misses the essential point. In a competitive capitalist economy, profit performs several functions: it compensates for certain risks, enables investment, provides a reserve against losses, attracts capital, and sometimes indicates that an activity is meeting solvent demand. It can also become income for owners. Profit is therefore neither mysterious nor necessarily scandalous in itself.

The problem arises when it becomes the dominant criterion for selecting activities. An indispensable but barely profitable activity may lack resources; a highly profitable activity may expand even when its social or ecological effects are questionable; a company may be driven to reduce human or environmental costs in order to protect its margin; a useful invention may remain inaccessible if its business model requires a high rate of return.

The market does not first ask: what do we collectively need most? It asks: for what is there solvent demand, at what price, at what cost, and with what return? These are useful questions, but they do not encompass all the values of a society. A very poor person may have an immense need but little solvent demand. A wealthy customer base may constitute a profitable market for a secondary need. Profit measures an economic relationship; it does not measure necessity, justice, or human importance.

Profit can be information. It becomes a political problem when it is treated as a general measure of social value.

Competition Turns Preferences into Constraints

Now suppose a business leader is sincerely concerned with working conditions, the environment, and the quality of the products. In theory, nothing prevents that person from giving up part of the margin. But if the company permanently bears costs that competitors externalize, invests less in innovation, or sells at a higher price without access to a market able to pay that premium, it may lose customers, capital, or its capacity to invest. Moral preferences then encounter a structural constraint.

This observation does not prove that every company is condemned to behave badly. It only shows why explaining capitalism through the psychology of capitalists is insufficient. Actors are caught within rules of the game. A company can choose certain practices, but it must also remain viable. Markets can sometimes reward social or ecological practices when consumers value them, but that correction itself depends on purchasing power, the information available, competition, and public rules.

Competition therefore produces a paradoxical mechanism. It can limit certain abuses by preventing a producer from setting prices arbitrarily. It can stimulate innovation. But it can also make collectively rational forms of conduct that almost no one would want in isolation: speeding up work rhythms, cutting costs, exploiting a resource more quickly, or investing in advertising because a competitor will do the same.

This is why certain questions cannot be left to individual virtue alone. When we want all producers to respect a common limit - working time, safety, pollution, labor rights, minimum quality - we transform an individual moral preference into a collective rule. We then remove that dimension from the field of competition. A company no longer has to choose between complying with a costly standard and surviving against those who do not: the standard changes the common conditions of the game.

From the Firm to Accumulation

A business is not necessarily capitalist in all its forms. A self-employed worker may own their means of work. A cooperative may belong to its workers. An association may employ staff without having the enrichment of investors as its purpose. A public enterprise may sell goods on a market. What interests us here is the particular combination in which assets are owned as capital and their control entitles their owners to a return, to accumulation, and to influence over productive decisions.

Accumulation gradually changes the scale of the problem. Profit is no longer merely consumed; it can be reinvested. Additional capital makes it possible to acquire more assets, finance technologies, endure periods of loss, absorb competitors, and further increase the capacity to accumulate. This movement is neither automatic nor infinite: companies fail, fortunes disappear, innovations displace established positions. But a real cumulative dynamic exists: owning assets can make it easier to acquire new assets.

The political question then becomes one of concentration. How far is a society willing to allow a right that is initially economic - to own and invest - gradually to become a power to decide how work is organized, how territories are used, which technologies are developed, what information is distributed, or how infrastructures on which millions of people depend are managed? Beyond a certain point, the problem is no longer only inequality of consumption. It is inequality of power.

Why This Distinction Changes Anticapitalism

If capitalism were simply the market, moving beyond it would mean abolishing markets. If capitalism were simply property, moving beyond it would mean abolishing property. If capitalism were simply profit, moving beyond it would mean banning every surplus. If capitalism were simply the firm, moving beyond it would mean directly administering all production. None of these conclusions is necessary.

A more precise critique allows for a more demanding ambition: distinguishing useful mechanisms from the relations of power they can carry. Prices can provide information without becoming the only measure of value. Individual initiative can exist without unlimited private accumulation. Firms can exist without their workers being excluded from every decision. Property for use can be protected while the concentration of productive property is limited. Some markets can remain while other domains are organized as public services or commons.

This also shifts the moral question. The issue is no longer to search for a class of intrinsically bad people. An owner can be generous; an employee can exploit someone weaker than themselves; a public administration can humiliate; a cooperative can reproduce hierarchies. Structure never relieves individuals of responsibility, but individual virtue does not replace the quality of institutions either.

Anticapitalism does not need to believe that capitalists are bad people. It only needs to ask why possession of capital should confer such considerable power over production and over those who take part in it.

The Political Knot

We can now formulate the knot that will guide the rest of this manifesto. A modern society must allow initiative, experimentation, coordination, investment, and a certain freedom of exchange. It must also prevent the material conditions of that freedom from becoming the means through which a few actors acquire lasting power over others.

The question, then, is not to choose abstractly between freedom and equality. It is to understand which forms of property, market, and enterprise make certain freedoms possible, which destroy others, and how decision-making capacities can be distributed so that freedom is not merely the formal right to enter into contracts in a world where the ability to refuse is radically unequal.

The next chapter will build on this distinction to examine capital's own movement: why the search for returns, competition, and reinvestment tend to turn accumulation into a social constraint, even when no individual actor has decided that society as a whole must always produce more.

CHAPTER 2

When Accumulation Becomes a Social Constraint

What We Mean by Accumulation

Capital does not merely exist in the form of dormant wealth. It becomes capital in the strong economic sense when it is committed to a process aimed at reproducing itself: a sum is invested, transformed into means of production, wages, equipment, goods, or services, and then returns in an enlarged form, or at a level of profitability sufficient to allow the cycle to continue. Accumulation refers to this movement whereby part of the surplus obtained is not merely consumed but reinvested in order to produce again.

This dynamic is not an anomaly external to capitalism. It is one of its driving forces. A company that makes a profit may distribute part of it, retain another part, modernize its productive equipment, enter a new market, improve its logistics, buy a competitor, finance research, or simply build up reserves. In all these cases, capital seeks to maintain or strengthen its future capacity to generate income.

It would nevertheless be too simple to conclude that every company necessarily seeks infinite expansion. Some remain small for decades. Some favor stability. Some disappear. Some accept a reduction in their activity. The problem therefore does not lie in a physical law according to which every company must grow forever. It lies in the general structure of incentives: in a competitive environment, voluntary stagnation can become a vulnerability when a rival invests more, cuts costs, improves its product, controls a technology, secures a distribution network, or reaches a scale that allows it to impose its terms.

Competition Turns a Possibility into Pressure

Competition is often presented as a beneficial discipline: it prevents a producer from setting prices alone, forces it to take consumers into account, stimulates innovation, and limits certain rents. This function is real. It would be false to reduce competition to pure economic violence.[i]

But the same competition that prevents immobility can also turn accumulation into a practical necessity. A company does not need to be run by particularly greedy individuals in order to seek higher productivity. It is enough that its competitors do so. If others automate, negotiate lower prices, relocate part of their production, make better use of data, shorten their lead times, or develop a more attractive product, a company that refuses all adaptation may lose market share, see its margin shrink, and eventually disappear.

The constraint is then structural before it is moral. The person running the company may want better wages, more time, less pressure, and better-paid suppliers. But if those choices sharply increase costs in a sector where prices are tight, they will have to reduce their margin, raise prices, persuade customers to pay more, or accept losing ground. This difficulty does not excuse every managerial choice. It simply shows that the critique of capitalism becomes stronger when it stops assuming that everything comes from individual malice.

A system is all the more powerful when it can obtain certain behaviors from people who do not fully adhere to its logic. The capitalist constraint does not always say, "Be greedy." It often says, "If you do not do what others do to remain competitive, you risk being pushed out of the game."

Productivity and Its Double Face

The increase in productivity is one of capitalism's great historical strengths. Producing more with less labor, fewer materials, or more efficient techniques can free up time, reduce the price of certain goods, make formerly rare objects accessible, and allow considerable improvements in material conditions.

But productivity has no social purpose built into it. Saving two hours of labor on a task does not tell us what we should do with the two hours that have been freed. They can become free time. They can reduce the price of the product. They can increase wages. They can increase the margin. They can be absorbed by an increase in output. They can make it possible to eliminate jobs while intensifying the work that remains. Technology opens a possibility; power relations and institutions largely determine how it is used.

This is where accumulation appears as a social constraint. When productivity gains are mainly fed back into a new race for production, society becomes more efficient without necessarily becoming freer. We work faster, communicate faster, deliver faster, produce more, and replace objects more quickly, yet the promise of time finally set free recedes as efficiency rises.[i]i

The problem, then, is not productivity in itself. A reasonable anticapitalist society would also have an interest in reducing arduous labor, conserving scarce resources, and saving energy. The question is who decides how the gain is allocated. If every improvement must first strengthen the competitive and financial capacity of the organization that achieves it, then technical progress remains subordinated to the reproduction of capital before becoming a collective decision about time, needs, and limits.

The Expansion of Markets

When productive capacities increase, it is also necessary to find outlets for what is produced. This can involve opening new territories, creating new services, transforming activities that were previously domestic or free into market services, intensifying advertising, expanding credit, or inventing new ways of capturing attention.

Here again, caricature must be avoided. Not all new markets are artificial. Many new goods respond to real needs, new uses, or legitimate aspirations. The internet, medicines, transportation, creative tools, and communication services have opened possibilities that previous generations could not simply have “desired” in their present form.

But a society organized around accumulation has a particular tendency: what was not yet capable of being monetized can become an economic frontier. Available time, personal data, attention, sleep, leisure, sociability, mobility, care, education, housing, or even one’s relationship with oneself can gradually become surrounded by offers, subscriptions, platforms, credit, and intermediaries.

Capitalism does not necessarily commodify everything through conscious intention. Rather, it creates a movement in which any activity capable of generating solvent demand can become a field for investment. The political question is therefore not to abolish every commodity, but to decide what should remain, or once again become, partially removed from this logic.

Why Growth Becomes Politically Difficult to Abandon

At this level, accumulation ceases to be merely a matter for companies. It becomes an institutional architecture. States depend on tax revenues. Social systems depend on contributions. Local authorities finance their infrastructure. Companies repay their debts. Households repay theirs. Pension funds expect returns. Banks need solvent borrowers. Governments want to avoid unemployment. Many social promises are therefore easier to keep when incomes, profits, and economic activity are rising.

This dependence does not mean that an economy without growth is logically impossible. It means that a large part of our institutions has been built on the assumption of an economically larger future. When that assumption disappears, conflicts that had previously been deferred become visible: who will pay pensions? how will public services be financed? how will debts be absorbed? how will gains be distributed if the size of the pie no longer increases? how can unemployment be reduced without relying on expansion?

Growth then functions as a political lubricant. It sometimes makes it possible to improve the situation of the poorest without immediately reducing the incomes of the richest. It makes it possible to promise more without directly opening the conflict over distribution. In a growing economy, everyone can hope to gain something. In a stationary or shrinking economy, the question of distribution becomes more explicit.

This is one of the most important points in the anticapitalist critique: growth is not merely a cultural objective or an economic indicator. It often becomes a way of deferring the democratic conflict over property, income, work, and resources.

Debt and the Anticipation of the Future

Debt reinforces this orientation toward the future. A debt is a promise: tomorrow, an income will have to repay what was advanced today. Debt can be useful. It makes it possible to invest before having accumulated all the necessary savings, to buy a home, to finance infrastructure, or to get through a difficult period. An economy without credit would be profoundly limited.[ii]i

But when the entire system takes on debt on the basis of expected future income, the future becomes partly mortgaged. Companies must generate the cash flows needed to service their debt. Households must maintain an income. States must preserve a tax base. Investors have bought securities in anticipation of future payments.

The more numerous these commitments become, the more painful economic contraction becomes. It does not simply mean "producing a little less." It can cause bankruptcies, unemployment, lost revenues, defaults, falling asset values, and banking crises. This fragility helps turn expansion into a political requirement, even when decision-makers know that certain forms of growth worsen other problems.

The system therefore does not necessarily pursue growth because everyone philosophically believes in growth. It also pursues it because a whole set of contracts, assets, debts, and institutions has been organized around the idea that tomorrow will make it possible to pay for today.

What Accumulation Concentrates

Accumulation does not merely produce more capital. It can produce more power. Someone who accumulates enough can invest faster, sustain a price war for longer, buy a competitor, control a technology, impose standards, finance a communications campaign, gain access to better legal advice, or bargain more aggressively with suppliers.

This concentration is not automatic in every sector. New companies emerge, dominant positions disappear, and some technologies destroy old rents. But the capacity to accumulate creates a cumulative advantage: owning capital often makes it possible to obtain income that increases the future capacity to own capital.

We must then distinguish wealth from power. A person can be rich without directly governing others. But when wealth takes the form of productive property, control over infrastructure, platforms, housing, media, or essential assets, it also becomes a means of shaping the conditions under which others live and work.

The next chapter will examine the question of work in greater depth. For now, it is enough to see that accumulation cannot be assessed solely as an increase in private goods. Beyond a certain point, it transforms the distribution of decision-making capacities.

The Contradiction Anticapitalism Must Accept

A serious critique must recognize what makes accumulation attractive. Accumulating can mean preparing for the future, financing innovation, withstanding a shock, developing an activity, building a more efficient tool, or making possible a project that requires substantial resources before producing its effects.

It would be absurd to want a society in which no surplus was ever set aside, no investment ever made, and no organization ever allowed to grow. The problem is not the existence of reserves, investment, or local growth. It is the transition from these means to a higher principle that ultimately organizes society as a whole.

We must therefore formulate the critique precisely: anticapitalism does not require the abolition of all material accumulation. It challenges the social dominance of a regime in which the private accumulation of capital becomes one of the principal criteria for the survival of organizations and, by extension, one of the major constraints weighing on work, production, innovation, and politics.

This distinction is decisive because it opens a positive question. A postcapitalist society will still have to invest. It will still have to plan ahead. It will still have to choose between present consumption and future capacities. But it will be able to seek to subject these choices to explicitly debated ends: needs, autonomy, resilience, justice, health, free time, ecological limits, and the quality of the common world.

Conclusion — It Is Not Greed; It Is an Architecture

Capitalism becomes difficult to challenge when it is reduced to psychology. If the problem is only greed, then better leaders, better shareholders, or more virtuous consumers should be enough. But accumulation shows that behavior is also produced by institutions, contracts, competitive relations, and expectations.

The strength of the system lies precisely in its ability to make rational, at the scale of a company, behaviors that become destructive at the collective scale. Cutting costs can save a company and weaken workers. Selling more can protect local employment and increase ecological pressure. Automation can free people from labor and concentrate the gains. Investment can prepare for the future and reinforce dependence on expansion.

The question, then, is not: “Why doesn’t someone simply stop this race?” The question is: “What institutions would make it possible to leave the race without making those with the least power pay the price of leaving it?”

It is from this point that the critique of work becomes necessary. Behind the abstractions of capital, productivity, and growth, there are always people who must live, accept or refuse conditions, bear risks, and sell part of their time. The next chapter will begin from this concrete point: if capital must reproduce itself, what becomes of the person who depends on a wage to live?

CHAPTER 3

We Work to Live, but the Economy Also Lives from Our Work

Work Is Not Simply Having a Job

The word work combines several realities that must be separated if we want to avoid a confused critique. It can refer to the activity necessary for life: growing food, cooking, repairing, cleaning, caring, learning, transmitting knowledge, creating, transporting, maintaining infrastructure, or organizing a community. It can also refer to a specific social relation: selling one's capacity to work for a given period of time in exchange for a wage.

A society that moved beyond capitalism would not move beyond work in the broad sense. Buildings would still have to be maintained, the sick cared for, children educated, energy produced, networks repaired, transport organized, and unpleasant tasks carried out that no one will romanticize. The real question, then, is not how to abolish every arduous activity. It is who decides what work is necessary, how it is distributed, who controls its conditions, and who disposes of the surplus it makes possible.

This distinction protects against two simplifications. The first is to celebrate work as a moral value in itself, as though every paid activity were automatically dignified or emancipatory. The second is to regard all work as an alienation from which we should free ourselves. Yet the same act can be experienced very differently depending on whether it is chosen or imposed, recognized or ignored, properly paid or poorly paid, carried out with room for decision or under constant supervision.

What is at stake here, then, is not human effort. It is the way a society organizes the necessity of contributing and distributes power between those who must work and those who control the material means of production.

Wage Labor: Legal Freedom, Material Dependence

In contemporary capitalism, most people do not directly own the means of producing what they need in order to live. They have neither enough land, nor productive assets, nor infrastructure enabling them to provide for their own existence. They therefore depend on monetary income, and that income most often comes from employment.

Wage labor has nevertheless represented a form of relative emancipation compared with other regimes of dependence. It can provide a personal income, make it possible to leave a family, a master, a village, or a community, and give a person the possibility of changing employers. It would be historically and politically false to describe all wage labor as a form of servitude identical to slavery or serfdom.

But this freedom remains asymmetrical. Someone with substantial reserves can wait, negotiate, change plans, or refuse an income that is too low. Someone who has to pay the rent at the end of the month has a more limited capacity to refuse. The contract is legally voluntary, but material necessity is not distributed equally.

This asymmetry becomes particularly visible when the labor market deteriorates. Two people may in theory be free to terminate a contract; if one loses an indispensable source of income while the other can quickly replace the employee, the consequences are not symmetrical. Legal freedom exists, but the economic balance of power changes its real scope.

Anticapitalist critique therefore gains precision when it stops claiming that the employee never chooses. The employee does choose, but within a space of possibilities structured by dependence on income, wealth, qualifications, the state of employment, family responsibilities, and the collective protections available.

The Firm Is Also a Site of Power

A firm is not merely a contract between individuals. It is a durable organization that distributes decision-making rights. In most capitalist firms, ownership of capital directly or indirectly gives the power to appoint management, which then organizes work: schedules, objectives, investments, division of tasks, systems of control, location of activities, performance criteria, and strategy.

Employees are not without rights. They may have representatives, join unions, bargain collectively, rely on labor law, or leave the company. In some countries, they even participate in governing bodies. But their power generally remains weaker than the power derived from ownership.

This difference raises a democratic tension. We consider it problematic for a person to be politically subject to rules they can neither challenge nor help modify.

Yet millions of people spend a major part of their lives inside organizations whose purposes they have little power to determine.

A firm is obviously not a parliament. A production line cannot suspend every daily decision until a general vote has been held. Coordination, expertise, and delegation are necessary. But delegation does not imply that final power must necessarily belong to those who supplied the capital rather than to those who bear the daily consequences of decisions.

The relevant question, then, is not "should everything be put to a vote?" It is: which powers should be reserved for management, which should be shared, and which rights of contestation should belong to those whose time, health, or future are at stake?

The Surplus: What Collective Work Produces and Who Decides Its Use

Every productive organization must pay costs: materials, energy, machines, premises, wages, maintenance, taxes, credit, and insurance. When revenue exceeds these costs, a surplus appears. It can be allocated in many ways: investment, reserves, higher wages, dividends, lower prices, training, safety, research, or reduced working time.

The existence of a surplus does not automatically prove exploitation in the moral sense. An organization needs reserves, investment, and margins in order to withstand shocks. The political problem concerns rather the right to decide how that surplus is allocated.

In the classical capitalist firm, this right is largely attached to ownership. Workers may negotiate part of the distribution through wages or collective action, but they generally do not have equal power over investment choices, the distribution of dividends, or the sale of the company.

This structure is often justified by risk: the shareholder is said to deserve control because capital is at risk. That argument is not absurd. Capital can be lost. But the employee also takes risks: job loss, physical wear, downward mobility, dependence on a skill that has become useless, relocation, or exposure to decisions beyond their control.

The point is therefore not to deny financial risk. It is to refuse to treat it automatically as the only risk that grants a right to power. A firm is an asymmetrical cooperation of capital, knowledge, time, health, and human trajectories.

Productivity Raises the Question of Time

An increase in productivity means that the same quantity of goods or services can be produced with less labor, or that the same quantity of labor can produce more. This transformation should open an immense political question: what do we do with the time saved?

It can be converted into additional production, higher wages, lower prices, profit, job cuts, or reduced working time. None of these uses is automatically contained in the technology itself.

This is why technical progress does not mechanically produce emancipation. A technology capable of saving two hours of work can free two hours of life or intensify the remaining activity. It can reduce arduousness or turn every minute into a measurable unit of performance.

A politics of work must therefore look less at productivity itself than at the distribution of its gains. If those gains are systematically converted into renewed growth, people become more efficient without necessarily becoming freer.

One of the most concrete anticapitalist demands is therefore to claim a share of technical progress in the form of time: shorter days, shorter weeks, leave, training, retirement, or freely chosen time.

Unemployment as a Balance of Power

Unemployment is first of all a loss of income and often a form of social suffering. But it also acts on those who still have a job. When replacement is easy and alternatives are scarce, workers' bargaining power decreases.

This function requires no conspiracy. It follows simply from the relationship between job openings, the need for income, and the possibility of replacement. An employer who knows that a line of candidates could fill a position has more room to impose certain conditions.

Conversely, when jobs are plentiful or social protections are strong, workers can more easily refuse schedules, wages, or abusive behavior. The balance of power changes.

This is why the level of social benefits, the duration of unemployment compensation, access to training, and the existence of economic alternatives are not peripheral questions. They directly determine real freedom within the employment contract.

A society that wants to make work freer must therefore reduce the existential threat associated with refusal. It cannot be satisfied with proclaiming that everyone is legally free to leave.

Invisible Work Sustains Visible Wor[ki]v

The wage economy also rests on an immense amount of activity that is not paid as employment: caring for children, supporting relatives, domestic organization, preparing meals, administrative tasks, maintaining health, helping with schoolwork, or providing emotional support.

These activities are not necessarily capitalist in origin. Family and gender hierarchies are older. But the productive economy materially depends on this invisible work: employees arrive at work fed, rested, socialized, and supported by tasks that do not appear in company accounts.

The temptation might then be to pay for everything. But turning every relationship into a market service would be paradoxical. Recognizing this work does not necessarily mean assigning it a price.

The real question is one of sharing: who bears the time required for the daily reproduction of life, with what resources and what protections? An emancipatory society must make these costs visible without turning every human bond into a contract.

Work Can Also Be a Source of Autonomy

A critique of wage labor becomes sterile if it forgets that work can provide skill, recognition, financial autonomy, usefulness, cooperation, and pride. Many people do not simply want to work less; they want to work differently.

Some want to create, teach, repair, care, cultivate, or build. The problem is not the existence of commitment to productive activity. The problem arises when the means of acting are controlled by institutions over which they have little influence.

This objection forces anticapitalism to separate itself from the fantasy of a society without constraint or responsibility. Even with strong material guarantees, unpleasant tasks will still have to be distributed, organizations coordinated, and the fact accepted that all cooperation imposes certain obligations.

The right question, then, is not "how can we avoid all effort?" but "how can we ensure that those who contribute have real power over the conditions, meaning, and distribution of that effort?"

Democratizing Without Bureaucratizing

The most obvious response to employer power would be to transfer control to the state. But this solution guarantees nothing. A public administration can reproduce rigid hierarchies, remote decisions, and very strong forms of discipline.

Economic democracy must therefore be pluralist. Some firms can become cooperatives. Others can introduce strong codetermination. Essential infrastructure can belong to the public sector or the commons. Small-scale activities can remain private. Unions and employee representatives can be given stronger rights·v

No legal form automatically produces emancipation. A cooperative can marginalize a minority. A public enterprise can be authoritarian. A small business can depend entirely on the personality of its owner.

The criterion must be concrete: can those who bear the consequences of a decision understand it, challenge it, participate in shaping it, and, when necessary, replace those who exercise it?

Economic democracy is therefore not a single institutional formula. It is a requirement for the distribution and reversibility of power within productive organizations.

Conclusion — The Freedom to Refuse

The labor market is often presented as a free meeting between supply and demand. This description is not false, but it becomes insufficient if it ignores the prior distribution of resources.

Economic freedom is not measured only by the number of contracts a person can sign. It is also measured by the number of contracts they can refuse without falling into poverty.

That is why social rights, protection against unemployment, access to essential needs, union power, reduced working time, and participation in decision-making are not external corrections to freedom. They are its material conditions.

Work will remain a collective necessity. But that necessity does not have to give those who own capital disproportionate power over the time, conditions, and future of others.

The next chapter will shift this question from the site of production to consumption and desire. For capitalism depends not only on our capacity to work: it also depends on our capacity to buy, to want, and to renew demand.

CHAPTER 4

A Society That Also Produces Its Consumers

Our Preferences Have a History

We never desire in a vacuum. Even before a product is offered to us, we have already learned what seems useful, desirable, modern, respectable, practical, or ridiculous. This formation passes through family, social group, school, media, income, territory, infrastructure, and observation of others. It does not abolish individual autonomy; it gives it a context. A desire is no less real because it has a history.[vi]

It would therefore be false to claim that capitalism entirely invents our needs. Human beings have always desired, imitated, competed, sought recognition, and used objects as signs of status. A critique that reduced every desire to external manipulation would deny what it claims to defend: individuals' capacity to want, interpret, resist, and change their minds.

But the opposite error is to imagine that preferences are already perfectly formed before any encounter with the market. What we can desire also depends on what exists, what is visible, what is accessible, and what our environment makes materially possible. A person may prefer taking the train to driving; if no train exists, that preference does not become a real choice. They may want to repair a device; if spare parts are unavailable or the product is locked down, the option remains theoretical.

We must therefore distinguish at least three levels. A preference can be socially formed without being imposed. It can be influenced by commercial mechanisms without being controlled. And it can be materially constrained by the organization of infrastructure. Confusing these levels leads either to denying individual autonomy or to underestimating the power of the economic environment.

Anticapitalist critique should therefore not decide which desires are "true." It should examine who possesses the means to durably structure the environment in which certain desires become easier, more visible, more frequent, and more profitable than others.

From Advertising to the Maintenance of Demand

Advertising does not mechanically command behavior. Campaigns fail, brands disappear, consumers grow tired, and messages are constantly reinterpreted. It would be absurd to portray the public as a mass without agency. A person may see the same advertisement a hundred times and never buy the product.

Yet the absence of total control does not mean the absence of influence. Familiarity, repetition, symbolic association, targeting, and the timing of exposure alter probabilities. A brand that is present everywhere does not force anyone to buy, but it occupies more mental space than an unknown offer. It becomes an option that is spontaneously available at the moment of choice.

This influence meets a more general structural constraint: a company that depends on sales has an interest in maintaining or renewing demand. When the initial need has been met or the market stabilizes, it must find other reasons to sell: a new function, a new format, a subscription, an aesthetic change, a new audience, technical renewal, or the reconfiguration of a standard.

Some of these innovations genuinely increase capabilities. They can make an object safer, more accessible, more economical, more durable, or more pleasant. Another part mainly serves to shorten the period during which an object or service is regarded as sufficient. Obsolescence may be material, software-based, social, or functional. A device may still work while becoming incompatible; a garment may be intact while appearing outdated; a service may remain useful while being made less accessible than its newer version.

The difficulty is that there is no simple boundary between a new need and maintained demand. Useful innovation can itself create new expectations. A technology that has become indispensable can increase our capabilities while also increasing our dependence on its renewal. It would therefore be too easy to oppose authentic needs to artificial ones.

The political question is not whether renewal should be prohibited. It is to identify the mechanisms that turn the maintenance of demand into a permanent necessity for organizations, and then to create countervailing powers: repairability, compatibility, support duration, transparency, plurality of supply, and independent information.

Credit and Attention Extend Market Logic

Credit makes it possible to buy before having accumulated the necessary savings. It can therefore increase autonomy: financing housing, education, equipment, or an activity. A society without credit would severely limit many people's ability to carry out important projects.

But credit also commits the future. Present spending becomes an obligation to obtain income later. Consumers do not buy only with what they possess today; they commit part of what they will have to earn tomorrow. This logic becomes problematic when indebtedness ceases to be an occasional tool and becomes a normal condition of access to basic needs or to the expected standard of living.

Consumer debt and dependence on work meet here. The more a person has to repay, the less able they are to refuse certain working conditions. Credit can therefore increase immediate freedom while reducing future freedom. This contradiction does not condemn borrowing; it requires us to examine its effects on bargaining power and material security.

The digital economy extends this mechanism in another direction: our attention itself becomes a resource. When a platform depends on advertising, data, or engagement, it has an interest in prolonging the user's presence, encouraging frequent returns, and maintaining interaction.[vii]

The tension is subtle because platforms also provide real capabilities. They make it possible to learn, communicate, create, organize, find work, maintain relationships, or access information that was once difficult to obtain. Critique therefore cannot reduce the user to the victim of a useless device.

The problem appears when the usefulness of the service and the operator's economic interest diverge. A person may want to consult a piece of information briefly; the business model may reward time spent on the platform. They may want to stay in touch with relatives; the platform may optimize mechanisms that increase interactions beyond what they would have consciously chosen.

The anticapitalist question is not "how can platforms be eliminated?" but "under what rules can a useful infrastructure be prevented from maximizing profitability at the expense of the autonomy of those who use it?" The conflict of interest must be treated as an institutional question, not as a moral failing on the part of the user.

Infrastructure Constrains Choices More Strongly Than Messages

A policy focused only on advertising would miss a deeper dimension: many consumption behaviors are structured before any commercial message intervenes. A city designed around cars makes the automobile almost compulsory. Poorly insulated housing increases energy consumption. A territory without accessible services imposes travel. A workplace organization far from places of residence makes certain forms of mobility unavoidable.

In these cases, speaking of individual choice remains legally correct but politically insufficient. A person chooses among several options, but the prior architecture of what is possible has already removed or made more expensive certain alternatives. Infrastructure then acts more strongly than advertising, because it does not merely suggest: it determines the practical costs of everyday life.

This observation transforms the critique of consumption. It is not enough to ask individuals to buy better, sort more waste, or resist messages. If infrastructure remains unchanged, individual responsibility carries a burden it cannot bear alone. Asking everyone to behave as though all options were equally available amounts to turning a collective constraint into a private fault.

Companies themselves adapt to this infrastructure. A commercial offer can reinforce a way of life already made necessary by urban planning, standards, or the organization of work. Conversely, public infrastructure can make viable a behavior that would not have survived market logic alone. Supply and the material framework therefore shape one another.

An anticapitalist politics of consumption must act on the material conditions of choice: urban planning, transport, housing, access to services, repairability, technical standards, and the availability of alternatives. It cannot be satisfied with individual education.

Yet this transformation carries a risk: replacing private infrastructure with public organization that also imposes a single way of life. The goal is therefore not to plan preferences. It is to make several trajectories genuinely practicable. Autonomy increases when a person can choose among options that materially exist, not merely among competing products within the same model.

The Desire for Status and the Paternalistic Risk

Part of consumption responds to social comparison. Some goods matter not only because of their function but because of what they signal: success, taste, distinctiveness, belonging, or modernity. There is nothing specifically capitalist about this dimension, but the market economy can turn it into a permanent engine of renewal.[viii]

When the value of a good depends on its relative position, the race can become endless. If everyone increases their consumption so as not to lose status, collective material effort rises even though the relative hierarchy remains intact. This mechanism does not mean that individuals are dupes; it means that their satisfaction also depends on a social relation that moves along with them.

It would be tempting to conclude that desires themselves should therefore be corrected. This is where critique becomes dangerous. Who will decide which desires are legitimate? Once a power claims to know other people's "true needs," anticapitalism can turn into paternalism.

A free society must accept that individuals choose objects others regard as frivolous, aesthetic, luxurious, or absurd. Freedom includes a measure of difference and even irrationality. It also includes the right to prefer symbolic consumption to what an expert would regard as a more rational allocation.

The paternalistic objection therefore forces us to reformulate the critique. The issue is not to moralize consumers, but to examine the conditions under which certain desires are stimulated, the costs they impose on others, and the way common resources are committed. A society can limit pollution without prohibiting the taste for prestige; it can regulate an advertising practice without deciding what everyone ought to like.

The response must address asymmetries of influence and constraint: transparency, protection of minors, the right to repair, limits on certain forms of capture, plurality of information, antimonopoly policy, and the development of material alternatives.

The goal is not to manufacture virtuous consumers. It is to make the formation of choices less dependent on mechanisms whose economic survival rests on multiplying demand, while leaving individuals sovereign over their preferences as long as those preferences do not impose their costs on others without debate.

Decommodifying Without Eliminating Choice

Some activities can be partly removed from market logic without society as a whole ceasing to use prices or exchanges. Health care, education, water, essential housing, basic mobility, or access to culture can be organized through rights, public services, commons, associations, or hybrid mechanisms.

Decommodification does not necessarily mean public monopoly. It means that minimum access to a need does not depend entirely on purchasing power. A person who receives care because they need it is not merely a customer. A student is not merely solvent demand. A resident is not merely an opportunity for real-estate returns.

This transformation does not eliminate the freedom to choose additional services, private forms, or differentiated goods. It simply creates a floor below which certain needs cease to be abandoned to purchasing power. It can even increase real choice: someone who no longer fears losing access to health care or housing has greater freedom to refuse a job, move to another region, or take a risk.

But decommodification also has risks. A public institution can become rigid, paternalistic, slow, or indifferent to preferences. A guaranteed service can be poorly designed. A formal right can remain inaccessible if the administration is opaque or overwhelmed. Removing an activity from the market is therefore not enough to make it just.

The response must preserve mechanisms of contestation, comparison, and exit where possible. Users must be able to report failures, institutions must be open to evaluation, and plurality of forms can remain useful. Decommodifying does not mean administering every detail of life.

A postcapitalist economy can therefore preserve consumption without making the consumer the central identity of the individual. We are also workers, citizens, relatives, creators, residents, and users of common institutions.

The problem with capitalism is not that we consume. It appears when a growing share of society depends on our capacity to consume ever more, and when those who benefit from this growth possess the means to shape the environment of our choices.

We do not want to abolish desire. We want to prevent an entire society from depending on its permanent stimulation. The next chapter will show that this power to shape needs is only one particular form of a broader phenomenon: accumulated capital can become power over collective decisions.

CHAPTER 5

Capital Also Accumulates Power

From Wealth to Power

A fortune is not merely a great capacity for consumption. Depending on its form, it can become a capacity to act upon the common world. Owning a comfortable home, security savings, or tools of one's trade does not produce the same social relationship as owning thousands of homes, an indispensable platform, a dominant company, or infrastructure on which millions of people depend.

Anticapitalist critique must begin from this difference rather than from an arbitrary moral threshold separating the "rich" from the "poor." A person can spend a great deal without directly governing the lives of others. Conversely, productive or strategic property can confer power far beyond the personal consumption it makes possible.

The problem appears when property becomes a durable right to decide the conditions of access to resources, direct investment, organize work, establish certain private rules, or exert influence over public institutions. At that point, economic inequality also becomes inequality in political capacity.

This is why wealth, income, property, and power must be distinguished. They are connected, but they are not identical. This chapter does not seek to morally condemn material success. It seeks to understand how accumulation can be transformed into the capacity to make decisions affecting others.

To Invest Is to Select Futures

Investment is often presented as an economically neutral operation: an actor places resources in a project they believe capable of generating a return. But investing also means selecting the activities that will receive time, machines, buildings, skills, and infrastructure.

Financing one technology rather than another, building high-end housing rather than affordable housing, opening a warehouse in one region rather than another, buying land, or developing a new platform changes future possibilities.

Whoever possesses capital obviously does not decide alone: they depend on public rules, workers, consumers, banks, suppliers, and many other constraints. But they possess a capacity to propose and select that is not equally distributed.

This capacity is often justified by risk. Someone who commits their wealth could lose it; it therefore seems legitimate that they should choose where to commit it. This argument contains a measure of truth. But it does not settle the political question. When an investment changes employment in a territory, access to housing, the environment, or a collective infrastructure, the consequences extend beyond the owner of the capital alone.

Economic democracy would not consist in submitting every investment to a referendum. It would consist in recognizing that some private choices have public effects significant enough to justify rules, countervailing powers, or broader participation.

The Mobility of Capital Changes the Balance of Power

Economic power also comes from the ability to move or to wait. A worker tied to a territory, a family, a language, or a home does not have the same mobility as a financial portfolio. A company can sometimes move production, change suppliers, or postpone an investment more easily than a community can move its population.

This asymmetry gives capital a particular bargaining power. A government may want to strengthen social standards, tax certain profits more heavily, or impose environmental obligations. If holders of investment can credibly reduce their commitments, relocate activities, or choose another jurisdiction, that possibility influences the debate.

It would be excessive to describe every threat of departure as blackmail. An activity may genuinely become unviable under certain conditions. But the very existence of that option alters the relationship between actors. Those who can wait often possess greater power than those who must immediately pay wages, finance public services, or find employment.

The free movement of capital can therefore come into tension with a territory's democratic capacity to define its own rules. A society cannot claim to be politically sovereign if every important decision is first evaluated according to the anticipated reaction of economic actors mobile enough to circumvent it.

Work: Governing Through Property

The previous chapter showed that the firm is also a site of power. Here, the question must be placed back within the logic of accumulation. The larger a company grows, the more people can be affected by decisions arising from its ownership: hiring, closures, relocation, automation, schedules, subcontracting, technological choices, safety, or the distribution of the surplus.

This power can be exercised responsibly. It can be limited by law, unions, collective agreements, or codetermination. But its source often remains the same: owning a sufficient share of the capital gives the right to appoint those who command the organization.

This structure becomes politically sensitive when decisions affecting thousands of human lives are taken in the name of a property right that workers do not possess. Workers contribute their time, skills, health, and experience, but final power generally does not return to them in the same proportion.

The point is not to deny all legitimacy to management. An organization needs people who are responsible for decisions. The question is why the financial contribution should constitute the principal basis for a power that also bears on other people's time and conditions of existence.

Housing: When a Need Becomes an Asset

Real-estate ownership makes the difference between property for use and property as power particularly clear. Owning the home in which one lives can protect autonomy. Owning a large number of homes intended to generate income places the owner in a different relationship with those who need them in order to be housed.

A lease remains a contract. The tenant has rights and can move when conditions allow it. But when supply is scarce, moving is costly, or employment depends on a specific location, the owner possesses a capacity to condition access to an essential need.

Housing then becomes both a place to live and a financial asset. These two functions can come into conflict. An increase in the value of an asset may be good news for its holder while making access more difficult for those seeking a place to live.

It does not follow that all private ownership of housing should be abolished. It follows that society must distinguish the right to possess a place in which to live from the right to accumulate without limit claims on other people's need for housing.

Platforms, Networks, and Dominant Position[si]x

Some contemporary forms of capital have a particular property: the more users, data, suppliers, or partners they accumulate, the harder their position can become to challenge. Network effects, economies of scale, control over standards, and privileged access to information can turn an economic advantage into a quasi-indispensable infrastructure.

A dominant platform then does more than sell a service. It can set access rules, change the conditions of visibility, impose commissions, decide which practices are permitted, and organize relationships among other actors who depend on its system.

Its power is not absolute. Competitors can emerge, technologies can change, and public authorities can regulate. But concentration creates a cumulative advantage: possessing a base of users, capital, and data often makes it easier to acquire an even larger base.

This mechanism shows why competition is not always enough to disperse power. In some markets, success itself raises the barriers that protect future success.

From Money to Political Influence

The conversion of capital into power does not stop at the firm. Significant economic resources can finance expertise, lobbying, organizations, communications campaigns, legal proceedings, media, or permanent access to decision-makers·x

It would be simplistic to conclude from this that politics is entirely bought. Elections, social mobilizations, institutions, the press, courts, and internal conflicts can produce decisions contrary to the interests of the most powerful economic actors.

But equality at the ballot box does not eliminate inequality of means between elections. A group capable of financing lawyers, experts, and a permanent presence in decision-making spaces possesses a different capacity for intervention from that of a citizen who can devote only a few hours of free time to a cause.

The democratic problem is therefore not only illegal corruption. It is also the legal asymmetry in the capacities to produce information, support a position, gain access to decision-makers, and endure over the course of political conflict.

Public Concentration Is Not an Automatic Solutio[nx]i

This critique encounters a fundamental objection: if private property concentrates power, why not transfer assets to the state? Because public concentration can produce a different form of domination, sometimes even harder to escape.

A state that owned companies, media, housing, and infrastructure would possess immense power over those who depend on it. Dispersed private property can protect spaces of autonomy against government. Independent companies, associations, media, or cooperatives can serve as countervailing powers.

Anticapitalism must therefore reject an overly simple symmetrical solution. The goal is not to replace a single private owner with a single public owner. It is to pluralize forms of property and limit the capacity of each to become sovereign.

The question is not: private or public? It is: what type of property is appropriate for what function, what powers follow from it, who can contest them, and how can decisions be revised?

Democratizing Economic Power

Economic democracy does not mean perfect equality of all resources. It means that large concentrations of economic power cannot remain durably beyond contestation.

This can involve competition law, taxation, worker representation, cooperatives, public control of certain infrastructures, commons, tenants' rights, platform transparency, media pluralism, or rules governing political finance.

None of these institutions is sufficient on its own. A public enterprise can function badly, a cooperative can reproduce hierarchies, regulation can be captured, and a tax can be circumvented. The goal is not to find the perfect mechanism, but to multiply countervailing powers.

The central criterion is simple: can property be converted almost without limit into the capacity to govern others? If the answer is yes, political democracy remains incomplete.

Conclusion — One Person, One Vote Is Not Enough

Modern democracy affirmed that wealth should not officially confer more votes in an election. A billionaire's vote does not legally count for more than that of a wage earner. This equality is fundamental.

But it coexists with far greater inequalities in the capacities to invest, own infrastructure, organize work, finance campaigns, control essential assets, or simply wait for a conflict to turn in one's favor.

Anticapitalism therefore poses a question that political democracy cannot avoid: how far can we separate the principle of "one person, one vote" from an economy in which some people possess decision-making power proportional to their assets?

The answer does not require condemning all wealth. It requires limiting the transformation of property into private sovereignty.

The next chapter must therefore confront the manifesto's most difficult contradiction: some of the mechanisms we criticize also protect autonomy, innovation, and plurality. Moving beyond capitalism cannot therefore mean destroying everything it contains. We must learn to preserve capacities without preserving the domination of capital.

CHAPTER 6

Why We Still Do Not Want to Abolish Everything Capitalism Has Made Possible

An Anticapitalism That Knows How to Preserve Nothing Would Be Unable to Govern

A social system never endures solely because of the domination it exercises. It also endures because it performs real functions. Capitalism has produced crises, concentrations of power, dependencies, and destruction that this manifesto has sought to describe. But it has also organized an immense capacity for investment, coordination, innovation, initiative, and adaptation. A critique that refused to look at these functions would not be preparing an alternative; it would be preparing for their disappearance.

We must therefore distinguish functions from the institutions that perform them today. The fact that markets sometimes transmit information does not mean that society should be governed by the market. The fact that private investment can finance innovation does not mean that innovation requires an unlimited concentration of capital. The fact that the firm enables initiative does not mean that property rights should grant uncompensated power over the work of others.

This distinction is decisive because it rules out two symmetrical shortcuts. The first consists in defending capitalism on the grounds that it performs certain useful functions. The second consists in believing that it is enough to eliminate its dominant institutions for those functions to be automatically taken over by better mechanisms.

Moving beyond capitalism therefore requires less destruction than disassembly: separating the capacities we want to preserve from the relations of power to which they are currently attached.

Individual Initiative Must Survive the Critique of Capital

Creating an activity, taking a risk, inventing a product, opening a workshop, organizing a service, or launching research does not in itself constitute capitalist domination. A postcapitalist society will always need people who try something without waiting for a central administration to order them to do so.

Individual initiative can even protect against other forms of dependence. Starting a small business, an association, or a cooperative can make it possible to leave a hierarchy, create an activity that did not exist, and respond to a need ignored by existing institutions.

The problem begins when the success of an initiative gradually becomes a title to govern others. A person may legitimately want to retain control of a tool they created. But when that activity employs hundreds of people, controls infrastructure, or accumulates indispensable assets, the relationship changes scale. Property is no longer only a protection of the founder's autonomy; it also becomes power over the autonomy of others.

A credible alternative must therefore protect the right to initiate, experiment, and own certain means of action while providing mechanisms through which the growth of an organization also brings growth in its democratic obligations.

Prices: A Useful Signal, Never a Moral Truth

Prices perform a function that any complex economy must take seriously. They condense part of the information about costs, scarcity, demand, and availability. When a good becomes difficult to produce or highly sought after, a change in price can signal that tension without an administration needing to know every individual decision.

But a price is not a complete measure of value. It also reflects the distribution of income, power relations, market structure, subsidies, tax rules, and what accounting chooses to ignore. Breathable air or a stable climate can have immense value while carrying no direct price. Conversely, a good may be very expensive precisely because it is scarce or controlled by a dominant actor.

We must therefore reject two errors. The first is to treat price as though it expressed the social truth of a need. The second is to think that prices can be eliminated without building other mechanisms of coordination.

A postcapitalist economy could perfectly well preserve prices in many areas, regulate them in others, and replace them with rights or direct allocations for certain essential needs. The question is not whether a price exists, but how much power we give it.

Competition Can Correct, but It Can Also Destroy

Competition sometimes forces organizations to compare themselves with one another. It can push a producer to improve a service, reduce certain costs, respond more quickly to expectations, or offer an innovation. It can also prevent an institution protected from all contestation from remaining indefinitely satisfied with its own inefficiency.

This function deserves to be preserved in one form or another. A society in which a single organization held a monopoly over every solution would risk turning every local error into a general error. The plurality of producers, methods, and institutions makes experimentation possible instead.

But competition has a downside. When it becomes a permanent war for market share, it can exert pressure on wages, subcontracting, deadlines, resources, or the environment. It can induce every organization to adopt conduct that none would choose in isolation if it knew the others would do the same.

What we need, then, is neither competition as a universal principle nor its total abolition. We need plurality, comparison, and the possibility of entry, but also domains protected from the logic of competition when it destroys the purposes we want to preserve.

Innovation Does Not Belong to Capitalism

One of the strongest arguments in favor of capitalism is its capacity to finance innovation. Expected profit can attract capital toward risky technologies, reward an invention, and accelerate the spread of a solution.[xi]i

This dynamic exists. But it does not prove that innovation depends exclusively on private investment. Public research, universities, collective infrastructure, developer communities, associations, workers, and accumulated knowledge also play a major role in creation.

Even within a private company, innovation is rarely the product of a single owner. It mobilizes teams, prior knowledge, public infrastructure, an education system, and often research financed collectively.

An alternative must therefore ask how to preserve risk-taking and the reward for invention without making every successful innovation the starting point for a lasting concentration of property. Public funding, cooperatives, collective funds, prizes, open licenses, or limited private enterprises can coexist.

The real issue is not to choose between innovation and equality. It is to prevent the financing of innovation from becoming a general justification for the power of capital.

Authoritarian Failures Are Not a Parenthesis to Be Erased

Anticapitalism bears a particular responsibility: it cannot speak of social transformation as though authoritarian experiments carried out in the name of socialism had nothing to teach it. When economic and political power are concentrated within the same structure, the disappearance of private property guarantees no emancipation.

Nationalizing a company does not automatically democratize it. A public administration can impose targets, discipline labor, and protect its own leaders. Central planning can fail to perceive certain local needs or to correct its errors quickly.[xii]i

It would be equally false to use these failures to conclude that all planning, all public ownership, or every socialist ambition necessarily leads to authoritarianism. History provides no such simple equation. It offers instead a warning: an institution that concentrates too many decisions without a real possibility of contestation can become oppressive regardless of the ideological vocabulary used to justify it.

The fundamental problem therefore remains power. An anticapitalist alternative must be built in such a way that its own institutions remain contestable, revisable, and pluralist.

Personal Property Also Protects Independence

Property is not a single category. Owning one's home, tools, savings, or a small activity can protect a person from dependence. A society that abolished all personal property would make everyone more dependent on the institutions that distribute access to goods.

Anticapitalism must therefore distinguish property for use from property that produces lasting power over others. This distinction is not always clear-cut, but it is politically indispensable.

A person who owns the workshop in which they work is not in the same position as a fund that owns hundreds of companies. A household that owns its home does not possess the same power as an actor controlling a vast rental portfolio.

The solution is therefore not the abstract abolition of property. It is limiting its transformation into cumulative power.

An Alternative Must Be Able to Fail Without Trapping All of Society

The market sometimes possesses a harsh but real form of correction: a company that no longer meets any need can disappear. This correction is neither just nor sufficient. Useful firms can die for lack of profitability, while harmful activities can prosper. But the possibility of failure sometimes limits the indefinite survival of inefficient organizations.

A public or cooperative institution must also be able to recognize its mistakes. If an alternative to capitalism provides no mechanism for evaluation, it risks replacing market pressure with administrative inertia.

Correction can take other forms: democratic oversight, comparison of results, transparency, independent audit, the right to exit, internal elections, rotation of responsibilities, unions, courts, and institutional pluralism.

A postcapitalist society must therefore be capable of discovering that it has been wrong. This may be one of the most important functions to preserve from the competitive order: not permanent competition, but the possibility that several solutions exist and that some can be abandoned.

Neither Sovereign Market nor Sovereign State

The contradiction can now be stated clearly. The market can transmit information but must not decide by itself what deserves to exist. The state can organize collective purposes but must not become the owner of all economic life. Private property can protect autonomy but must not grant an unlimited right to govern others.

A postcapitalist economy will probably have to be mixed in the strong sense: not a temporary compromise between capitalism and socialism, but an acknowledged plurality of institutional forms chosen according to their function.

Some infrastructure may belong to the public sector. Some resources may be organized as commons. Some firms may be cooperatives. Small private businesses may continue to exist. Markets may coordinate ordinary goods while other needs are guaranteed as rights.

The common criterion will not be institutional purity. It will be the capacity to subordinate economic mechanisms to publicly debatable purposes and to prevent any actor, private or public, from becoming sovereign.

Conclusion — Preserve the Capacities, Shift the Power

Capitalism has often succeeded in presenting itself as the exclusive owner of initiative, innovation, and choice. That identification must be rejected.

We can preserve initiative without preserving shareholder sovereignty. We can preserve prices without entrusting them with the definition of value. We can preserve certain forms of competition without organizing all of society as a competition. We can protect personal property without allowing the indefinite accumulation of economic power.

Moving beyond capitalism is therefore not a clean slate. It consists in separating useful functions from the structure of domination to which they are currently linked.

This distinction finally allows us to pose the positive question of the final chapter. If we reject both sovereign capital and the sovereign state, we must now show how several forms of property, decision-making, and social guarantees could be concretely articulated in a real transition.

CHAPTER 7

Beyond Capitalism, Toward What?

A Direction Rather Than a Closed System

A critique of capitalism that refuses every positive proposal leaves a decisive question open: why leave a known order for an indeterminate future? But the opposite error would be to design in advance a perfect, entirely coherent society for which nothing would remain but to apply the plan. The history of political transformations should be enough to make us wary of such certainty.

We can nevertheless define a direction. It consists in reducing the conversion of property into power over others, increasing the democratic capacity to decide economic purposes, guaranteeing the material conditions of real freedom, preserving initiative and experimentation, and placing production within ecological limits.

These principles do not dictate a single institution. They serve as criteria. Is a reform desirable because it calls itself anticapitalist, or because it actually distributes power more widely? Is a public enterprise better because it belongs to the state, or because those who depend on it can better understand and challenge its decisions? Is a cooperative emancipatory because of its legal status, or because its members genuinely possess shared power?

Moving beyond capitalism must therefore be judged by its effects: capacity to refuse, sharing of decisions, material security, distribution of costs, possibility of correction, and respect for limits. This means accepting that an institution using the right vocabulary can be bad, and that an institution inherited from capitalism can sometimes be preserved if its function is transformed and its powers limited.

This approach requires giving up purity. A real society will be composed of heterogeneous institutions. Some will be public, others cooperative, some private, others commons. The question will not be whether each element belongs to the right category, but whether it serves the chosen ends and remains open to contestation.

Pluralizing Property and Democratizing Organizations

The first transformation concerns property. Not all forms of property produce the same relation of power. Owning one's home or tools can protect autonomy. Owning essential infrastructure, a large housing portfolio, or a company employing thousands of people produces effects on another scale.

A postcapitalist economy should therefore match different forms to different functions: personal property, small private firms, cooperatives, public enterprises, commons, associations, municipal structures, or hybrid forms. The question is not to choose one single form, but to determine which one best limits domination while preserving useful capacities.

The size and social importance of an organization should change its democratic obligations. A small activity does not require the same governance as a company on which an entire region depends. As collective consequences grow, the workers and communities concerned can legitimately acquire greater rights to representation, information, veto, or strategic participation.

This democratization nevertheless carries a possible cost: multiplying procedures can slow decisions, dilute responsibilities, or favor conservative internal coalitions. A company facing a crisis may need to act quickly. A cooperative too can hesitate to take an unpopular but necessary decision.

We must therefore distinguish levels of decision. Day-to-day management can remain delegated. Strategic decisions that profoundly affect human trajectories - closure, mass automation, relocation, radical transformation of working conditions - justify greater participation.

The objective is not to abolish functional authority. It is to make power proportionate to its consequences and open to revision. Management can decide without being sovereign; property can confer rights without constituting a title to govern without limit.

This distinction also makes it possible to preserve initiative. A small structure must be able to experiment without being paralyzed by heavy procedures. But its growth should bring a corresponding growth in its obligations toward those who become dependent on its decisions.

Making Refusal Materially Possible

Changing corporate governance is not enough if someone who refuses a job immediately risks losing housing, health care, or food. Political and economic freedom has a material foundation.

Health care, education, water, minimum energy provision, social protection, accessible housing, and basic mobility can be guaranteed through public services, collective insurance, benefits, commons, or hybrid mechanisms. No instrument is automatically superior; their common function is to reduce existential dependence on market income.

This security changes the balance of power at work. The more a person can survive a refusal, the more genuinely negotiable the contract becomes. Union rights, unemployment compensation, training, reduced working time, and essential services then become infrastructures of freedom.

But these guarantees have a real cost. They mobilize resources, labor, taxation, and administrative capacities. A serious policy cannot simultaneously promise more services, less work, lower taxes, and less production without making the trade-offs explicit.

Funding can come from several sources: redistribution, contributions, taxation of wealth and income, savings achieved in certain sectors, or the redirection of investment. But no source is free. Every choice alters incentives, wealth holdings, and power relations.

Another trap must also be avoided: allowing a material floor to become a paternalistic administrative mechanism. A social guarantee that requires excessive surveillance or humiliates those who use it can reproduce another form of dependence.

The question, then, is not to abolish cost. It is to decide collectively which costs we accept, who bears them, and which forms of security we consider important enough to mutualize. An emancipatory policy must make refusal possible without turning protection into control.

Using Productivity, Planning, and Finance as Means

A society that produces more efficiently has a choice: produce more, increase incomes, improve services, reduce working time, or combine these uses.

Capitalism often tends to convert a significant share of the gain into renewed expansion. A transition must make this choice explicit.

Reducing working time is one direct way to transform productivity into autonomy. But it cannot be decreed uniformly without looking at sectors, skill shortages, arduousness, and social needs. In some fields, a rapid reduction in working time may require more hiring, training, or investment.

Planning becomes necessary when decisions commit the long term: energy, transport, health, fundamental research, climate adaptation, or territorial development. It should set objectives and limits without claiming to centralize every detail.

The distinction between planning and administering must remain clear. Planning can mean defining an energy trajectory, setting a carbon limit, guaranteeing a level of service, or directing investment. Administering every economic activity in detail would be another ambition, far more centralized, and is not required by this approach.

Finance too must become a tool again. Credit, savings, insurance, and investment will remain necessary. The question is whether their return criteria command social purposes or are subordinated to them. Public banks, credit cooperatives, social funds, regulation, and investment obligations can play several complementary roles.

But financing a transition means moving capital. Some investments will become less attractive, while others will be favored. This can provoke disinvestment, the search for more advantageous jurisdictions, or resistance from capital holders. Pretending such reactions do not exist would be irresponsibl[e.xi]v

The transition must therefore provide its own mechanisms of stability: tax coordination, control over certain financial infrastructures, targeted public guarantees, long-term financing, and clear rules. The aim is not to prevent every movement of capital, but to prevent the threat of withdrawal from making democratic decisions impossible.

These instruments can generate their own rigidities: bad investments, bureaucracy, political capture, favoritism, or inertia. Planning and public finance must therefore never be exempt from evaluation, transparency, and the possibility of revision.

Making Ecological Limits a Real Political Constraint

An anticapitalist transition that ignored ecological limits would shift power without resolving one of the major contradictions of our time. The economy depends on resources, soils, energy, ecosystems, and a climate that are not infinitely substitutable.

A society must be able to decide that a profitable activity is no longer acceptable because its ecological cost is too high. Standards, quotas, bans, carbon budgets, taxation, industrial planning, and investment can serve this capaci[ty.x]v

But ecology also creates distributional conflicts. Banning an activity can destroy jobs. Making energy more expensive can hit low-income households harder. Changing transport can penalize those whose territory has been built around the automobile.

Ecological transition therefore cannot be added after the fact to a social program. Protections must precede or accompany constraints. A policy that imposes costs on the most vulnerable while leaving the consumption of the most powerful untouched destroys its own legitimacy.

We must also accept that some transformations have a net cost. Not everything can be fully compensated. Reducing certain forms of production may mean giving up part of consumption, reallocating labor, or accepting investments that are less profitable in the short term.

The democratic issue is precisely to make these costs visible and decide which are justified. A real ecological limit does not automatically determine who must pay to respect it.

The transition must therefore distinguish physical necessity from political choice. The former may be imposed by the material world; the latter remains a human decision about distribution, priorities, and protections.

The Order of Transformations and the Risk of a New Oligarchy

The order of reforms matters because a transformation can fail if its social conditions do not yet exist. Reducing certain forms of production without protecting incomes can produce a social crisis. Democratizing firms without strengthening workers' security can leave their capacity to challenge decisions fragile. Nationalizing without creating countervailing powers can simply shift the center of concentration.

A plausible sequence therefore begins by increasing capacities for refusal: social protections, labor rights, access to essential needs, and collective organization. It can then deepen economic democracy and plurality of property, before more strongly directing investment, finance, and ecological planning.

This sequence is not universal. A crisis may impose a different order. But it recalls one rule: a reform must not presuppose the autonomy it is precisely supposed to build.

We must also anticipate cross-effects. Higher taxation on capital can finance social guarantees while reducing some investment. Reduced working time can increase employment in some sectors and create tensions in others. Ecological planning can support new industries while accelerating the decline of older activities.

These tensions are not objections that cancel every reform. They are the real conditions of decision-making. A credible postcapitalist policy must say what it accepts losing, what it seeks to protect, and which costs it judges unjustifiable.

Any new architecture will also produce new powerful groups: public managers, union officials, experts, cooperative executives, administrations, elected representatives. No vocabulary immunizes them against the concentration of power.

The transition must therefore organize its own contestation: transparency, rotation of responsibilities, independent justice, freedom of the press, autonomous unions, plurality of organizations, audits, and rights of opposition. A postcapitalist institution that becomes impossible to challenge reproduces the problem it claims to solve.

The danger is not only a return to capitalism. It is also the production of another order in which the concentration of power simply changes hands.

An Experimental, Revisable Transition Capable of Reversing Its Errors

Moving beyond capitalism will probably not resemble a single date on which all old institutions disappear. Societies are too complex, economic functions too intertwined, and dependencies too numerous to be replaced in a single gesture.

Some transformations may be rapid; others will require local trials, revisions, and learning. This gradualism does not mean an absence of radicalism. A series of institutional changes can profoundly shift power if it transforms property, work, finance, essential services, and ecological limits.

Every reform must be accompanied by a criterion of failure. If a cooperative actually concentrates power in a few hands, we must be able to see it. If nationalization reduces transparency, we must be able to correct it. If an ecological policy increases insecurity without sufficiently reducing damage, we must be able to redesign it.

This also means accepting reversal when effects are bad. A policy should not be maintained solely because it corresponds to the doctrine of the camp that implemented it. Loyalty to ends must come before loyalty to instruments.

The difficulty is that no single indicator is enough. A reform can improve equality and reduce efficiency; another can increase production while concentrating power. The criteria are heterogeneous and should not be artificially collapsed into a single score.

The trade-offs will therefore have to be made explicit: autonomy, security, efficiency, justice, sustainability, quality of work, resilience, freedom of initiative. Political decision-making consists precisely in taking responsibility for how these values are weighted in a given situation.

The transition must therefore be faithful not to a plan, but to its purposes. This means accepting that some abandoned solutions may be replaced by others, including when they carried the right vocabulary.

The goal is not a pure economy. It is an economy put back in its place: a set of mechanisms chosen and corrected according to their effects on autonomy, justice, limits, and power.

We can preserve markets when they coordinate usefully, replace them when they exclude essential needs, use planning when it protects the long term, protect property when it guarantees autonomy, and limit it when it becomes domination.

Moving beyond capitalism then means shifting the center of gravity: from a society that adapts itself to the reproduction of capital toward a society that requires its economic mechanisms to justify the purposes they serve.

The general conclusion can now return to the question that has run through the entire manifesto: what freedom do we actually want to protect?

CONCLUSION

Freedom After Capitalism

Freedom Is Not Reducible to the Market

Capitalism has often succeeded in identifying its own existence with freedom itself. The ability to buy, sell, own, invest, start a business, or change employers is then presented as the principal form of economic autonomy. These freedoms matter. A society that abolished them without a credible alternative would not be freer.

But they are not enough. Freedom is not measured only by what we can choose when we have the means to choose. It is also measured by what we can refuse without losing the elementary conditions of our existence.

Someone who can leave a job without risking the loss of their home possesses more freedom than someone who must accept any condition. Someone who can receive health care without depending on their economic profitability possesses more freedom. Someone who takes part in the decisions that organize their work possesses more freedom. Someone who has time that is not entirely absorbed by the need to earn a living possesses more freedom.

The anticapitalism defended here therefore does not oppose individual freedom to collective organization. It asks which institutions make freedom real for those who today possess the least power.

The Problem Was Not Only Inequality

We could have written a manifesto against the rich. That would have been simpler. But inequality of wealth is only one part of the problem.

The heart of the critique lies elsewhere: when ownership of capital is transformed into lasting power over work, investment, housing, infrastructure, or information, the economy ceases to be merely a sphere of exchange. It becomes a political structure.

Capitalism is then problematic less because some people possess a great deal than because that possession can become a right to decide more.

This is why redistributing income without transforming the distribution of economic power is not always enough. A society can be less unequal while still being organized around institutions in which fundamental decisions belong mainly to the holders of capital.

We Did Not Seek a Perfect System

No chapter of this manifesto has proposed a mechanism capable of abolishing conflict, selfishness, error, or domination. Such a promise would be dangerous.

Cooperatives can function badly. Public services can become bureaucratic. Administrations can concentrate power. Markets can sometimes coordinate better than plans. Small businesses can be authoritarian. Democratic institutions can be captured.

The question is therefore not to finally discover the perfect institution. It is to build an order in which no mechanism can become sovereign without countervailing power.

A postcapitalist society worthy of the name will have to be capable of correcting its own institutions. It will have to tolerate opposition, experiment with several forms of property, maintain strong individual rights, and recognize that democracy is not a destination but a practice of revising power.

What Must Be Preserved

We do not want to abolish the possibility of creating an activity, inventing, exchanging, or owning the means of personal autonomy. We do not want to replace all prices with administrative orders or all firms with ministries.

We want to preserve useful capacities: initiative, decentralized information, experimentation, plurality, innovation, the possibility of exit.

But we want, as far as possible, to separate them from the unlimited concentration of economic power.

In other words, we want to keep the tools without surrendering society to them.

What Must Be Shifted

The decisive shift concerns purpose. In a capitalist society, a central part of economic activity is organized around the reproduction and expansion of capital. Firms must remain solvent, competitive, and profitable in order to survive. This constraint can be locally rational and collectively destructive.

A postcapitalist society will abolish neither costs nor the need to make trade-offs. It will still have to choose among competing uses of resources. But it will be able to state more explicitly that profitability is only one criterion among others.

Health, autonomy, justice, resilience, quality of work, free time, essential needs, ecological limits, and democratic capacity can become first-order purposes rather than corrections added afterward.

The economy does not disappear. It is put back in its place.

The Freedom Not to Be Governed by Capital

We have learned to protect the right to own. We must learn with equal force to protect those who live under the consequences of other people's property.

We have learned to protect the freedom to undertake. We must also protect the freedom not to depend entirely on the entrepreneur in order to live.

We have learned to protect the contract. We must look at the material conditions that give some people the possibility of refusing and others the necessity of accepting.

We have learned to share political power through citizenship. We still have to share more widely the economic power that organizes an immense part of our lives.

This is what moving beyond capitalism can mean: not abolishing all property, every market, or all initiative, but ceasing to accept that the accumulation of capital constitutes a permanent title to govern work, needs, and the common future.

Final Words

Capitalism is not eternal. Nor is it a simple accident that could be erased by decree. It is a set of institutions, dependencies, rights, and habits that have produced both extraordinary capacities and powerful forms of domination.

Moving beyond it therefore means doing more than denouncing it. It requires preserving what it has made possible, correcting what it has distorted, and transforming the structures that convert property into power.

The goal is not to build a society in which no one owns anything. The goal is to build a society in which no one can own enough of the world to govern others by that possession alone.

We do not yet know exactly what such a society will look like. That is a weakness only if we believe history must be written before it is lived.

But we can know in which direction to move: toward a greater real capacity to choose, refuse, participate, and live without the accumulation of some becoming the condition of existence of others.

Freedom after capitalism will not be the end of conflict. It might simply begin when we stop confusing the freedom of capital with human freedom.

NOTES

[i] OECD, Competition and market dynamism; IMF, Global Market Power and its Macroeconomic Implications (2018), doi:10.5089/9781484361672.001. The effects of competition and market power on innovation and investment are conditional and non-linear.

[ii] Jon C. Messenger, Working time and the future of work, ILO, Research Paper no. 6 (2018). The historical relationship between productivity, wages, and reduced working time does not imply that productivity gains are automatically converted into free time.

[iii] Christophe André, Household Debt in OECD Countries: Stylised Facts and Policy Issues, OECD Economics Department Working Papers no. 1277 (2016). Debt can increase vulnerability to income or employment shocks.

[iv] Jacques Charmes, The Unpaid Care Work and the Labour Market, ILO (2019); ILO, The impact of care responsibilities on women's labour force participation (2024). These works document the scale and distribution of unpaid care work.

[v] OECD, Negotiating Our Way Up (2019), doi:10.1787/1fd2da34-en. Forms of worker voice, consultation, and codetermination vary greatly; their effects depend on actual rights, context, and their articulation with direct dialogue.

[vi] IPCC, AR6 WGIII, ch. 5, Demand, services and social aspects of mitigation (2022). Preferences and behaviors interact with social norms, infrastructure, and the material architecture of choice.

[vii] OECD, Dark commercial patterns, OECD Digital Economy Papers no. 336 (2022), doi:10.1787/44f5e846-en. The report documents interfaces capable of steering, deceiving, constraining, or manipulating consumer decisions and increasing attention.

[viii] Clark, Frijters and Shields, Relative Income, Happiness, and Utility, Journal of Economic Literature 46(1), 2008; De Giorgi, Frederiksen and Pistaferri, Consumption Network Effects, Review of Economic Studies, 2020. Social comparison exists as a mechanism, but its magnitude varies by context.

[ix] OECD, Concentration and business dynamics in product markets (2025), doi:10.1787/d714066e-en; OECD, Competition and market dynamism. Digitalization, intangible assets, network effects, and acquisitions can contribute to concentration in some markets.

[x] OECD, Lobbying in the 21st Century: Transparency, Integrity and Access (2021), doi:10.1787/c6d8eff8-en. Lobbying is a legitimate practice of influence but carries risks of undue influence and asymmetry of access.

[xi] World Bank, The Business of the State (2023), doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1998-8. The study of 76,000 firms with public ownership highlights heterogeneous performance and competition effects depending on sectors and governance.

[xii] OECD, Public support to R&D and innovation; OECD, Commercialising Public Research (2013). Universities, public laboratories, and public funding contribute to innovation systems; innovation therefore does not depend exclusively on private capital.

[xiii] World Bank, World Development Report 1996: From Plan to Market. This source deals with former centrally planned economies and their problems of information, allocation, and restructuring; it does not permit generalization to every form of planning.

[xiv] OECD, 2024 Progress Report on Tax Co-operation for the 21st Century. In open economies, capital mobility and tax competition can weigh on certain national choices; the effects depend on rules and international coordination.

[xv] IPCC, AR6 WGIII, ch. 5 (2022). Demand pathways jointly depend on social factors, infrastructure, technologies, and policies; transition policies must therefore articulate ecological constraints with the material conditions of choice.

A SHORT ANTICAPITALIST MANIFESTO

Capitalism often presents itself as natural, inevitable, and without alternative. This manifesto argues the opposite.

It examines capitalism as a historical system built on accumulation, competition, commodification, and the concentration of power. It follows its effects through work, consumption, inequality, political domination, and ecological destruction.

But critique alone is not enough. This short manifesto also asks what it would mean to move beyond capitalism — not in nostalgia, but in the search for another society grounded in freedom, solidarity, and ecological limits.

Short, clear, and polemical, *A Short Anticapitalist Manifesto* is both a critique of the present order and a call to build another one.

Hieronymus Anonymus