

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)

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Émile Armand

The Critical Activity of Individualists

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One should not be mistaken: individualist anarchists are negators, destroyers, demolishers. They are those who believe in nothing, respect nothing. Nothing in fact is exempt from their critique of disintegration, Nothing is sacred.

When do they make a critique?

At every moment. Not one event or one historical fact which can not be critiqued. Not one suffering, not one sorrow, not one mourning which can not give rise to a critique; not one human drama which does not suggest a critique.

Where does one criticize?

In every milieu

How does one criticize?

With enthusiasm. With courage. With sincerity, The individualist critiques if it depended on themselves for their entourage to become an entirely individualist anarchist milieu. Without concern about the failure of those who may have preceded them, of their errors, of their blunders. In the hope and conviction that the results obtained tomorrow will be better than those obtained today.

In taking heed of the mass of difficulties overturned to reach the results already obtained. If necessary, to be alone in making the effort to arrive at a result.

Criticize by what means?

By a thousand means. By all means, By the word, by writing, by deed. By journal, by pamphlet, by book. By the public meeting room, by writing, by contradiction, By living the life of a refractory. By an existence "outside". By example. By contrast. By individualist achievements, By associations of kindred spirits to live the individualist life between themselves, by free individualist milieus where one can experiment freely and draw all the possible consequences. By the multiplication of individualist groups. By the practice of effective comradeship. By economic associations. By associations to protect comrades against the risks and the hazards they could undergo as a result of propagandizing their ideas or putting their opinions in practice. By the creation of numerous schools of , where one can be educated, when one can prepare the brain and the senses to think, want, choose, resonate, and experiment to refine themselves.

Criticize what?

Present day institutions and men. Laws, morality, dogmas, customs, conventions. Capitalist accumulation, militarism, parasitism, patriotism. Public and private education, schools, colleges, high schools, family education. Acquired facts and judged matters. Received texts and invariable opinions, immutable principles, declarations of the rights of Man, and Declarations of Independence. The ideas of borders of social inferiority, not based on scientific observation. The ideas which present day society puts forth on the family, paternal or maternal affections, friendship, obligatory monogamy, love, marriage. The respect of established things, of the past, of forefathers. Inevitable evolution, fatal determinism, religious or secular predestination. Moralism, piety, undemonstrable faith, apriori belief. Authoritarianism, parliamentarianism, centralized administrations, provisional or definitive dictatorship. The er-

roneous ideas on which surge charity, solidarity, universal love. The bourgeois in rough overalls or delicate frock coats. Important men, heads of schools, messiahs, saviors, the Catholic Pope or anticlerical magistrate. Superstitions, , childish behavior, legends, supernatural mysteries. Magistrates, judges, , customs officers, rural watchmen. The idea of work-exploitation as a regeneration; or of inactivity and idleness presented as corollaries of individualist ideas. Politeness, courtesy, honesty, prudishness as they make up the bourgeois sauce. The needs of a Cause, fanaticism and sacrifices to an ideal when they cover up only hypocrisy and lies.

Sometimes the individualist will base themselves on scientific facts and sometimes they resort to personal observation. Sometimes they invoke reason and sometimes feeling. They ridicule and make mocking remarks. Or they profoundly reflect. Or make comparisons. They prune, they cut, they amputate, they strike the iron to the wound ten or a hundred times if necessary.

Critique from what motive?

Not out of party spirit. Not out of dilettantism or snobbery, Not to create saviors, disciples or adherents. Not out of expediency to grow in number. They criticize to make a clean sweep. Once the brain is cleared, uncongealed, liberated, reason and feeling evolve, vibrant with joy, for each to erect their own conception of life, of accomplishing it, of combating the internal City. They criticize so each can lead their own life, orient their activity according to their own tendencies, their own temperament, their own character, their own aspirations to associate with others in order to live amply, with intensity and happiness.

The individualist anarchist critiques to free themselves and others.