

# To Be Anarchist

Fernand Planche

27 October 1934

To be anarchist is above all to be good; it is to think, to dream, to discuss without sectarianism. It is to hate everything that causes suffering, tears, death.

It is to understand and explain things clearly, simply, without fear of the consequences, and also without hope of a profit.

It is to reject everything that is ugly, petty, inhuman, servile and submissive.

It is to draw closer to everything that is beautiful, good, proud, just, friendly to liberty and truth.

It is to follow a straight path, without letting ourselves be distracted by the threats, nor the insults, nor the calls to treason.

It is to be a helper, to address the woes of our fellows; a struggler, to march at the head of the rebels; a thinker, to glimpse the dawn of a better day.

It is to cherish the lover, to guide the tottering steps of the child, to respect the aged, to engage in mutual aid all around us.

It is to be limited by no horizon, no border; to wish to be a brother to all humans, without concerning ourselves with races, languages or colors.

It is to climb the mountains, to race across the plains, to deliver our bodies to the waters of the stream, to the regenerating rays of the sun.

It is to savor the fine, ripe fruits, to bite into the still more beautiful fruit of love; to make of the animals a second family, faithful, loving, tender.

It is to live intensely without prejudices, without respect for outdated customs, envies, resentments, hatreds; to live two lives, is to live two times.

How many have believed they were anarchists, but were blinded by the dazzling vision. In those, banal egoism regaining the ascendancy, a false sinecure, a bare subsistence has ended the fine dream glimpsed. They were not made for that fantastic dream, nor to bear that vocation.

But, also, how many were anarchists without knowing it. All the names that, at the end of a life of courage, goodness, rebellion and generosity, have left a memory in history were worthy of our name, as well as the unknowns who struggle, suffer and die, in order that humanity advances.

Go, friend, you who read this may perhaps be hesitating, but hesitate no longer, the most beautiful of causes is offered to you.

Read, reflect, observe, discuss, analyze, understand, and launch yourself into the fray, the satisfactions will fully compensate the pains and in the evening of your life, before your eyes close forever, when in an instant the film of your existence will unfold in a very brief retrospective, no worry will come to darken your brow, no regret will blanch your lips, if it is not the regret of the dream interrupted and terminated by you.

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This short piece, published in *La Conquête du pain* No. 3 (27 Octobre 1934), exists in two slightly different forms. A manuscript version, which Shawn P. Wilbur has also translated, includes two paragraphs not found in the published version.

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