E. Armand
Mini-Manual of Individualist Anarchism
July 1st, 1911

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Essay written in 1911 and published in l'Encyclopédie anarchiste (1925–1934), work in four volumes edited by Sébastien Faure.

Translator's note: My translation of E. Armand's "Mini-Manual" was a fairly early effort, and I've been meaning to get a revised translation posted for some time now. I originally tackled the sections that had not been published by Larry Gambone much more out of curiosity than deep interest. As I've mentioned, I've done a number of translations of Armand's work without quite convincing myself of his importance. But, having finally dipped into his *Individualist Anarchist Initiation*, and finding it extremely interesting, I decided it was time to take a few hours to work over the "Mini-Manual." There are a couple of real awful errors fixed, and I think the article now more closely reflects the approach and language of Armand's more developed work.

Mini-Manual of Individualist Anarchism

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as she pleases are the initial conditions for the emancipation of woman.

The individualist-anarchist wants to live, wants to be able to appreciate life individually—life considered in all its manifestations. He remains meanwhile master of his will, considering his knowledge, his faculties, his senses, and the multiple organs of perception of his body as so many servitors put at the disposition of his *self*. He is not a coward, but he does not want to diminish himself. And he knows well that he who allows himself to be led by his passions or dominated by his penchants is a slave. He wants to maintain "the mastery of the self" in order to advance towards the adventures to which independent research and free study lead him. He will willingly advocate a simple life, the renunciation of false, enslaving, useless needs; avoidance of the large cities; a rational diet and bodily hygiene.

The individualist-anarchist will interest himself in the associations formed by certain comrades with an eye to ridding themselves of obsession with a milieu which disgusts them. The refusal of military service, or of paying taxes will have all his sympathy; free unions, single or plural, as a protestation against ordinary morals; illegalism as the violent rupture (and with certain reservations) of an economic contract imposed by force; abstention from every action, from every labor, from every function involving the maintenance or consolidation of the imposed intellectual, ethical or economic regime; the exchange of vital products between individualist-anarchist possessors of the necessary engines of production, apart from every capitalist intermediary; etc., are acts of revolt agreeing essentially with the character of individualist-anarchism.

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in themselves, who share in his propaganda of educational critique and his choice of persons; who respect the mode of existence of each individual, and do not interfere with the development of those who march forward with him and who touch him the most closely.

The individualist-anarchist is never the slave of a formula-type or of a received text. He admits only opinions. He proposes only theses. He does not impose an end on himself. If he adopts one method of life on one point of detail, it is in order to assure himself more liberty, more happiness, more well-being, but certainly not order to sacrifice himself to it. And he modifies it, and transforms it when it appears to him that to continue to remain faithful to it would diminish his autonomy. He does not want to let himself be dominated by principles established *a priori*; it is *a posteriori*, on his experiences, that he bases his rule of conduct, never definitive, always subject to the modifications and to the transformations that new experiences can suggest, and to the necessity of acquiring new weapons in his struggle against the environment—without making an absolute of the *a priori*.

The individualist-anarchist is never accountable to anyone but himself for his acts and deeds.

The individualist-anarchist considers association only as an expedient, a makeshift. Thus, he wants to associate only in cases of urgency—and always voluntarily. And he only desires to contract, in general, for the short term, it being always understood that every contract can be voided as soon as it harms either one of the contracting parties.

The individualist-anarchist decrees no fixed sexual morality. It is up to each to determine his sexual, affective or sentimental life, as much for one sex as for the other. What is essential is that in intimate relations between anarchists of differing sexes neither violence nor constraint take place. He thinks that economic independence and the possibility of being a mother

ority, since he cannot treat with the collective totality as equal to equal, and power to power;

b. the obligation (in whatever domain) of mutual aid, of solidarity, or of association;

c. the deprivation of the individual of the inalienable possession of the means of production and the complete and unrestricted disposition of the product of his labors;

d. the exploitation of anyone by any one of his fellows, who would make him labor on his account and for his profit;

e. monopolization, i.e. the possibility of an individual, a couple, a familial group possessing more than is necessary for its normal upkeep;

f. the monopoly of the State or of any executive form replacing it, i.e., its intervention—in its role as centralizer, administrator, director, or organizer—in the relations between individuals, in whatever domain;

g. the loan at interest, usury, agio, money-changing, inheritance, etc., etc.

III

The individualist-anarchist makes "propaganda" in order to highlight individualist-anarchist dispositions which have been ignore, or at the very least to bring about an intellectual atmosphere favorable to their appearance. Between individualist-anarchists relations are established on the basis of "reciprocity." "Camaraderie" is essentially of the individual order[it is never imposed. Those "comrade" whom it pleases him to associate with, will be those who make an appreciable effort to feel life

I

To be an anarchist is to deny authority and reject its economic corollary: exploitation—and to reject it in every domain of human activity. The anarchist wishes to live without gods or masters; without bosses or directors; a-legal, without laws and without prejudices; amoral, without obligations and without collective morality. He wants to live freely, to live his own idea of life. In his heart of hearts, he is always asocial, insubordinate, an outsider, marginal, an exception, a misfit. And obliged as he is to live in a society the constitution of which is repugnant to his temperament, he dwells there as a foreigner. If he makes unavoidable concessions to his environment—always with the intention of taking them back—in order to avoid risking or sacrificing his life foolishly or uselessly, it is because he considers these concessions weapons of personal defense in the struggle for existence. The anarchist wishes to live his life, as much as possible—morally, intellectually, and economically—without concerning himself with the rest of the world, exploiters or exploited, without wanting to dominate or to exploit others, but ready to respond by all means against whomever would interfere in his life or would prevent him from expressing his thought by the pen or by speech.

The anarchist's enemies are the State and all its institutions, which tend to maintain or to perpetuate its stranglehold on the individual. There is no possibility of conciliation between the anarchist and any form whatever of society resting on authority, whether it emanates from an autocrat, from an aristocracy, or from a democracy. No common ground is possible between the anarchist and any environment regulated by the decisions of a majority or the wishes of an elite. The anarchist combats, for the same reasons, the teaching furnished by the State and that dispensed by the Church. He is the adversary of monopolies and of privileges, whether they are of the in-

tellectual, moral or economic order. In a word, he is the irreconcilable antagonist of every regime, of every social system, of every state of things that involves the domination of other men or the environment over the individual, and of the exploitation of the individual by another or by the group.

The work of the anarchist is above all a work of critique. The anarchist goes, sowing revolt against that which oppresses, obstructs, or opposes itself to the free expansion of the individual being. It is proper first to rid brains of preconceived ideas, to put at liberty temperaments enchained by fear, to give rise to mindsets free from popular opinion and social conventions; it is thus that the anarchist will push all comers to go along with him to rebel practically against the determinism of the social environment, to affirm themselves individually, to sculpt their internal image, to render themselves, as much as possible, independent of the moral, intellectual and economic environment. He will urge the ignorant to instruct themselves, the nonchalant to react, the feeble to become strong, the bent to straighten. He will push the poorly endowed and less apt to draw from themselves all the resources they can and not to rely on others.

In these regards, an abyss separates anarchism from all forms of socialism, including syndicalism.

The anarchist places at the base of all his conceptions of life: the individual act. And that is why he willingly calls himself anarchist-individualist.

He does not believe that the evils men suffer come exclusively from capitalism or from private property. He believes that they are due above all to the defective mentality of men, taken as a bloc. There are only masters because there are slaves and the gods only remain because the faithful kneel. The individualist anarchist has little interest in a violent revolution, aiming for a transformation of the mode of distribution of products in the collectivist or communist sense, which would hardly bring about a change in the general mentality and which would

not bring about the emancipation of the individual being at all. In a communist regime the individual would be as subordinate as he is presently to the good will of those surrounding him: he would find himself as poor, as miserable as he is now; instead of being under the thumb of the small capitalist minority of the present, he would be dominated by the whole of the economy. Nothing would properly belong to him. He would be a producer or a consumer, put a little or take a bit from the communal heap, but he would never be autonomous.

II

The individualist-anarchist differentiates himself from the anarchist-communist in the sense that he considers (apart from property in some objects of enjoyment extending from the personality) property in the means of production and the free disposition of products as essential guarantees of the autonomy of the person. It is understood that this property is limited by the possibility of putting to work (individually, by couples, by familial groups, etc.) the expanse of soil or the engines of production required to meet the necessities of the social unit; with the condition that the possessor not rent it to anyone or turn to someone in his service to put it into use.

The individualist-anarchist no more intends to live at any price—as an individualist exploiter, for example—than he would live under regulation, provided that he was assured a bowl of soup, and guaranteed a dwelling and some clothing.

The individualist-anarchist, moreover, does not claim any system which would bind future relations. He claims to place himself in a state of legitimate defense against every social atmosphere (State, society, milieu, grouping, etc.) which would allow, accept, perpetuate, sanction or render possible:

a. the subordination of the individual being to the environment, placing the individual in a state of obvious inferi-