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Demolish Authority

Ernest Coeurderoy

1850

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To make the Revolution pass, like a red-hot iron, across this century, one thing alone must be done:

Demolish authority.

This proposition has no need of demonstration. Let each inquire within and let them say whether it is willingly or by force that they accept the fact that another proclaims themselves their master and acts as such.

Let them say if they do not believe that they are worth as much as any other.

Let them say if they are in the mood to maintain popes, emperors, kings, representatives, monopolists, doctors, teachers, judges, journalists, tribunes, directors and dictators forever.

Let them say if they do not count on being delivered from all that soon.

Let them say if that do not understand their own interests better than any other, and if it is voluntarily that they put them in the hands of strangers.

Let them say if they are not profoundly convinced that well-ordered charity begins with oneself, and that their business comes before that of others.

— And I would say to them: you are right to put your interest before that of others; nature cries out for it.

So know why your particular interest is always absorbed by a stronger interest; finally learn what isolates you from your fellows.

And you will see that it is the substitution of the sign for the thing, of the fiction for the reality, of money for labor, alms for equality, property for possession, inheritance for usufruct, encumbrance for circulation, duty for happiness.

It was not this way among the first people; each of them found in abundance what they needed. We no longer have the instruments of labor and enjoyment; is this then a reason why the division is made in an unjust manner?

We must find the wicked principle by virtue of which the greatest part of humanity finds itself excluded from the right to live. We must know why the treasures of nature and the wonders of the human mind are confiscated in advance and for all time, save for revendication.

Man! It is because of force and authority that we cease to appeal with principles.

Together, let us unmask them, behind whatever disguises, whatever pretexts, whatever holy apparatus they present themselves. They are only dangerous because they have never shown themselves naked before our eyes.