

# ENCOUNTERS

## WITH ANARCHIST INDIVIDUALISM

### Writings on Camaraderie

*Here is an example of the ways in which E. Armand's Anarchist Individualist Initiation can be used as starting place for exploring his much larger body of work. You'll find one section from the Initiation, plus the article that was its main source, as well as a selection of Armand's other works on the same topic.*

*Initiation* 176) THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF CAMARADERIE.

It is very rare to hold a conversation with an individualist without at the end of a quarter of an hour – sometimes it is after five minutes of conversation – hearing them complain about the disillusionments that the practice of camaraderie has caused them. It is whispered at first in a mysterious tone of voice, but soon, if one insists and on the condition that one will keep the secret (!) the individualist, or would-be individualist, will enumerate all the bad luck, all the disappointments, all the bitterness with which his encounters with Pierre, Paul and Jean have showered his existence. His complaints – nine times out of ten – are sincere and, why deny it, there is no doubt that camaraderie has not always given all the results that we expect.

I propose to examine very briefly if there has not been a misunderstanding in the conception that still imbues some communists ideas of fraternity and universal love, [which] a fairly large number of individualists have drawn of camaraderie.

When we analyze at all seriously the causes that have led to the disappointments attributed to the practice camaraderie, we discover this: it is that in such and such circumstances, Pierre, Paul or Jean have not conducted themselves as their comrade expected that they would or rather that they have not acted as they would have acted themselves.

All the misunderstandings between comrades have no other reason. We travel alongside a comrade for a month, a year, ten years: an event emerges, unexpected, where his attitude is absolutely opposite to the gestures that we expect from him. Disappointment? Trickery? Concealment? Words too coarse. We only know the comrade imperfectly or rather the events encountered together had not been of a nature to put them in a position to reveal his true personality.

The individualists are too inclined to forget that camaraderie is not an “obligation” or a “duty,” it is a “relativity” like all the incidents of individual life, and “experiment.” Camaraderie is above all of the individual order. We have already said it.

In vain will we accumulate mountains of gossip, if not of slander about Jean, Pierre or Paul; I wish to account by myself for the manner in which they act towards me. I do not intend any longer to espouse the quarrels of others that see in camaraderie a process of photographic reproduction – to the “moral.” What monotony if it was necessary that individualist, under the pretext of camaraderie, must repeat the gestures or attitudes of his fellow in anarchist individualism!

But before posing as a thesis that camaraderie is no more an “obligation” than an “obsession” and put forward that opinion that it is necessary not to confuse any more with

“familiarity” than with “promiscuity,” it is necessary at least to determine who is “my” or “our” comrade.

I define: our comrades are all those who show an individualist activity, all those who elaborate and endeavor to bring to realization a conception individual “life” in the anarchist sense of the word, in other words an existence and an activity conceived and lived outside the influence of the environment and in reaction against the determinism of the milieu. I insist on this point: I consider as my comrade every being which has imagined and which leads to an individualist “activity” and life in relation to his knowledge, to his experiences, to his psychological constitution, to his evaluation of the pleasure and not in relation to my aspirations or my ideal of the “individualist comrade.”

Accepting this, you will understand well that it establishes degrees and shades of camaraderie. We can correspond with a camarade, encounter them in the meetings and feel that we could stand to live in intimacy with them. Who would question it? It is a question of temperament. Camaraderie between young anarchists, twenty years old, is different from that between comrades who are in the summer or passed the autumn of life. Likewise camaraderie between nomads and those who value the comfort of an interior – between those practicing unicity in love and those practicing diversity – between diligent vegetarians and meat-eaters, – between non-smokers and smokers.

Certain temperaments can only provide the intellectual production and it would be folly to ask any sort of camaraderie of them; it would even diminish their usefulness. Others find a great deal of happiness in isolation, in the company of a single friend or in intimacy with one male or female companion - or with several - who share all the experiences of their daily lives. The important thing in all this is that does not diminish the intensity of their individualist activity.

Active by nature, it is understood that I could not find a place for intimate camaraderie with the anarchist I found sprawled on his bed at three o'clock in the afternoon, while in my closet I have a thousand pamphlets waiting to be distributed. I can continue to have an excellent relationship with him, but we will not be close.

We may cease to feel affinities of circumstances or character with a camarade; new conditions may arise that lead to the weakening or disappearance of ongoing relationships. I do not see anything in these facts that undermines the individualistic camaraderie or is likely to diminish the interest that can be generated by the activity of a given comrade. For example, I will not appreciate the effort of a camarade less because they feel determined not to spend time with me. That would not prevent me, if need be, from rendering them some service that is in my power or assisting them as best I could in their struggle against society or their propaganda.

Without wishing to set in motion a machine to explore time and defeat the campaign of the burgeoning anarchist, there is a camaraderie of greater utility than the desire for intimacy, the insistence of which may seem animated by an unhealthy curiosity. Some comrades — too few, alas! — have taken the initiative to publish broadsides, brochures and books where they defend, where they explain, and where they discuss the ideas that are dear to us. To support them with our money and our sympathy. To awaken around us the desire for emancipation, the need for reading and the thirst for knowledge. To create study groups where we seek to arouse, in those who awoke only yesterday, the disgust for the dogma and the search for free examination in all fields. If this cannot be done — or engrossing occupations only allow it in a limited way — to help those who have set themselves a similar task. Is this not the best and most enduring manifestation of camaraderie?

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*All working translations by Shawn P. Wilbur, last revised January 4, 2025.*

## SUMMARY

Section 176 of the *Anarchist Individualist Initiation* includes rewritten material from the first article in this collection, "Anarchist Camaraderie," published in *l'anarchie* July 7, 1910. This article inspired a long series of exchanges, of which the five have been included. Subsequent articles centered on the choice between anarchist individualism and anarchist communism.

Also included here is a later article by Armand, again titled "Anarchist Camaraderie," written under the pseudonym "Herman Sterne," as well as three short pieces, a poem and a longer, two-part article from *l'en dehors*, all on the subject of camaraderie.

Finally, I have included Armand's article on "Comradery" from the *Anarchist Encyclopedia*, as was as the article on "Comrade" by Gérard de Lacaze-Duthiers.

Shawn P. Wilbur, January 5, 2025.

## **Anarchist Camaraderie**

It is very rare to hold a conversation with an anarchist without hearing them lamenting after a quarter of an hour — sometimes after five minutes of conversation — about the disillusionment that the practice of camaraderie has caused them. It is whispered at first, in a mysterious tone of voice, but soon, if you insist and on the condition that it be kept secret (!), the anarchist lists all the setbacks, all the disappointments, all the bitterness with which their association with Pierre, Paul, and Jean has filled their life. Their complaints — nine times out of ten — are sincere and — why deny it? — there is no doubt that camaraderie has not always given all the results that were expected of it.

I propose to examine very briefly whether there has not been a misunderstanding in the conception that, still imbued with the communist ideas of universal fraternity and love, a fairly large number of anarchists have drawn for themselves of camaraderie — myself included, when I had a completely different idea of camaraderie than the one I have of it today.

I believed then that “the product belongs to the community or the group” and “to each according their needs.” I am of the opinion today that “the product belongs to the producer” and that “to each according to their effort.” There is a significant difference: — to each according to their needs — this is communism, even when anarchistic; to each according to their effort is anarchism — or individualist anarchism, for those who see the necessity — which I do not — of coupling these two terms. And this difference can be seen in all areas.

When we analyze at all seriously the causes that have given rise to the disappointments attributed to the practice of camaraderie, we discover this: in certain circumstances, Peter, Paul or John did not behave as their camarade expected them to do or rather that they did not act as that camarade would have acted himself.

All the misunderstandings between companions have no other motive. We travel with a camarade for a month, a year, ten years: an event arises, unforeseen, where their attitude is absolutely opposed to the gestures that were expected of them. Disappointment? Deception? Dissimulation? Too big a word. We knew the camarade only imperfectly or rather the events encountered together had not been of a nature to enable them to reveal their true personality.

Anarchists should not forget that camaraderie is not an “obligation” or a “duty” — it is a “relativity” like all incidents of anarchist life, an “experience.” Camaraderie is above all of an individual nature. In vain will one accumulate mountains of gossip, if not calumnies, on the account of John, Peter, or Paul; I want to see for myself how they will act toward me. I do not intend to espouse the quarrels of others any more than to see in camaraderie a process of photographic reproduction — morally. How monotonous it would be if each

anarchist, under the pretext of camaraderie, had to repeat the gestures or attitudes of their neighbor in anarchism. To hell with the anarchist City in that case!

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But before postulating that camaraderie is no more an “obligation” than an “obsession” and expressing the opinion that it should no more be confused with “familiarity” than with “promiscuity,” it would be necessary at least to determine what « my » or « our » camarade is. I define: our comrades are all those who display an anarchist activity, all those who elaborate and strive to bring to fruition a conception of an anarchist individual “life,” in other words an existence and an activity conceived, lived outside the influence of the milieu and in reaction against the determinism of the milieu. I insist on this point: I consider as my camarade any being who has imagined and who leads an anarchist “activity” and life, in relation to their knowledge, their experiences, their psychological constitution, their appreciation of happiness and not in relation to my aspirations or my ideal of the “anarchist camarade.”

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This being admitted, it will be very well understood that there are degrees and nuances in camaraderie. One can correspond with a camarade, meet in meetings and feel that one could not bear to live in intimacy with them. Who will dispute it? A question of temperament! The camaraderie between young anarchists of eighteen years is different than that between comrades who are in the summer of life and entering the autumn. Likewise the camaraderie between nomads and those who appreciate the comfort of an interior, — between practitioners of unity in love and practitioners of diversity — between assiduous vegetarians and carnivores, — between non-smokers and smokers.

Certain temperaments can only provide intellectual production and it would be madness to ask them for another kind of camaraderie; it would even diminish their usefulness. Others find a greater amount of happiness in isolation, in the company of a single friend or in the intimacy of a companion who shares all the experiences of their daily life. The important thing in all this is that it does not diminish the intensity of their anarchist activity.

Active by nature, it will be understood that I cannot find room for intimate camaraderie with the anarchist I meet sprawled on his bed at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, while in my closet I have a thousand pamphlets waiting to be distributed. I could continue to have excellent relations with him; we will not be intimate friends.

And besides, is it necessary for individual development that one throws the details of one's intimate life to others as fodder? I do not think so. My house is not made of glass. I want to be allowed to live my life according to my anarchist conception (my own): there are many hours when I leave the door locked in order to collect myself, to enjoy the scent of yesterday's joyful experiences or even to meditate on the painful failures of today.

The best camarade is ultimately oneself, or one who completes or extends you: a companion, male or female, — less directly: the two or three friends to whom you are attached by intimate affinities.

One can cease to feel affinities of circumstance or character with a camarade; new conditions can intervene that postulate a weakening or the disappearance of ongoing relations. I see nothing here that undermines anarchist camaraderie or which is likely to diminish the interest that the activity of a given camarade can arouse. If a camarade feels determined to no longer associate with me, for example, I will not appreciate their anarchist work any less. This cannot prevent me, if necessary, from rendering them such service in my power or from assisting them as best I can in their struggle against society or in their propaganda.

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Anarchists, moreover, have never conceived of the Anarchist City as a phalanstery. The anarchist species is scattered all over the earth and not penned in an ark.

I sometimes let myself imagine — I am an incorrigible mystic — the living conditions of anarchists in an anarchist society (?). I understand well that there can be a contribution — in common — to the common activity. This is, I believe, the most economical method of producing the essential utilities, but I imagine that once the share of individual activity has been provided, each would be happy to arrange their own life as they please — one to devote themselves to study, another to find their companion, a third to devote themselves to artistic work, a fourth to wander with friends along the banks of a cool stream, etc., etc., but it would not be worth having rebelled against imposed solidarity in order to place oneself under the yoke of obligatory camaraderie.

Apart from the question of anarchist activity, my camarade will never be anyone but the one toward whom my sympathy draws me.

Without wanting to start a time machine and combing the countryside of an anarchist future, I see a camaraderie of greater utility than more or less spiritual outdoor games, too frequent walks together or a desire for intimacy whose insistence seems to me to be animated by an unhealthy curiosity. A few camarades — unfortunately too few in number — have taken the initiative to publish sheets, brochures, books in which they defend, expose, discuss the ideas that are dear to us. Let us support them, with our money, with our sympathy. Let us awaken around us the desire for emancipation, the need to read, the thirst for knowledge. Let us create study groups where we will seek to arouse, in those who were awakened yesterday, disgust for dogma, the search for free examination in all areas. If we cannot do it — or if our absorbing occupations allow us to do it only in a limited way — let us help those who have taken up such a task.

It is painful to note that in the countryside socialism is progressing, while anarchism is barely making inroads. This leads me to conclude that the best camaraderie is still to facilitate the task of those who are trying to accomplish the anarchist selection, that is to

say, to bring to us the brains capable of first understanding, then of deepening anarchist ideas.

E. Armand.

*L'anarchie*, July 14, 1910.



## OUR CORRESPONDENCE

### Anarchist Camaraderie

*to Armand*

A sentence from your last article astonished me. All the more so since, in my opinion, you deal with the idea that you bring us a little too quickly.

"I am of the opinion today that the product belongs to the producer" and that it is "to each according to their effort."

Certainly, there are people who have a somewhat authoritarian conception of communism. For them, it is a religion and they see communist humanity under the aspect of a more or less disciplined herd. The individual disappears before Society and the rights and aspirations of each must give way to social interest. Now it is obvious that compulsory communist solidarity repels us as much as the patriotic fraternity imposed today, but this conception is not that of the anarchists.

Is the new conception of human relations that you present compatible with camaraderie? Is our ideal "To each according to their needs" or, as you claim, "To each according to their works"?

"To each according to their works" is wage labor, it is collectivism, it is the evaluation of labor and remuneration proportionate to the effort. If my strength does not allow me to do as much "hard work" as you, I would then be — by virtue of your singular theory — placed in a state of inferiority when it comes to the satisfaction of my needs. Having worked more than me, you will have the right to consume more! And if I am sick, and if I feel the need for rest or solitude... nothing to eat! That is a bizarre conception of camaraderie.

Much more logical is the formula "To each according to his needs." It implies the disappearance of wage labor, of all authoritarian control of production and of all arbitrary regulation of consumption. Liberty to produce and consume, free labor and taking from the heap, these are in my opinion the living conditions capable of guaranteeing to each one the greatest possible sum of happiness. On the sole condition, it is certain, that men have become more conscious and that their prejudices and their passions do not come to compromise the balance of social relations.

And as I do not like to play on words, it matters little to me whether this conception is called communism or camaraderie.

But the capitalist theory “To each according to his labor” results in the maintenance of the current social mechanisms. I am surprised to see you advocate a thesis that engenders control, surveillance, statism and... parasitism!

Permit me to believe that this has nothing anarchist about it.

André LORULOT

P. S.. As for the necessity — which you do not see — to associate the two terms anarchism and Individualism, I understand it very well for my part. It is easy to see that, unless he is unilluminated or a loudmouth, the anarchist is above all an individualist. — He rebels and fights against authority — out of selfishness, only. Imitating neither the troublemaker nor the mystic, he works to live more... But these are things of which no one is unaware.

A. L.



*L'anarchie*, July 21, 1910.

## OUR CORRESPONDENCE

### Anarchist Comradeship

*To Lorulot*

Since I literally have no time, I will only respond to your objections in a few lines.

Certain anarchists (individualists) of whom I am one, believe that any society that does not allow the producer free disposal of their product would be as authoritarian from an economic point of view as the one that we are subjected to.

Without prophesying the advent of the anarchist golden age, I claim in theory the possibility of doing what I want with my product, of exchanging it or keeping it for my own needs, of destroying it even, if that pleases me. I also mean, in the case of an exchange, to want to take account of the destination of my product: to which consumer it will go and for what use it will serve. I also want to be able to be uninterested in it.

As an anarchist, — not communist — I consider my production as a result of my own effort and I intend to remove it, like the details of my intellectual or private life, from any control of the State or of civil servants; delegates of any community or even of communist statisticians-distributors. I want to deal with selected individuals to dispose of my production and not with the masses, even if they should call themselves anarchists,

It is clear that by speaking of dealing from producer to producer I imply the disappearance of the capitalist or hoarder, of the parasite (rentier, etc.), of the speculative intermediary, and nearly that of the idler, communist or not.

In an article under study, I will discuss this thesis in depth by comparing it to the method of putting on and taking from the heap.

E. ARMAND



*L'anarchie*, July 28, 1910.

## On Camaraderie

Armand is right when he points out the current state of mind of anarchists on the subject of camaraderie. Of course, we hear only complaints, recriminations, accusations. Everyone complains about his neighbor, and whether these lamentations are slanderous or justified, they nonetheless reveal a regrettable situation, for which Armand does not give the real reasons and for which he does not indicate any remedy.

Now, it is not enough to note what is. It is more useful to know why it is so and to investigate whether it could not be otherwise. Instead of contenting ourselves with moaning about what we call the lack of camaraderie, let us look at the question as it presents itself.

First of all, it is obvious that disillusionment can only occur in someone who possesses illusions. The disappointments experienced in the field of camaraderie are all the more painful the more faith one had placed in it. Many comrades believed that the realization of this great word “camaraderie” was easy, that one could immediately, without preparation, without selection, practice the most complete fraternity. These ones were mistaken; they realize it and protest! Disillusioned, skeptical, they then come to proclaim, with disgust and resentment, the failure of all camaraderie...

These friends exaggerate and show that they have never understood anything about the things they claimed to practice. Conceived in bad conditions, an experiment can fail. I would even say, that it “must” fail, that it is necessary that it fail. Let us therefore seek the elements of a happier experiment and better conditions, allowing to obtain more interesting results.

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I do not entirely adopt the definition given by Armand of the Comrade: “The comrade is the one who shows an anarchist activity, who elaborates and strives to bring to fruition a conception of an anarchist individual ‘life’ — in other words an existence and an activity

conceived, lived outside the influence of the atmosphere and in reaction against the determinism of the milieu.”

It is certain that we sympathize with all those who revolt against the current social form and enter into struggle with the prejudices and institutions that crush us. But is this not a very platonic camaraderie? Two individuals call themselves anarchists, profess the same hatreds, experience identical hopes, formulate very similar theories and criticisms — but in their daily existence they continue to carry out the same crushing gestures as their contemporaries. If we do not try now to practice solidarity and mutual aid, what value will our theories have? Must we always be content to phrase, speculate, dream, while continuing to wallow in the same quagmire?

I do not see the possibility for a man to live his individual anarchist conception of life without coming into contact with other humans. Now, our relations can only be based on struggle — open or hypocritical — or on solidarity.

Determinists, we know that men are led to the conception of struggle and competition because they have not understood, in a sufficiently clear and convincing way, what their true interests consist of.

Serious and reasoned egoism leads the individual to union with association. It associates his efforts with those of an individual possessing the same interests as him, so that the chances of success of both are increased. Altruism, sacrifice, devotion are religious terms, used by moralists, but which observation and study reduce to nothing. At the bottom of all these “beautiful” feelings we always find this “vile” egoism stigmatized by all, which animates all our actions, bad or good.

Partisans of camaraderie by interest, by egoism, we cannot practice it with improper and defective elements. If I extend my hand to my neighbor in danger, it is only because I am eager that on occasion he acts in the same way towards me. But if he takes advantage of my support and loses interest in me — I am fooled, I must adjust my attitude according to his and stop doing him a favor. What joy and what use could I find in facilitating the existence of the one who shows himself indifferent or hostile? Can I be in solidarity with the viper who threatens me? Can I be “friends” with the cop, with the boss, with the prison guard? Can I make camaraderie with the alcoholic, the brute, the madman? And he who does not want to reason, or who seeks to impose his authority on me, or who stamps me, do they deserve that I be fraternal towards them?

A hundred other circumstances will be encountered where temperaments will not be able to balance each other, where understanding will be impossible. It is not enough that this or that person calls himself anarchist and has the word camaraderie on his lips. This is why I don't like Armand's definition very much. For me, a comrade is someone who consciously seeks to make my life easier in order to benefit from an attitude of reciprocity. A comrade is someone who not only will not bother me, will never brutalize me, but will also never try to impose anything on me. He will be respectful of my individuality, my aspirations, my tastes and if he obviously keeps the right to criticize me, it will be as a

comrade who is interested in my happiness, my development and not as an authoritarian and pretentious censor. To judge and discuss my actions, he will have to make an effort to put himself in my place, with my temperament, my organism and my feelings.

It is useless to say what effective support I, as well as everyone else, can expect from real camaraderie. My capacity to react against the atmosphere is considerably increased, I am stronger to fight and to tear from the milieu the legitimate satisfactions that it refuses me.

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It therefore appears that the realization of camaraderie is closely linked to the following two factors:

1. Elevation of individual consciousness;
2. Selection of comrades.

The first condition is indispensable. How can one be a comrade towards others if one is not capable of being one first towards oneself? And how many individuals are there, however, who, towards themselves, act unfavorably, behave like brutes, waste their existence and rush towards suffering, towards illness, towards death? Because they are ignorant and stupid, because they are still imbued with the usual stupidities and wickedness. So when they have acquired a more enlightened conscience; when they act more reasonably and lead a more logical life, they will be capable of bringing to others a less suspect camaraderie, a less vain and less proud temperament, ways of doing things that are truly fraternal and affectionate.

As soon as the educated, more conscious individual has become enamored of a freer and more rational life, he turns to his fellow men. He seeks the friends he needs. He observes temperaments, studies their manifestations. When he feels drawn to a frank and good nature, or when he believes he finds in some the qualities of friendship and tolerance, without which no sociability is possible, he can then attempt an experiment in serious camaraderie. It may fail, of course, because we are not perfect and there is no question of becoming so. What we must know is how to tolerate the imperfections of our neighbor, so that he will consent to the concessions that our character requires.

The disillusionments encountered are understandable when we consider our personal mediocrity and the general corruption. But camaraderie is not a myth. On the contrary, it is the essential goal towards which our efforts must tend and I think, for my part, that we can achieve it by working to improve ourselves, and then by understanding that fraternity is not a panacea and that its exercise cannot do without an intelligent selection among the men who surround us.

HAËL



## OUR CORRESPONDENCE

### **Anarchist Camaraderie**

*to E. Armand*

You hardly answer the objections that I have formulated and we will have to wait for more complete explanations from you, to draw some profit from this discussion.

What nevertheless appears as a point established is that you intend to abandon the communist-anarchist thesis, which is symbolized by the formula "From each according to their ability; to each according to their needs." You claim for the producer the right of ownership of their product, the right to dispose of it as they please; either for their personal satisfaction or for exchange with another producer. Each, being free to labor at will, could nevertheless consume only the equivalence of their production. And you claim that such relations between men would lead to the disappearance of the capitalist-grabber, the parasite and the idler...

But this system of tariffed production and regulated consumption is the current social organization!

The men of today have the same idea as you. As long as they have "scratched" a lot, they have the right to "absorb" a lot. By what right would the weak or the idler come to sit at the common table? And yet what could be more absurd than to take the capacity for production as a criterion of needs? Only my capacity for consumption can determine the satisfaction of my needs.

It was probably such a state of mind that presided over the origins of property and, subsequently, of wage labor. At the beginning it was still relatively easy to exchange products, between producers or between owners. He who had too much meat could barter some of it for an animal skin, or for some ornament or instrument that excited his covetousness.

Then, when needs increased, trade appeared, with the swarms of intermediaries, usurers, traffickers. The exchange-value also appeared, because it was soon no longer possible to deal directly. The clog maker could not continually "pay" his baker with shoes that the latter did not need. Or else the two producers present did not possess the commodities capable of satisfying each other. The exchange value, — shell, precious stone, coin, then bank note and financial obligation! — came to replace very logically the direct exchange of products. I do not see at all how your system of production and consumption could function without the assistance of some monetary value. How do you expect the friend, mason or metallurgist, to be able to exchange the value of his effort with all the workers who carry out the things that he cannot do without? Will he have to go and

find the peasant, the weaver, the painter in turn? And how will he associate with the workers of the same profession as him, whose assistance he cannot, however, avoid?

Such a hypothesis is absolutely impossible to envisage, because it is purely absurd. The direct exchange of their products could not be organized directly between all producers.

It could only be done by causing a considerable loss of time and energy and by leading to the disappearance of a very large number of industries — which would lead us to live a rudimentary existence, on the necessity of which it would be good, above all, for us to agree.

Or else, the only logical solution will have to intervene: indirect exchange with the help of a conventional value accepted by all. But this implies the existence of private or public capitalism. These shoes that I cannot go and sell right and left to consumers — who must at the same time be able to provide me with a commodity that I consider useful — these shoes I will have to deliver to an intermediary cog whose purpose will be to make them available to potential buyers. Whether it is at the shop of the boss to whom I deliver my merchandise, or at the common store, managed by a civil servant, it will always be necessary that in exchange for my shoes, for my work, I be given a receipt, a work order — or a piece of metal — which will then serve me to obtain the essential or the superfluous desired.

This is why I said the other day that the application of your system brings us straight back to wage labor. Perhaps my idea thus developed, it will be better understood?

You do not want to have relations with the mass, but simply with selected individuals. Will it still be necessary for these individuals to be able to provide each member of the association with everything he will need? Do you really believe that you will never need to come into contact with neighboring groups and thus be able to completely ignore the rest of humanity?

On the other hand, if the comrades with whom you will live have been selected, that is to say if they are designated to live a more logical existence, why would you need to build barriers around everyone, thus perpetuating competitions and struggles?

Because finally, a reflection is necessary. You fear the idle or the lazy communist, thus repeating a vulgar and poor objection, monopolized until now by our collectivist detractors. I do not want to discuss now the ill-founded nature of this apprehension, but to expose all the reasons and all the facts that predict the disappearance of the idler in a better organized society. I admit for a moment the value of your objection — I suppose that there are idle people; other idle people than the intermediaries and the controllers who, as we have just seen, will inevitably be engendered by wage labor.

Well, these idle people who have not produced, or have not carried out a production parallel to the needs they feel, what do you do with them? They obviously do not have the right to consume. Will they accept this state of affairs? Alas, it is to be assumed, my poor Armand, that in your society, we will soon see the appearance of policemen, the functioning of courts and the construction of prisons.

Thus, “to each according to his works” is indirect exchange, it is money, it is wage labor. And it is also property, with its corollary theft, as well as regulation and authority in all their forms.

You know, moreover, that this concept is not new, Tucker and some American individualists have long propagated it, declaring themselves supporters of individual property.

Any clear-sighted mind understands with ease that social ills, and all miseries and all restrictions come from this imbecile *idea* of property. It is against this prejudice that we must fight to rid ourselves of all its consequences — which I have only pointed out in a quick and superficial way, because I believe that every anarchist must know the grievances that our communism formulates against the capitalist and oppressive system.

I therefore remain a communist. No fraternity with all your petty barriers and your stupid egoisms! This beautiful and logical thing that we call Solidarity cannot accommodate the foolish mistrust professed by today's narrow-minded people. But to live true and complete camaraderie we need conscious and good men — and that is why the urgent task consists in trying to manufacture some.

André LORULOT.



*l'anarchie*, August 4, 1910.

## OUR CORRESPONDENCE

### On Camaraderie

*to Haël*

1. I engage in camaraderie because I find a reasoned advantage in it, a sentimental profit or, if you prefer, because it is useful to me, or because I am determined to do so. All expressions that are equivalent.

And this because I am an anarchist (individualist), therefore “egoistic” as Lorulot very well defines it.

We agree.

If I engaged in “camaraderie” because it is good behavior among anarchists to be a “good buddy,” or because article N of the “Manual of the Perfect Anarchist” prescribes it or for any other cause external to my judgment, — in other words if I engaged in camaraderie out of “duty,” I would immediately cease being an anarchist.

2. It follows that if intimate association with an anarchist causes me more displeasure than joy, I will stop associating with them. Otherwise we would risk imposing ourselves on

each other. It may indeed be that their conception of « their life » as anarchist is the antithesis of mine. So all that remains for us is to go our separate ways.

Shall I conclude that they are less of a camarade than I am? Not at all. I will deduce that our affinities — in this or that domain — are not of a nature to allow us to live together.

I therefore think I am logical in sticking to this thesis that: camaraderie is of the individual order.

Moreover, — I repeat myself intentionally — the fact that I do not feel determined to live side by side with a comrade does not mean that I am not interested in their activity or that I would not try to get them out of a bad situation, if necessary, or to do them a favor.

Camaraderie is not measured at all by the use of the pronoun “you” or the noun “camarade.” I would judge myself a complete imbecile if I took offense because John Henry Mackay calls me “Sir” in our correspondence. A matter of education or temperament.

There are anarchists whose ideal is a hut in the depths of a wood or an isolated cabin on the edge of the ocean. I know others with gigantic lavalieres, commoners, beggars of handshakes all around. Again, a matter of temperament. Which judge will decide that this one is more fraternal than that one?

3. It may be that we both have different conceptions of “anarchist camaraderie.” Those who join us should take advantage of it. For my part, I think that unless camaraderie is of an individual nature, it assumes the character of an obligation. It ceases from then on to be anarchist.

All I ask of you, my dear Haël, is not to send me a policeman to force me to eat from the same bowl as you, if my “egoism” does not find reason to rejoice in it. Just as with Lorulot, I will ask next week, in case I prefer to keep for myself, destroy or exchange my product directly with a group of producers for example, not to send me a communist policeman to force me to put it in the heap.

E. Armand.

## **Anarchist Camaraderie**

According to the newspapers in mass circulation, nothing astounds public opinion more than the lack of attention paid by anarchists to the criminal records or civil status of their camarades.

— So one anarchist welcomes another like that, without questioning them about their resources or means of living, without asking them to show their military record book or their latest rent receipt.

Alas, yes, good people, that is how it is. A camarade to us, *a priori*, is anyone who professes anarchist ideas, that is to say, anyone who fights exploitation and authority, anyone who wants to free themselves from the constraints of the State or the oppression of the Social Milieu, anyone who finally propagandizes in this sense. None of us will ask them where they come from or where they are going. None of us will ask them for letters of recommendation. We will care very little whether they exercise a profession recognized by the police or whether their profession is, on the contrary, one of those condemned by social conventions. We may not receive them in our home, but if we do, we will not subject them to any interrogation.

They will come in freely, and leave the same way. And we will not ask the dust of the road in which direction they have taken their steps.

If it were a question of getting to know the anarchist who, in passing, knocked at our door and to whom we opened, it is not on the esteem or distrust that “honest people,” “respectable persons,” or their delegates may entertain for them that we would base our opinion. We would leave it to the passage of time to reveal whether we were not mistaken, in believing that we had discovered with whom we intended to share our roof the affinities of one order or another, which make possible a more intimate camaraderie than casual frequentation.

We do not even worry about the good or bad impression that this or that camarade has produced on others than us — even anarchists. It is in relation to ourselves, taken individually, that camaraderie is determined. And we accept responsibility for it.

\* \* \*

There was a time when everyone knew that anarchist was synonymous with irregular. No one was surprised then that our people were “without gods or masters,” “without faith or law,” “without hearth or home.” Other times have come. Former outsiders have become settled and established men: they have made their way in revolutionism or insurrectionism as others make a career in hosiery or lemonade. Some now pose as socially irreproachable; the liberal bourgeoisie considers them as “consciences, although anarchists,” their concierges greet them, the neighbors are full of praise for their

respectable appearance, and, *in petto*, the journalists consider them as colleagues. But when an anarchist violently disturbs the tranquility of the frog pond, where, confused, friendly patentees, obsequious chatterboxes and pen-pushers flounder, what a thunder of horrified croaking! They can't believe it, the poor things! That, anarchists?

But yes, men who are made to smile by the formalities of legalism, — who care little or nothing about being called by this or that name, — who are indifferent to nationality or criminal record, that is what the anarchists are. If they are aware of being forced members of “society,” they are no less aware that *they are not morally part of it*. They do not feel any more indebted to it than a slave does to the master who holds them in chains. That is why, among camarades, we do not ask ourselves if “our papers are in order” or “what we live on.”

Make no mistake about it. Even if he were the most honorable on the outside, the anarchist — unless his anarchism is nothing other than a snob's facade or an intellectual's parade — the anarchist will always find himself, when the time comes: a demolitionist, a denier, a refractory, unscrupulous, an outsider to prejudices — a camarade finally, if not in this domain, at least in that one. Now, between beings who, with regard to a social pact that embraces and crushes them, have made a clean sweep of scruples and prejudices, one cannot however ask to base camaraderie on the reputation or renown that they have acquired with society.

Hermann STERNE

*l'en dehors*, October 31, 1925.

TO JUDGE the behavior of a a comrade, male or female, according to YOUR criterion for anarchist life, and not according to THEIR OWN, is to do the work of a legislator or lawgiver, but not that of an anarchist. So, you WHO JUDGE, why do you call yourselves anarchists?



*l'en dehors*, mid-February, 1927.

Complete camaraderie involves advantages, but it also involves disadvantages. Our idea of camaraderie entails that we accept both.

It knows nothing of the “so much the worse for you.” — E. Armand



*l'en dehors*, late November, 1928.

### **To be added to the chapter on “effective camaraderie”**

Knowing the difficulty anarchist ideas (and especially individualist anarchists) have in becoming known to the general public — knowing that writers, individualist propagandists are generally deprived of the possibilities required to make known outside their particular circles the theses that are dear to them — if I were anything influential or listened to in a publishing house, I would do everything in my power to ensure that the publisher who employs me publishes and makes widely known any anarchist work about which I am consulted — and this all the more so since the said work would react against the customary form of the volumes generally put on sale.

Given the insipidity and nullity of the books currently offered to the average reader, I would believe, by acting thus, that I was simply behaving as a comrade with regard to the author of the work concerning which I was asked for my opinion. And very modestly at that. — At least that is my opinion. — E. Armand.

### **The True Camarade**

Worthy, you are far too dignified to bear the thought that someone might have given more than you have received —

or that the one who gives to you might suspect that they have received less than their contribution —

I know well that you will say, "Fair is fair..." —

and that you consider yourself "an egoist among the egoists" —

But egoist, you are much too egoist —

to admit that, being able to give pleasure to someone in your world —

you would refuse yourself the delight of doing so —

I am well aware that you speak constantly of "reciprocity" —

but you never believe you have paid enough for a smile, reimbursed a kind word, acquitted a sign of sympathy —

you are much too individual to accept that, in their relations with you, that one of your own should have reason to fear that they have not been paid in return —

You insist, to all who will listen, that you are only bound by the terms of the contract that you have concluded with one of your own —

but I have seen you, a thousand times, torment yourself, wrack your brain, asking yourself —

if you have exactly fulfilled your obligations —

"exactly" —

that is, exactly as intended by the one who had contracted with you —

at the moment when you signed it —

You are much too "unique," too proud —

to not exhaust, to the utmost extreme —

the capacity to give, to make and to satisfy —

in order not to leave, hands empty and their desire unfulfilled, the one of your own who reached out to you —

imagining you rich in possibilities...

## CAMARADERIE

### I

I continue to maintain the opinion that I expressed many years ago and the events that I am witnessing will not influence my way of seeing. I consider, in relation to the human race, the anarchist individualists in our manner as a particular psychological species. It is neither by caprice, nor by chance, nor by dilettantism that I have given this journal the title *l'en dehors*. I regard the individualist in our manner as a being apart, anomalous; I say very *anomalous*, in other words irregular, exceptional. It is good, from time to time, to return to what we consider as the very basis of our propaganda, of the achievements that we pursue.

You have to know nothing about life, never have approached men to claim that our aspirations and our demands are the same as those of the majority. It seems, it is true, that the majority is, as much as we are, in search for the better being. But it conceives this better being only as achievable within certain limits, relative to a certain statism. It seems that the multitude are, as much as we are, in search of material pleasures, but it conceives the obtaining of these pleasures only as admitted by the social whole, controlled by its representatives. In other words, the crowd is eager for satisfactions, but it wants them to be safe, reassuring satisfactions.

The State, the Church, the law, the police and other institutions of the same kind are the manifest expressions of this statism and, in more or less organized social groupings, they have always existed. To understand this existence well, it is necessary to analyze the state of mind of the normal members of ordinary human societies: these people live on an established basis — economic, religious, intellectual, moral, it does not matter — that procures for them a certain amount of happiness; they fear nothing so much as to see all or part of this happiness taken away from them, however imperfect it may be. Hence the creation of organizations guaranteeing that no harm will be done to it and that if harm is done, it will be done slowly and without upheaval of the general mentality.

It would be wrong to believe that this turn of mind is specific to the human race. Imagine an innovator who sets out to change the order of colonies of social insects: he would be, without any consideration, either exterminated or thrown out of the colony. The same is true everywhere where animals live in herds: the reformer of age-old practices would have no chance of success there. It is instinctive and it is normal.

We are not unaware that from time to time, in human societies, a revolution breaks out. A bearer of new ideas, a group of ideologues — I give pride of place to revolutionaries — gathers supporters around them. These supporters have not in any way imbued themselves with this ideology, moreover. Most of the time, they are discontented

people, irritated by the inferior situation in which circumstances have placed them, but their inner statism does not differ in any way from that of the reactionaries, from those who hold to the "old ideas." Revolutionaries can seize power, but as soon as the fever of uncertainty has fallen, as soon as the pendulum of normalization has resumed its customary course, it is seen that the transformation has been only superficial. No more than before the revolution do the members of the social milieu now governed by the revolutionaries want risk for risk's sake, adventure for adventure's sake, experience for experience's sake. They are content to identify as counter-revolutionaries and to hunt down those who want to lay hands on the newly established state of affairs.

The human race is as ready to accept anarchist communism, if it could be established by force, as it has accepted or accepts absolute monarchy, democracy, fascism. The human race instinctively turns to the victor, because it expects that he will assure it stability. It is much more to stability that it aspires than to a particular form of government. Normally, it asks to be governed, that is to say, stabilized.

It will be objected to me that even based on theocracy or the most rigorous autocracy, human societies or their administrators have always admitted the existence of a certain critical spirit, a certain freedom of thought, even a certain possibility of behaving in an original way. But where it has been tolerated, it is much more on the part of the privileged than of the socially disinherited. The privileged hold on to their privileges and we know that they are more rebellious than reformers or innovators. Provided that we let them say and do, without it resulting in too much scandal, they will end up keeping quiet. The one who is dissatisfied with his fate has long teeth, and the wealthy know very well that if they give them *carte blanche*, they will not rest until they have replaced them.

With this exception, normal societies require that those they enclose willingly or by force conform, as a last resort, to the average conception of the milieu, whether from an ethical or an economic point of view. The nonconformist must keep quiet, fall into line; otherwise, because it does not want him to disturb it, the social milieu will get rid of him: by murder, by prison, by deportation. This process is regular; scientifically and morally explicable and justifiable, if one places oneself at this point of view that one would have the bad grace to forget: every organism is conservative by instinct.

—O—

The anarchist individualist anomaly consists in the possession of an *internal* individual dynamism, which allows the one who is endowed with it to feel capable of doing without the State to regulate his individual relations with other men. This state of being triggers a whole series of attitudes among which we will note the following: passionate search for benefits, pleasures, personal balances, new or renewed; denial of the fact established from a social point of view; moral nonconformism; intellectual insubordination, etc. We will not seek the origins of this inner dynamism. We do not want to quibble with those who claim that it exists in all humans in a latent state. We note that currently *some* human

beings affirm themselves capable of living anarchically, of serving as a law unto themselves. Each for himself, has his risks and perils, sometimes isolated, sometimes associated, while the human race, in general, declares or recognizes that to exist, subsist and endure, it cannot do without an archist system, in other words an organization, territorial today, global perhaps tomorrow, which determines, arbitrarily or democratically, the form of the relations of men between them.

The anarchist individualist holds as null and void the human association, which encompasses him or holds him against his will within it, which binds him to obligations he never subscribed to, which forces him to contribute to charges for which he never assumed responsibility; which constrains him to practice mores to which he never gave his consent.

The members of normally organized human societies are ready for all concessions, provided that their tranquility is not disturbed. And this is what the State guarantees them by throwing aside those who seriously threaten to disturb the customary tranquility.

We do not see between the two mentalities a possibility of fusion. We do not think that the *en dehors* and the *en dedans*, the outsiders and the insiders, can live in harmony. It is impossible for us to imagine that archists and anarchists can pursue a similar goal, present similar demands, nourish identical aspirations. Between the anarchist individualist species and the human race in general, there can, in our opinion, be no connection.

—O—

All this does not mean that the individualist in our way is neither sociable — nor supportive — nor sentimental — that the spirit of compassion is lacking. As we conceive him, the individualist is perfectly capable of executing the terms of a contract that he would have *freely* entered into, even if the said clauses were a hundred times more rigorous than those *imposed*, to achieve a similar goal, by the anarchist society. The anarchist individualist wants to make his own destiny, according to his personal determinism — even if this process were more disadvantageous to him than to rely on the directives of a milieu in which he does not recognize the right to decide for him. The individualist in our manner does not reject, *a priori*, to deal ON AN EQUAL FOOTING with human societies. What he asks for is not to force others to live his aspirations, but the ability to seek out and reveal to themselves those whose nature is similar to his own. What the anarchist individualist wants is — without encroaching on the being or having of others — to find himself in conditions that allow him to live the existence that seems to him most likely to grant him the maximum of palpable and tangible satisfactions — satisfactions of an economic or sensory or intellectual nature. — This without having to fear, under the pretext of obedience to a code, to a standard, to a scale not accepted by him, the intervention, intrusion or interference of a “guardian of order.” For him and those with whom he associates, at his own risk and peril and theirs.

We persist in believing that those who espouse this individual and anarchist conception of life are decidedly few in number, that they constitute a milieu on the fringes of the vulgar social milieu, a world outside the ordinary world. Perhaps the number of those « en dehors » cannot exceed a certain figure. We do not know.

But the constituents of this species, which currently claims to be able to do without the tutelage of the State to accomplish its destiny, are necessarily led to maintain relations *among themselves*, relations all the more frequent — ethically or morally speaking — even relations of an economic nature — as they will reduce to a minimum the relations that they can maintain with statist, social conformists and other archists.

We designate under the name of *camaraderie* the set of relations that the constituents of the anarchist individualist space maintain mutually.

It remains for us to ask ourselves in what sense *camaraderie* can be understood, in order to be profitable to individualists as we conceive them and to demonstrate that they can do without the State.

## II

In the first part of this study, I described anarchist individualism — this is THE THESIS OF *L'EN DEHORS* — as the expression of a “species” or a “milieu,” with psychological traits, with clearly marked ethical characteristics — *negation of the usefulness of state or governmental authority and of the institutions that it bribes or supports to establish or establish relationships or agreements between individuals*. — We situate this species in the present, wanting no more domination of the past than exploitation of the future.

The anarchist individualist of yesterday has already returned to dust. The anarchist individualist of tomorrow has not yet risen from nothingness. Only the *current* camarade interests us, because he is the only element of experimentation that can live, *in our company*, our theses or our propositions.

To claim that reason or science will *later* lead all humans to adopt, to live the anarchist individualist conception of life is more than a hypothesis; it is an act of faith. No one knows what reason or science will lead men to. Thus there are throughout the world a crowd of believers who accomplish from their adolescence to their death acts of faith. Revolutionaries, socialists, Bolsheviks, libertarian communists, trade unionists *believe* — the sincere ones, among themselves — that reason or science will one day lead humanity to rally under their banners. We are not believers, we others; we are achievers — “presentists.” We do not have the faith that moves mountains or crosses seas on dry land. We trust only in ourselves, *for today*; we live only for the present moment and only for this moment, even if it is the repetition, the renewal or the replica of a moment lived a third, a week or ten years ago.

The anarchist individualist species — the milieu — is not made up of unities of the same age. While death daily throws one of ours into universal circulation, young humans

come to join us. The chain is therefore not interrupted; there is no break in continuity. But the young and the old, those who are devoured by the summer heat as well as those whipped by the winter breeze, all of ours want... to live their whole life, all that they still have to live, all their desires, all their aspirations, right away and immediately. In other words, it is immediately and without worrying about authority that the components of the anarchist individualist species want to affirm their individuality, *to feel themselves to be...*

Considered in itself, the anarchist concept, moreover, escapes duration. It is not circumstantial; it is not held on a leash by time or space. It does not depend on the past, the present, or the future. It is; it is self-sufficient, independent of classes, castes, categories. It remains autonomous and irreducible. To deny the usefulness of authority and its institutions to bring individuals into agreement and to associate with each other is a proposition that is valid and remains the same for all times and all places. Each time that two or more individuals have been able, can or will be able to agree among themselves, to make a voluntary contract or to terminate it without the interference of a representative or agent of the authority, anarchist individualism has been, is or will be realized.

It is not for the association to last that individualists in our manner associate and consent to *sacrifice* part of their freedom or will (Stirner), it is to “affirm their individuality” — to feel that they ARE, each taken individually, thanks to the accomplishment, or to the enjoyment, or to the possession or to the satisfaction or to the satisfaction of one or more needs or desires or appetites defined, for a determined time or not, the association ending (by termination, for example) as soon as individuality ceases to assert itself.

Despite the existence of authority and its institutions — against which they can do nothing, by the way — individualists in our manner intend to affirm their individuality. Despite the social-authoritarian constraint, we say; publicly, whenever possible; in an occult way, when they cannot do otherwise. Amoral (let us not forget), the anarchist individualists use trickery as a means of defense against the encroachments of the State, similar to that Montenegrin revolutionary whose story the *Correspondance internationale* told in its issue of May 25, who disguised herself as a policeman to escape from a Serbian prison. Just as an anarchist can camouflage himself as a soldier of the Red Army to escape from a Soviet penal colony.

What interests our milieu, our species, is not to philosophize — “live first, philosophize afterwards” says the well-known adage — it is the existence of a voluntary agreement, a tacit contract, a free assurance which, in the current state of things, allows its components to affirm their individuality.

We have concretized or synthesized in a very understandable term this agreement, this assurance, this contract: camaraderie, and we have defined it thus:

As insurance: “contract that the insured subscribe to among themselves to spare themselves any useless or avoidable suffering.”

(In a species or milieu constantly in a state of reaction — defense or struggle — on the social-authoritarian atmosphere, how would individuality assert itself if its constituents make each other suffer?)

As association: not only as a theoretical insurance against useless or avoidable suffering (between insured) but also “as a practical and current effort to procure for each other the satisfaction of the needs, desires, appetites, of whatever nature they may be, that the participants in the camaraderie contract could manifest.”

(How can individuality assert itself when needs, appetites, desires cannot be, are not satisfied?)

This definition of camaraderie is in no way limiting, since it does not circumscribe or relativize the nature of needs or desires, which allows, within the species or milieu, the formation of affinity groups based on the diversity of said needs or desires or appetites and the means to satisfy them.

This definition of camaraderie is logically unconcerned with the State; it is necessarily conceived outside the intervention or interference of the socialist-authoritarian, none of the participants in the camaraderie contract feeling any obligation to expose to the agents of the Authority or to the delegates of the Statist Ambiance what needs, what appetites, what desires solicit them, haunt them, drive them, excite them.

We can consider camaraderie from another angle, obviously; but we do not believe that a more adequate definition can be provided for the use of individualists who want to “consume” each other to appease “the thirst of their egoism” — to reuse a Stirnerian expression — and who only agree to restrict their freedom and their will for the greater benefit of the affirmation of their individuality — an indisputably reciprocal attitude.

E. Armand.

**CAMARADERIE.** Let one consider anarchism from whatever angle one wishes, from the most fiercely individualistic or the most broadly communist point of view; whether one regards it as a purely individual ethic or as a purely social conception, its realization is and will always remain of a “human” order, that is to say that in Anarchy there exist and there will exist “relations between men,” as these have existed and exist in all social circles, whatever their importance.

We know that in Anarchy, these relations are not determined by constraint, violence, law; we know that they are not subject to disciplinary or penal sanctions; we know that they ignore the encroachment on the evolution of others, malevolence, envy, jealousy, slander; we know that in no case can these relations be based on the control of individual actions, their “standardization” to a unilateral standard-rule of conduct, applicable in all cases and suitable for all temperaments. It is essential, in fact, that all this be unknown “in anarchy,” if we do not want Authority, that is to say the State and the government, to be resurrected or reappear — in its true form or under a mask.

It remains, then, to ask ourselves what form “in anarchy” the relations of humans with each other take or will take.

In my opinion, they can only, they will only be able to establish themselves in a certain way, a special way of behaving towards each other, which I will call camaraderie. It is one of those words that has been much abused in practice, and I know something about it. Elsewhere, I have proclaimed that camaraderie was of an individual nature and I will not retract that here. Camaraderie is a matter of individual affinities, that is true; it is obvious that where affinities are lacking, camaraderie is a poor thing, if one wants it to descend from the mists of theory. I admit that it is difficult to imagine a camaraderie of a very intimate nature between nomads and companions appreciating the comfort of an interior — between practitioners of unity in love and practitioners of plurality in love or sexual communism — or even between partisans of an exclusive diet. It is better that those who hold to the realization of a special aspect of life in freedom group themselves together. The flexibility of the anarchist conception of life, which allows both the isolated and the associated to live « their » life, which allows associations to function each as they please and freely set themselves any object — the flexibility of the anarchist conception, we say, implies such a diversity of unions and federations of unions that it remains and will remain open to any unity to join with whomever it suits it best.

But all this stated, there still remains to be defined what is to be understood by camaraderie. Without doubt, it is an experience like all the incidents of individual life; without doubt it is neither an obligation nor a duty; but it is not only an experience, it is a state of mind, a feeling that is part of sympathy, of the “affective” order, which, generalized, constitutes a sort of voluntary insurance, a tacit contract, that “camarades” subscribe to among themselves to spare themselves useless or avoidable suffering.

In my opinion, an association of anarchist comrades is an anti-authoritarian milieu whose components have decided, among themselves, to procure for themselves the greatest sum of joy and enjoyment compatible with the anarchist notion of life. The tendency of an association or union of anarchists — again, in my opinion — is that within it is realized the satisfaction of all the needs, all the desires, all the aspirations that can be experienced and felt by beings who, while denying gods and masters, do not want to be gods and masters for any among them.

I cannot find a better synonym for the term camaraderie than the word kindness (*bonté*.)

It can be argued that since, in order to regulate relations between human beings, any recourse to authority is ruled out, it goes without saying that recourse to reasoning is essential for the solution of the difficulties that may arise in the anti-authoritarian milieu. Only those who feel able to do without the law and custom are capable — it seems at first glance — of doing without external authority. Without a doubt. In any current or future milieu, where institutions based on constraint are unknown, it is obvious that reason and logic will be used to resolve conflicts or disagreements that can or might unfortunately arise or persist among those who constitute it. Always? This eternal, continual appeal to cold reason or implacable logic is unsatisfactory. Such a milieu would resemble, upon serious reflection, a hospital ward or a corridor in a well-maintained cellular prison.

No, reason and logic are not enough to establish and regulate relations between men when recourse to violence or government action is excluded. Another factor is indispensable, and this factor is goodness, of which camaraderie is the concrete translation. It must be remembered here that the human being who is conscious enough to set aside authority from their relations with their fellow beings is not only gifted with powerful faculties of analysis or synthesis, is not only a mathematician or a classifier; they are a sensitive, understanding, good being. Good, because they are strong. One can follow a desperately straight path and be a weakling — more than a weakling — a poor wretch whom an excursion outside the straight line would irremediably disorient. The imperturbable logician is often a deficient person who would lose all ability to conduct themselves if they were transported outside the cycle of their deductions. Logic applied indiscriminately to all cases often betrays a lack of understanding, an inner dryness. Now, this is, for me, how camaraderie is defined, the practical application of kindness: trying, striving, attempting to grasp, understand, penetrate, even assimilate the desires, aspirations, the mentality in a word, of the one, of those with whom the habits or the unforeseen events of daily life bring us into contact or leave us in contact.

Whatever the dry doctrinaires claim, I maintain that goodness remains, if not the principal, at least one of the principal factors that govern the relations between the components of a milieu from which all authority is banished — the goodness that looks into the suffering that existence engenders in *the living*, the goodness that is not envious, the goodness that is not put off by apparent coldness, the goodness that is not irritated and

does not suspect evil, that uses patience and forbearance, the goodness that returns several times to the charge if it has reason to suppose that its gesture has been falsely interpreted, the goodness that hopes and endures; the goodness that knows the full price, the full value of a word that soothes, of a look that consoles — yes, goodness in action, that is to say, camaraderie.

We believe that authority is the cause of all the evils that individuals complain about and communities lament; we believe that “universal pain” is the result of coercive institutions. A milieu without authority, a comradely milieu, is a milieu where one should no longer suffer, a milieu where one could not encounter a brain that atrophies for lack of culture, a single stomach that contracts for lack of food, a single heart that bleeds for lack of love — because where all this is lacking, the possibility of *liberty of choice* is lacking. — An anti-authoritarian milieu that does not, that would not do everything possible to ensure this for its constituents is, would be a painful disappointment to us, a cruel disillusionment, would only have relations with “a comradely milieu” that are really too distant.

It may be objected that there are inevitable sufferings; that even supposing that all authority is banished from the groups in which we move, it is not certain that we understand each other on all points. I agree. But I ask in my turn if arid, harsh and hard reasoning is capable of reducing to an ever smaller number, the cases of avoidable pain? I maintain that supple, flexible, assimilative kindness will succeed where implacable logic will fail. The world of our aspirations — the one in which we wish to develop, grow, sculpt ourselves — the milieu of comrades, the new milieu for which both our flesh and our spirit languish, is a sociable atmosphere, where rancor, bitterness, dissatisfaction will no longer be found. It is a new world for real. It is a world where a constant, tireless effort is desired to reduce to an ever smaller minimum the occasions of inevitable suffering. It is a world of comrades. Well, in my opinion, in this new world, goodness plays, will play a more decisive role than pure reason. And it is this determining role of goodness, a voluntary role, that sums up, in my opinion, all camaraderie.

— E. ARMAND

**COMRADE.** A word that has replaced, among political actors, the word "citizen," which was worn out and no longer made sense. Every candidate for deputy feels obliged to begin his speeches with the expression "comrades." It is more familiar, more democratic. "Citizens" was still too bourgeois. It was therefore necessary to invent a new term, or rather to use an old term to flatter the people and put them to sleep. Comrades was that word. It entered politics, became fashionable and there are hardly any groups, gatherings, "meetings"<sup>1</sup> today where it is not used by the leaders of a party. Are we happier, less "legalized," less burdened with taxes, less prisoners of authority since such a word was introduced into the political jargon? On the contrary, there has never been less "camaraderie" in groups where the first comers use this word without believing in it, trivializing it, lowering it to the level of their social climber mentality.

*Pseudo-comrades.* When we pronounce the word "comrades," we are naturally led to believe that it translates an affinity of spirit, bonds of sympathy, friendship, mutual aid, esteem, affection, between minds thinking the same thing and acting for the same goal. Experience unfortunately shows us that this is not always the case, and that this word does not correspond at all to its true meaning. We are quite astonished to meet among the "comrades" indifferent, hostile, and even dangerous beings. It is a word that has been much abused and is still abused. We should put an end to this abuse. This word should not be used for everything. Because they shook hands and said, "Comrades," people believe they have proven their commitment to the cause and put their ideas into practice. This is not the case. Our worst enemies are often recruited from among our comrades. They, knowing our secrets, because we confide in them while they forget to confide in us, are well placed to betray us. We wonder where the blows that strike us come from. It is often a comrade, met the day before, who showed you warm marks of sympathy, and whom you would never have suspected of a hostile action, who played this trick on you.

A few less handshakes, and a little more solidarity, would be better. Let us be comrades in other ways than just words. It is unfortunate to have to be wary when a stranger calls out to you, "Comrade!" "It is often better to deal with a bourgeois who calls you "Sir" and addresses you politely, than with comrades who address you informally, only getting on well with you in order to better betray you. If distrust between comrades is an evil, too much trust is another, because there are undesirable comrades, whom we have just reasons to fear. We must have enough flair, perspicacity, psychology to know how to distinguish the true comrades from the false ones. We see the comrades at work, when we are in trouble or in embarrassment: they let you go! As long as you do not need their services, they are at your side. You should not count on them if the slightest trouble happens to you. It is a real calamity to deal with certain comrades. They stick to your

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<sup>1</sup> In English in the original. — TRANSLATOR

steps, follow you everywhere, not out of sympathy, but because they do not know what to do with their time. What do they do? We don't know. We never knew, and we never will. You can make them understand that your moments are precious, but they don't leave you alone. What do they want? What are they trying to achieve? What do they live on? It's suspicious. There are comrades that it's good not to hang around with, as they are really compromising; they try to lure you into a dirty business, knowing full well that they will come out of it unscathed. They behave like police officers (there's a good chance that they are part of this corporation.) You walk: you are caught. As soon as it comes to making a nice gesture, there is no one left. These crazy comrades, who act like despicable bourgeois in everything they do, are extremely dangerous. To get out of trouble, they don't hesitate to denounce you. This "camaraderie," which is the reason for the existence of vanguard groups, often exists less in these groups than anywhere else. What is deplorable among communists or individualists is the distrust between comrades. They watch each other, spy on each other. No trust reigns among them. Each hides, steals from the other his thoughts, his feelings, his means of existence. We have seen groups whose programs were generous, lack this harmony which they advocated. Fighting all superstitions, exalting above all the beautiful, the good and the true, these "comrades," whom a high ideal should have made better, spent their time suspecting each other, being jealous of each other, harming each other, hiding their thought, acting slyly below. Sad observation!

Comrades introduce politics into the "milieus." They pronounce excommunications when they should be the first to be excommunicated. Their tyranny is unbearable. With them, it is impossible to discuss. They do not admit contradiction. Their authoritarianism is boundless. Nothing distinguishes them from the bourgeoisie anymore. If there were not in the groups, these comrades who are crazy from all points of view, these groups could do good work, while only bad work comes out of them. Intellectuals or manual workers, such comrades do the worst work, sowing hatred, slander, jealousy, envy, discord wherever they go. There are comrades who are unbearable by their pedantry. They want at all costs for you to espouse their ideas, while they have none. They never cease to annoy you with their pseudo-science, the pretentious formulas they use: they claim to know everything, and they know nothing. They believe themselves to be superior, and in any circumstance, you realize their intellectual and moral inferiority. Pedantry wreaks havoc in so-called advanced circles as much as in others. We see comrades come to talks, conferences, meetings, with the fixed idea of contradicting you, about anything and with any arguments. As for learning, they don't care. They are happy to be applauded by their friends and to have been able to prove to the "lecturer," by shouting and gesticulating, that they are stronger than him. They come with the idea of disturbing a meeting, whatever the subject being treated. They make objections to you that do not hold water. They try to make themselves interesting by any means. Or else, they smear you or have you smeared by other comrades in the more or less libertarian papers. Methods that the bourgeois themselves often hesitate to use. The chapels of mutual admiration are as harmful as the

chatter of mutual denigration. There is no camaraderie in either case. The only way to put an end to these intolerable mores arising from a false conception of camaraderie is the reform of the individual. Let individuals banish envy, vanity and hypocrisy from their hearts. Let them improve, be more tolerant, less unjust, and false camaraderie will have had its day. That will be worth more than speeches, empty words and even writings. Camaraderie demands *acts*.

*Former comrades.* — What has become of the former comrades whose enthusiasm warmed you, with whom you fought twenty years old?

One fine day, we didn't see them again. They disappeared from circulation. They became bourgeois. Most of them settled down. They married a rich woman or made a fortune. They had reproached you for your lukewarmness; you were never advanced enough for them. You were a "dirty bourgeois." Nevertheless, you are still the same, and they are different. They went to the other side of the barricade, into the camp of the well-fed, the satisfied. — Yes, they say, I have changed. When you are an honest man, you must abandon your opinions if you recognize that you have made a mistake. I was an anarchist, and I am not any more. That's all. I believe that you have to do your duty. We do not live in strikes. We live in society. I have changed, and I am happy with it. — All it took was a place, a title, a piece of ribbon, sometimes less, for them to evolve. They sell molasses or palaver in the salons of the Élysée. They no longer talk about shooting officers or robbing the capitalists' safe. They are neat and tidy, I tell you, orderly and settled until they die. It's because their convictions were flimsy. They were just waiting for an opportunity to get rid of them. My former comrades have become right-thinking bourgeois, honest merchants, brave soldiers, excellent civil servants and perfect "pimps." They are good fathers and valiant patriots. They have found their way. Let them stay there! They have become ministers, or deputy ministers. They wear academic palms or the ribbon of the Legion of Honor in their buttonholes. Truly, many of our former comrades have gone bad. We know the "comrades." We know what they are capable of. They do not care much about harmonizing their actions with their theories. Their camaraderie is only a bluff. It is most often an exploitation.

Let us not exaggerate anything, however. Let us not be pessimistic. Let us not discourage anyone. Let us be fair. There are good comrades, excellent hearts, who answer: "Present!" whenever necessary. They are rare, they are not running the streets, but still we find some. These ones deserve to be loved. A good comrade is as rare as a true friend. What am I saying, is it not the "type" of the true friend? A good comrade enlightens you on your faults as well as on your qualities. He is the adviser, the guide, seeking neither to impose his advice nor his way of seeing, but only to be useful to you. A good comrade does not betray you. He acts with the purest disinterest. He is sincere and loyal. He looks you in the face and extends his hand to you without ulterior motive. He never abandons you in difficult times. He is there, very close, supporting you, morally and physically. He knows the words that must be said, the actions that must be accomplished, without noise,

without ostentation. He gives himself according to his means, according to his strength, but he gives himself entirely. The little that he does is a lot. He defends us if we are attacked. He shares his meal with you, his bed. He gives you everything he possesses. Noble hearts, how rare you are! Do we know many people who deserve this beautiful name: “comrades”? We really hesitate to use it with certain brutes. Comrades who dirty you, drag you through the mud, cowardly comrades who murder you from behind, we find them everywhere, at every moment, but loyal, sincere, generous, disinterested comrades, when you meet one on your way, tell yourself that you have found a treasure.

*Conversation between comrades:* familiar chat, on an interesting subject, concerning such and such a moral or political question, which can contribute to the education of groups and individuals.

*En camarade (as a friend):* expression by which a woman makes you understand that she will walk or have lunch with you, without going any further. Some women are happy to be your comrade, but not your mistress (there is a nuance.) It is their right. They are happy to maintain intellectual relations with you, but not sexual relations. These are purely friendly relations. These women believe that friendship is preferable to love, and that it causes fewer disappointments. They can talk freely for hours with a man, — or men — about the sexual question, free love, revolutionary sexualism and other related questions, without it having any effect on them. No conversation intimidates them. Real boys, at least in this respect of the flesh, and one feels immediately at ease in their company. They agree to accompany you anywhere, to share your games, your sports, your distractions; as for giving themselves, they refuse to do so. The comrade expires where the mistress begins. Such women can be very agreeable; however, some men find that this is not enough. They cannot be satisfied with camaraderie. They need more.

*Amorous camaraderie:* This name designates a conception of love that is not current in bourgeois circles. It is in hypocritical forms, concealed by legality, that the bourgeois practice a pseudo-amorous camaraderie. Amorous camaraderie consists in this: that a woman should no more refuse herself to the man who desires her than he should refuse her invitation. However, in sexual pluralism, temperament and preferences must be taken into account. Giving oneself involves a choice. There are women who refuse to give themselves to the first person who comes along, who do not care whether the thing pleases them or not. In short, amorous camaraderie consists of this: “We please each other, let us unite, without consulting anyone.” Amorous camaraderie offers practical difficulties, and it is not within everyone's reach. It presupposes liberated minds, having banished jealousy from their hearts, and consenting to their companion — male or female — disposing of their person as they intend to do themselves. Plural love is impossible without reciprocity, mutual consent.

G. DE LACAZE-DUTHIERS