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# Union of Egoists

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## **What is a UnionOfEgoists.com?**

This is an informational resource provided by Kevin I. Slaughter of Underworld Amusements and Trevor Blake of OVO, initiated in February and publicly launched April 1st of 2016. The website initially focuses on providing historical, biographical and bibliographical details of a few their favorite Egoist philosophers. It is also integrating the archives of egoist website i-studies.com, the former project of Svein Olav Nyberg, and the EgoistArchives.com project of Dan Davies. Further, it will be home to Der Geist, a Journal of Egoism in print 1845 – 1945. UnionOfEgoists.com will be the best resource for Egoism online.

## **What is a Union of Egoists?**

“We two, the State and I, are enemies. I, the egoist, have not at heart the welfare of this “human society,” I sacrifice nothing to it, I only utilize it; but to be able to utilize it completely I transform it rather into my property and my creature; i. e., I annihilate it, and form in its place the Union of Egoists.”

– Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*

## **What is Egoism?**

“Egoism is the claim that the Individual is the measure of all things. In ethics, in epistemology, in aesthetics, in society, the Individual is the best and only arbitrator. Egoism claims social convention, laws, other people, religion, language, time and all other forces outside of the Individual are an impediment to the liberty and existence of the Individual. Such impediments may be tolerated but they have no special standing to the Individual, who may elect to ignore or subvert or destroy them as He can. In egoism the State has no monopoly to take tax or to wage war.”

–Trevor Blake, *Confessions of a Failed Egoist*

# MINUS ONE

NUMBER 6.

JAN. — FEB.

1965

## AN INDIVIDUALIST ANARCHIST REVIEW



A friendly encounter between a  
libertarian communist and an individualist anarchist.

### CONTENTS INCLUDE:-

The Illusion of Moralism — A.J. Baker.

The Call of Dionysus — Benjamin de Casseres.

The Economics of Individualism — Mildred J. Loomis.

Personal or Political — S.E. Parker.

To Express Oneself — Jean-Pierre Laly.

Poems, Correspondence etc.

Adventure is the spirit of curiosity that has got for itself a lusty body. It is the restless eye of Temerity seeking to enclose within its sphere finer and newer circles of experience.

The imagination is a daredevil. It is a picklock, a breakbolt, the knight-errant of man. Back of and inciting the spirit of adventure and the spirit of curiosity stands Don Quixote, for the Knight of La Mancha is no other than the personified ironic spirit of the adventurous imagination.

In all ages non-religious adventure has been loved for itself. It has never admitted allegiance to the cant words "right" and "wrong"; it has never muddled its enterprises by yoking itself to morals or the other ogres for which the dull spirits among men drudge. Adventure, like motion and light, is its own excuse for being. It is a primal passion, coeval with the birth of matter and movement. The first movement of the first atom was an adventure in space. The last movement will be an adventure in nihility.

The spirit of adventure - whether it be in the material or mental sphere, whether it be embodied in a D'Artagnan or a Zarathustra - chooses for its realm of operations the Unknown. The Unknown is not only that world that lies beyond experience, but it includes as well that more intimate world that can be created by finding new relations with old materials. There is a North Pole at each man's door that invites to the spirit of adventure. The adventures of Edison are as thrilling to him as the adventures of Marco Polo were. The intellect is a born marauder - that is, if it be really intellect, and not merely a medium between the stomach and the objects that the stomach needs for its digestive apparatus.

The spirit of adventure is a rebellious spirit. It is at war with routine and respectability. Routine starves body and brain, and in its deadly clutch we begin to measure off the days of life on the walls of consciousness like men condemned to death chalk on the walls of their cells the passing of the days ~~that finally fetch them to rope and~~ finds his exquisite moment in the bloody butcheries of hand-to-hand contests and the other in slaying his 'animal nature' and in an ecstatic frenzy rising to his last divine adventure - union with the Eternal.

Life itself is the adventure of the soul in matter. The buccaneering spirit of man is the one thing that renders the world sublime. It is better to pluck the forbidden fruit and be everlastingly damned than to accept the safe-conduct of Conformity and drowse away an eternity in a heaven of ennui.

Cerberus guards the door to Hades, but his bark is worse than his bite. He is only firmly intrenched to the cowardly eye. Cerberus is a toy pug and his teeth are paper-mache.

Which of us has not dreamed of following some black flag? Which of us who is healthy has not in a figment of the brain, in a fiction of action, stormed some forbidden Gibraltar, laid his Petersburg mine or swum some raging Hellespont of the spirit? Those are marked days in our lives on which we dared something - ivory days, days we would live over again, with their venturesome hours and the sense of danger face to face with that non-script kingdom, the Unknown.

In literature it is adventure that lives. The Iliad, the Odyssey, the Anæid, the Divine Comedy, Robinson Crusoe, Don Quixote and the Three Guardsmen are the answers. *Musqueteers?*

What is lawless and awful and novel appeal to all men in all time. Civilization, the arts and peace are only saved from stupidity by the progressive inversion of the adventurous spirit. In politics, science, art and industry the new man, the new idea, the adventurous thought startle and dazzle. We smell an adventure in the man who says "I deny." A Rodin, a Blake, a Nietzsche, an Ibsen, a Shelley glow in the romantic halos with which we crown them. They stand on the firing line of man's invasion of the country of the enemy, the Unknowable; vicariously, they give relish to the bread-and-butter fare of a pointless existence.

Man lives for vivid sensations. Some feed the craving with alcohol, others with the blasting dreams of religious mysticism. The pirate of the South Seas and the hermit of the Gobi are both moved by the same impulse, the love of adventure. One finds his exquisite moment in the bloody butcheries of hand-to-hand contests and the other in slaying his 'animal nature' and in an ecstatic frenzy rising to his last divine adventure - union with the Eternal.

I would like to get away from everybody  
 down a death dark street  
 of garish painted girls  
 and men who had shit themselves for the last time  
 there no one would know me  
 for their death would be mine  
 and the staring eyes of life  
 would have no power to move me  
 nor the ~~probable~~ finger of accusation  
 stir my soul with guilty duties  
 where all have lost their dwindled hopes  
 perhaps is peace  
 or at least forgetfulness  
 who knows? S.E.P.

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This newsprint this death

Yesterdays violence buried deep in todays newsprint.  
 Gods cancer still slaughters the Congo and rapes the world.  
 Much stale madness obscenely spread upon the page.  
 Churchill's 90th birthday t.v. celebrations & the myth,  
 almost alive in a green velvet siren-suit, is displayed  
 to the mob and revealed in picturesque senility.  
 Eaten priests, raped nuns, burnt villages, crazed mercenaries &  
 a wicked old man fused together in this tapestry of death.  
 What could be more fitting; more terrible; more real?

Dave Cunliffe.

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An Old Chinese Proverb

~~but the farm horse is useful~~

The farm horse is useful

~~The war horse is beautiful~~

But the war horse is beautiful.

(translated by Pat Parker)

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Will readers please note:-

1. All communications should be sent, WITHOUT ANY MENTION OF "MINUS ONE" to S.E. Parker, 2 c, Orsett Terrace, London W.2.
2. The article by Mildred J. Loomis advertised on the cover can be found in FREEDOM, the anarchist weekly, issue of Jan. 16th, 1965.
3. The article "Personal or Political" by S. E. Parker has not appeared as he has been busy moving house. It may appear later.
4. Libertarian literature, any book in print and many out of print can be obtained from Freedom Bookshop, 17a, Maxwell Rd., London S.W.6.

MINUS ONE is published and edited by S.E. Parker, 2c Orsett Terrace, W.2.

From the most narrow-minded to the most developed, men feel the need to communicate, to express themselves and make themselves understood. They want to make known their ideas and feelings, their repulsions and yearnings.

It is difficult enough to express oneself in one's own native language and to make oneself understood sufficiently for one's convictions to be consciously shared by others. To this difficulty is added the multitude of philosophies and points of view, together with their terminologies and the different and complicated dialectics deriving from them.

But this difficulty becomes much greater when one tries to express oneself in a language not one's own. Indeed, each language has a frame of mind peculiar to it with infinite lights and shades. One must, therefore, be well acquainted with a particular language in order to know if its speakers will be as sensitive to what one says as those who from an early age speak and think in the same language as oneself.

To express oneself means: to know, to communicate. It is to feel and perforce to love. If men had been given the ability to understand each other without the barriers of language, how many mistakes, misunderstandings, hatreds and calamities could have been avoided? If this had been so, evolution would have been quite different and one would certainly not speak of armaments, of enemies and of all those wrong values with which the leaders of all castes and regimes hoodwink people. The words "war" and "sect" would have disappeared from our vocabulary. By ignoring the frontiers of countries and of minds "peace" would have been no longer a mere word, but have existed as a reality.

A large number of freethinkers and men of good will have already made attempts at this fundamental communication. But the leaders of each sect, aware that this would bring about their ruin, have stopped this kind of activity. They have drawn on the historical means of keeping the crowd under the crooks of its shepherds - the main one being "divide and rule".

Individualist anarchists of former generations believed for a time in

the success of Esperanto, but this has proved an illusion and there are today too few adepts of this language. Perhaps some day we will be ready, in spite of the obscurantisms, to try again...

And it must be added that when those attempts were made, not only did the governments raise barriers, but the masses themselves opposed them, setting against them the brutalizing and retrograde concepts of fatherland, prestige, glory, and race.

This slavistic hatred for those who live on the other side of the frontier, anchored for centuries in men's hearts, has been stronger than the sentiment of freedom. To be free is before all to express oneself, and expression as activity is the fruit of thinking.

Individualist anarchists do not live with delusions and irrational thoughts. We have no hope or trust in the crowd. Prestige and glory sound hollow to us. But we know that in each breast there throbs a human heart and that to be a man is above all to be free. We hope that our efforts will, little by little, bear fruit and that ultimately a genuine human consciousness will arise. Maybe, some centuries from now, hatred and ignorance will disappear from the world. Perhaps some day men will speak the same language and will be able by discussion to put an end to moral taboos and mental castration - particularly those of the "domination of man by man", and the "herd spirit".

The late E. Armand used to say that anarchists are the "oligo-elements" of society. The day when all men will be oligo-elements there will be no more Society, but a multitude of individual consciousnesses, mature, radiant, and balanced.

But for that it will be necessary to express oneself, to take all values into consideration.

The altruist is an unreasonable egoist; he would like to model all mankind after his own peculiar sensibility.

The terrible thing about the quest for truth is that you find it.  
Remy de Gourmont.





## Moralism/cont.

Thus, suppose we do ask for a justification of a moral pronouncement. Justifications which satisfy the moralist will in every case take the form of referring us to some ultimate moral authority or sanction which upholds the pronouncement in question. The history of moral philosophy is mainly the history of appeals to different moral sanctions, but I want to begin with the simplest case of all, that of the appeal to God - for this is truly a paradigm case, it provides a moral for all the more complex or sophisticated moral justifications. So, examine the view that we must obey the Ten Commandments because God commands us to do so. Considered fully, we could reject this view by pointing out the illogical character of the "proofs" of God's existence, and the whole conception of a supernatural being. But this would be a side point. The important point is that even if we assumed for the sake of argument that it made

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## Some Reflections.

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### On Human Freedom

The biggest threat to human freedom is not the cold war, the H-bomb, the build-up of racial hatred or the fact that two thirds of the human race never see a square meal, huge and urgent as these problems are. The main threat, though few seem to realise it, comes from the extinction of human individuality and the subtle eroding of whole areas of human feeling and thought, which together with the destruction of what was formerly beautiful in the physical environment are occasioned by the onward march of science, technology and "progress". This "progress", or "economic growth" as it is called today (note how the more modern phrase has no idealistic implications) has become an end in itself regardless of its effects for good or ill on the human race. When I compare the relatively rural and tranquil Britain of 50 years ago with today's hectic, over-populated, mass-orientated rat-race I wonder how much worse things will be in 50 or 150 years time. Surely the point is not far off when we will all go mad.

Now I know that it is impossible to dismantle wholesale industrial society and I also know that it is not inevitable that technology be abused. But I do wish more people would realise the dangers inherent in continuing "progress" and then there would be less half-baked advocacy of ever increasing material prosperity (usually advocated for the already prosperous and rarely for the starving two thirds) regardless of its actual value for the human race, and less adoration of all the claptrap of the technocrats.

### On Relationships and Motives

An individualist anarchist in his relations with his fellow men and women might be motivated by love or affection in the case of one or two of them. But unless he is one of those rare people who can feel genuine warmth and compassion for all and sundry, his dealings with the bulk of his fellows will consist of

mutual agreements based on mutual self-interest. Such utilitarian relationships will be so described and not dressed up as brotherly love.

Individualist anarchists vary between warm hearted humanists and misanthropic recluses. The inevitable loves, hates, envies, likes and dislikes which exist among people would not matter among individualists for they would keep their relationships as simple as possible and people who could not get on need only keep out of each other's way. "Mind your own business" is the golden and only rule of individualists.

In an anarchist communist or syndicalist world the problem of human relationships becomes very acute. The complexities of such societies would necessitate continuous whole-hearted co-operation from the entire population if the society was to function at all efficiently. Now, 60 or 70 years ago when anarchist communism and syndicalism were in their heydays not only was industry much less complex but the then existing psychological and sociological evidence suggested that people were basically decent. While only the more inane propagandists denied that anti-social behaviour existed it was widely believed that man, if not wholly good was certainly good enough to live in a free society. Such social discord as did exist, it was felt, was the result of the authoritarian nature of society and if only authoritarian institutions could be overthrown all would be well.

Such over-simplified views of people and society have taken severe blows from the findings of modern psychology which has shown that behind the facade of reasonable human behaviour lurks a morass of greed, envy, fear, hate and violence and that these human characteristics, while originating to a large extent in authoritarian society, are themselves the cause of authoritarianism. It is a vicious circle and it is not broken by denying the evidence. J.R.

## Moralism/cont.

sense to speak of an existing God, this would not provide the required moral justification. To be told "god commands us to obey the Ten Commandments" gives no moral explanation of why we should do what God commands. The position is exactly the same as with commands that may be given in everyday life; we are just told we must do such and such, and a moral reason for obeying has not been given. And if it is said that God is so powerful that we cannot or dare not disobey him, we have (as sometimes with everyday orders) simply a case of coercion. God is now treated as an all-powerful policeman who by force or threats tries to intimidate us into doing what he wants. In this case the moral appeal to God turns out merely to be an appeal to a pure authoritarian—which is something we can indicate by saying, in the spirit of Bakunin, "If God did exist, it would be necessary to oppose him!".

Many moral apologists, including theologians, appear to have recognised parts of the criticism just made, and that is why they have tried to find a moral sanction different from God's commands. In effect, they have seen through saying "Right actions are right because God commands them" and want to say instead "God commands them because they are right", so that a new account of right is required. But although more complicated sanctions are usually offered, it is only their complication which makes them more plausible; logically, they are in the same position as the simple appeal to God.

Thus, appeal is often made to our "Duty", "Conscience" or "Moral Sense", which are said to tell us what we ought to do (for instance, that we ought to do what God commands). Again as a side point, we could object here to the theory of mind implied, and could argue that mental agencies such as Duty, Conscience or Moral Sense are fictitious entities (unless, indeed, they are connected with an empirical Freudian account of the super-ego, in which case their non-moral character is apparent). But the main point is that instead of an external policeman or censor, God, we now have an internal policeman or censor, such as Duty. And again no moral reason has been given for obeying the commands in question, for while it will be said they are "morally obligatory", this is just another way of saying "they must be obeyed". This is all the more evident when we remember that the main point of referring to Duty is to enforce its demands as against those of what is called "Inclination". We have the

position: Duty or our Moral Sense tells us to do X, and inclination or our Immoral Sense tells us to do Y; but it has not been shown why we ought to do X rather than Y. Of course, we may be told that it is axiomatic that we ought to do what Duty says, that this is what Duty means. Taken seriously this begs the question, for "We ought to obey Duty" becomes "We ought to obey that which ought to be obeyed". Otherwise, what it comes to in practical situations is that some professional moralist Z commands us to obey the commands of Duty, and no reason has been given to show why we must obey Z's commands.

The view I am presenting is thus that the quest for a moral sanction, for an absolute ought, never gets beyond the disguised expression of simple commands. To this the reply may be made that the word "ought" regularly occurs in everyday life and that we can all distinguish between orders like "Close the door", "Put out that cigarette", and much more binding exhortations of the form "You ought to do such and such". However, when we examine these uses of "ought" we find they work in the following ways: suppose someone says, "You ought to change your golf-grip"; it is clear that there are certain assumptions made which can be expressed by saying more fully "If you want to improve your golf (and presumably you do) you ought to change your golf-grip". Similarly if it is said "You ought to be more careful discussing politics in front of the manager", what is meant is "If you want to get on in your job you ought to be more careful". In those cases, if a man accepts the statement as true and has the wishes and interests assumed, there is a sense in which the "ought" may be said to apply to him. But it does not apply to a man with different wishes and interests—a man might not worry about bettering his golf or his job. Now the moralist would be in the same position if he were prepared to express his "oughts" like this: "If you want to please God you ought to obey his commands", "If you want to conform to social pressures you ought to do what prevailing moralists tell you to do". But the moralist, of course, is not content with this because it is left open for people not to want to please God or conform to social pressures. The moralist wants to find a sanction which will allow him to say that people of all sorts, including those with wishes and interests opposed to his own, ought to have his wishes and interests and ought to do that which he says; and this is why he tries to disguise his commands as absolute moral obligations. To be concluded.

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Blackmail!  
By Domenico Pastorello

Eve blackmailed Adam with an apple.  
This is the legend.

Today it is always the same woman  
who is blackmailing the male. For  
this purpose she has created modes  
-ty.

Offers are reducing, prices are  
increasing.

Woman will sell every square inch  
of her precious skin for the  
highest price. Only recently has  
she begun to show a part of it to  
the public. The mysteries of her  
beauties do not interest anyone  
any more. My sister always wore  
long sleeves, a petticoat to her  
feet, dark stockings and a collar  
up to her chin. An old tactic, the  
aim always the same: a superwoman  
who looks with a tolerant sigh  
on the disgusting nakedness of the  
male.

In the market of Tirana the female  
slave is offered veiled from head  
to foot. No touching or speaking  
is allowed. Do you want her? Then  
pay!

In the christian market virgins are  
offered in the same way. Do you  
want her? Then marry!

In Tirana he who makes a mistake  
sells his slave again at a higher  
price in order to deceive the  
purchaser. In Italy the cheated  
can only blame himself. What else  
can he do?

In civilised countries he puts  
the woman into circulation again  
- the divorced will often be paid  
twice!

The honest despise easy women; they  
are bunglers who lower prices.  
Alas, those who refuse to be paid  
for often cost you dear!

Do you want me? Then offer me your  
arm. Afterwards will come your  
pocketbook, your talent, the  
monopoly of your feelings, the  
control of your time, your  
complicity in my tactic ... as a

good woman. You will teach my son  
that he was found under a cabbage.  
Naked females? Tabu!. Also post-  
cards! If on television they show  
Venus di Milo or Paolina Borghese  
you must quickly shut your eyes.  
On the other hand, you must escort  
me naked, or nearly naked, to the  
ball, the theatre and the seaside.  
At home you will oblige me to be  
properly dressed and modest...

Modesty? How many crimes have been  
committed in your name! Every day  
the papers are full of them: the  
girl-mother who commits suicide,  
the jealous lover who murders, the  
third who are consecrated to  
divorce Italian style, the timid  
buried living in monasteries.

Silence about sex? A dogma!  
Ignorance, a hell. Thousands and  
Thousands of tragic deviations.

The baby weeps bitterly. She is  
pregnant. The mother: How did it  
happen? She: He kissed me! The  
mother: Where? She: On the lips!  
The mother: You are an idiot! She:  
But didn't you tell me that this is  
the way to have children?

My aunt ran away from home on the  
day of her marriage. In the  
darkness she returned in desperat-  
ion to her parents' house. "My  
husband will do brutal things to  
me." Then she has seven sons.

Skilfull, scornful, blackmailing,  
modesty demands the darkest  
ignorance, and on the stock exchan-  
ge of female prices it sends  
quotation sky-high. The man pays.

A revolution? Agreed!

(Our comrade seems to be reacting  
to conditions in Catholic countries.  
Although the kind of puritanism  
He denounces is not dead here, it  
is certainly on the defensive. And  
I doubt if women are alone to  
Blame for the cult of modesty.  
Perhaps some woman reader will  
Write us a counter-blast .....

Editor)

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HAIKU . . Japanese girls, how do you meet them?

Well, you don't, you see

They're simply part of the famous landscape.

TRACY THOMPSON.

To the Editor,

I take issue with F. Delisle over her concern at Armand's antagonism to his family (MINUS ONE No. 5). Even at such an early age it is obvious that Armand was developing his individualist principles and condemning the sentiment and expediency that lies behind the myth of the "family group". He resented being at the mercy of an authority (his parents) who had not a clue how to rear a child. How many do know this? Do you? I am damn-sure I don't and I am a fourtimes grandad!

G.E.W.

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To MINUS ONE,

Sid Parker, in his reply to my article "Individualism Plus" must surely have worried some of the individualist comrades who read MINUS ONE.

Despite his "shrewd suspicions" concerning the Christie marchers, I doubt very much whether many of the marchers had an approach as involved as Sid's. I would not be ashamed of claiming noble motives for marching - nobility not to be confused with the self-interested villainy of the nominal "nobles" of the world - nor on the score of morality am I opposed to moral authorities as such. (1) I believe anarchism is a noble ideal and that only morality will make it workable, without morality anarchist individualists will not be free.

I thought Sid rather unfair in his allegations regarding my mention of extreme right-wing "individualists". I wrote that it would be dangerous to forget the attraction Stirner's ideas had for right-wing extremist "individualists" (the quotation marks were in my original piece) (2). Although Sid says that what he regards as a smear is unworthy of an answer he mentions Mussolini's Stirnerite leanings. Might it not be dangerous to forget this? I would add that my smearing was rather bad, for I wrote:- "The honesty of the Stirnerite approach is one of its strengths".

Brixton.

J.W.

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Editor's reply:-

(1) Nor would I be ashamed of claiming nobility for egoistic motives. I enclosed "nobler" in quotation marks because opponents of egoism often like to speak of the egoistic approach as if it were inferior to their "altruism". Nobility is surely at its best when it has no trace of subservience to anything, material or ideological, which demands submission from individuals.

(2) Since the sentence containing the reference to "extreme right-wing individualists" was preceded by one which reads: "Rachman and Clore are both examples of the individualist self-interest one hears so much about", I do not think my allegation was unfair.

(3) Mussolini, I have now found out, did write in praise of "The Ego and His Own" before World War 1 when he was a left-wing socialist. He also translated Kropotkin's "Words of a Rebel" into Italian and some of his fascist colleagues were former anarcho-syndicalists! Is it "dangerous" to forget this? Mussolini was no doubt a "good man with other people's ideas", as Trotsky wrote of James Burnham, but his loyalties were of such a butterfly character and covered so many differing attitudes that anyone using him as a terrible example is apt to find they have thrown a boomerang. S.E.P.

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Dear Editor,

What short memories some people have! In an article in the last issue of MINUS ONE Jeremy Westall wrote "The plain fact is that anarchism - is non-violent, yet we have the impression - from non-violent anarchists that there must be anarchists who are for violence". It is not so many moons since Jeremy himself was defending revolutionary violence in various libertarian journals and on one occasion was telling everybody of his proficiency with small arms.

Also, in his reply to Jeremy, Sid Parker uses the sentence "To live for others is the mark of a slave, not a self-governing individual". While Sid does to some extent qualify this remark in the earlier part of his article I should like to make clear that there is no reason whatsoever why an individualist should not be a doctor, nurse, social worker or the like. The point is that an individualist would not do such work out of any sense of duty or obligation. While an individualist might freely decide to devote his time and energy to others, the words "ought", "should" and "must" just are not in his vocabulary

Notting Hill. Martin Wardon.

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Dear Friends,

It would appear to me that the difference between the individualist anarchist and the anarchist communist is simple. It's all a mat-

ter of personality. What I want to know from Sid Parker is, where are all these terrible anarchist communists who want to oppress the poor hard done by individualists? (1)

The anarchist communists run a newspaper called FREEDOM and in it they let the individualists have their say and they usually spend more time attacking anarchist communism than they do attacking fascism. (2)

It seems to me that individualism is just one big whine about why we do this and why we do that. I go on demonstrations because I think I should, and anyway it might do some good. I don't feel big about this or better about it, it's just something that has to be done as far as I'm concerned. I think that in an anarchist world or even an anarchist group some individualists could be tolerated if only as a source of amusement. For people who have no wish to force their ideas on others they certainly do a lot of preaching at people. Perhaps, however, if one were subjected to this for a long time one would have to kill them - acting in one's own self-interest, of course. (3) Then the other individualists would turn on you and tell you that this was not in your self-interest for they have a way of knowing what is in the self-interest of anarchist communists much more than the anarchists do themselves. (4)

If anarchism means anything at all it means freedom, co-operation and responsibility. Take away one of these things and it means irresponsibility and slavery. When are individualists going to think for themselves instead of telling us what Stirner, Armand and Thoreau said, (5) and middle class grumbling about the fact that the workers are not as intelligent as themselves.

Good luck with MINUS ONE,  
Enfield. Anarchist Communist.

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Editor's reply:-

(1) I have never suggested that anarchist communists want to oppress individualists. My argument is that the type of economic system they advocate, if it were to become the

One of the reasons why I am out of employment now, why I have been out of employment for years, is simply that I have other ideas than the gentlemen who give the places to men who think as they do.

Vincent van Gogh.  
(letter to Theo van Gogh, July, 1880)

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only system, would be oppressive because it would deny any possibility for different economic relationships. This is set out in more detail in FREEDOM for September 19th, (2) And it seems that communists use MINUS ONE to attack individualism. This pleases me for it helps to clarify ideas. Perhaps "Anarchist-Communist", however, prefers a warm woolliness sprinkled with a few fiery slogans like "down with fascism"?

(3) If "Anarchist-communist" would compare what he says here with what he says in the first paragraph he might think there is something to his version of the individualist attitude to communists. The position of licensed buffoon is hardly an equitable one. We only "preach" to those who want to listen to us.

(4) Individualists would be quite content to follow their own self-interests and let others follow theirs. We are not moralisers.

(5) A group to which "Anarchist-Communist" belongs has just republished Alexander Berkman's "ABC of Anarchism", so one could criticise them on the same score. We tell others what Stirner, Armand and Thoreau thought because we believe their thoughts worth knowing and it pleases us to make them known. We do not regard what they said as sacred texts which must be accepted without question or criticism, and, when it seems important enough, we make clear where we differ from them.

S.E.P.

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For though the caves were rabbitted

by H.D. Thoreau.

For though the caves were rabbitted,  
And the well sweeps were slanted,  
Each house seemed not inhabited  
But haunted.

The pensive traveller held his way,  
Silent and melancholy,  
For every man an idiot was,  
And every house a folly.

x x x x x x x x

Lines by Henry Wotton (1568-1639)

(from "The character of a happy life")

How happy is he born and taught,  
That serveth not another's will;  
Whose armour is his honest thought,  
And simple truth his utmost skill.

This man is freed from servile bonds,  
Of hope to rise or fear to fall;  
Lord of himself, though not of lands,  
And having nothing, yet have all.

x x x x x x x x x x

Only he that altereth remains unalterably mine. - Nietzsche.

x x x x x x x x x x

## On the Track of the Scholar Gipsy.

by Alastair MacHenry.

If your hair is worn at a moderate length and you carry a rucksack instead of a blanket roll then hitch-hiking is usually fairly easy in England. I started early on the A40 west of London and was soon speeding towards my destination, Eynsham in Oxfordshire. From Eynsham I planned to explore the northernmost part of Berkshire, contained within the great

loop of the Thames by Oxford. Three hundred years ago, before the Enclosure Acts despoiled the countryside and industrialisation the towns, this area was roamed by a young man who had been forced by his poverty to give up his studies at Oxford University and had begun wandering with a gipsy tribe. He took easily to the life and on being initiated into the arts and secrets of the gipsies came to prefer it to his former settled existence. These bare facts are recorded in Glanvil's "Vanity of Dogmatizing" (1661) and the story was later romanticised and immortalised by Matthew Arnold in his poem "The Scholar Gipsy".

I love to escape from the hurly burly of London to spend a day walking in quiet places and with an Ordnance Survey map I planned to visit many of the places mentioned in Arnold's poem. They were harvesting wheat as I struck southwards along a footpath from Eynsham and the men in the fields gave me some odd looks. I strode on and soon found out why when the footpath petered out. The landowner had lost no time in ploughing and dividing the land where the path had ran and I had to negotiate several barbed wire fences to reach the road a mile further on. A little way down this road, past the high tension cables and the caravan site with its rows of primary coloured metal boxes, I came to the first of the spots mentioned in Arnold's poem, the ferry across the strippling Thames at Bablockhythe. I waited for the ferry man in the nearby Chequers Inn which sells good beer although my enjoyment of it was spoilt by the non-stop bar radio. Soon the gnarled, weather beaten ferry man arrived who rang me, the only passenger, a sixpenny Berkshire County Council ticket and we were off. It was only thirty yards but as the antiquated chain drawn vessel edged over a queue of motor boats formed up in both directions. The Thames was beautiful but its tranquillity was marred by these bustling boats.

I won't describe the rest of my day in detail. I visited many of the places Arnold mentioned and their present condition gives an idea of the deplorable state the English countryside is getting into. Hurst Hill and Bagley Wood are largely private. Hinksey Ridge is succumbing to creeping suburbia from Oxford and has a fine view towards the Morris Car works at Cowley. Godstow Bridge (where black winged swallows haunt the glittering Thames) now carries a motor clearway which must have long since caused any remaining swallows to be deafened and asphyxiated. I saw few wild flowers and little animal life doubtless because the fields had received a progressive drenching with poisonous insecticides. There was a constant roaring from the aircraft circling the large airfield and parachute training centre at nearby Abingdon. From outside Abingdon I caught my first glimpse of the long low line of the Berkshire Downs on the southern horizon. Surely these, I thought, are indestructible. But I was baffled as to the purpose of some huge domes and oddly shaped structures that were rearing up at the foot of the Downs. The map supplied the answer, they were part of Harwell atomic research centre so perhaps the ancient chalk downs are not indestructible after all.

However, the trip wasn't all gloomy and had some pleasant moments. One was when I climbed up to the twin beech clumps that crown the Sinodun Hills and brewed a well earned mug of tea.

I didn't see any gipsies. Hitler gassed all those he could lay hands on; the local authorities of England use less crude methods. They refuse them camping sites and keep them continually on the move until the gipsies give up in despair. Their number is continually decreasing. And at no time could I visualise the scholar gipsy. I can imagine a lot of people feeling at home in this corner of Berkshire in its present condition but not him nor Matthew Arnold who immortalised him. But as I came down into Didcot in the late evening to catch my train back to London I met a bearded, unkempt young man trying to thumb a lift at the junction of the A4130 and B4016. With his blanket roll slung across his faded satin jacket he eyed me suspiciously with my "square" rucksack. We exchanged a few words. He told me that he had undergone a revulsion at his redbrick University, and although a clever student had thrown it all up for the beat life. I gave him two shillings and sixpence and hurried down to the station in the gathering dusk.

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## Eleventh Verse of the Individualist Hymn: "Mighty Stirner, 'tis for thee".

The common cormorant or shag  
Lays eggs inside a paper bag  
The reason you will see no doubt  
It is to keep the lightning out  
But what these unobservant birds  
Have never noticed is that herds  
Of wandering bears may come with buns  
And steal the bags to hold the crumbs.

x x x x x x x x x x