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# Union of Egoists

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*-Kevin I. Slaughter*

## **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*

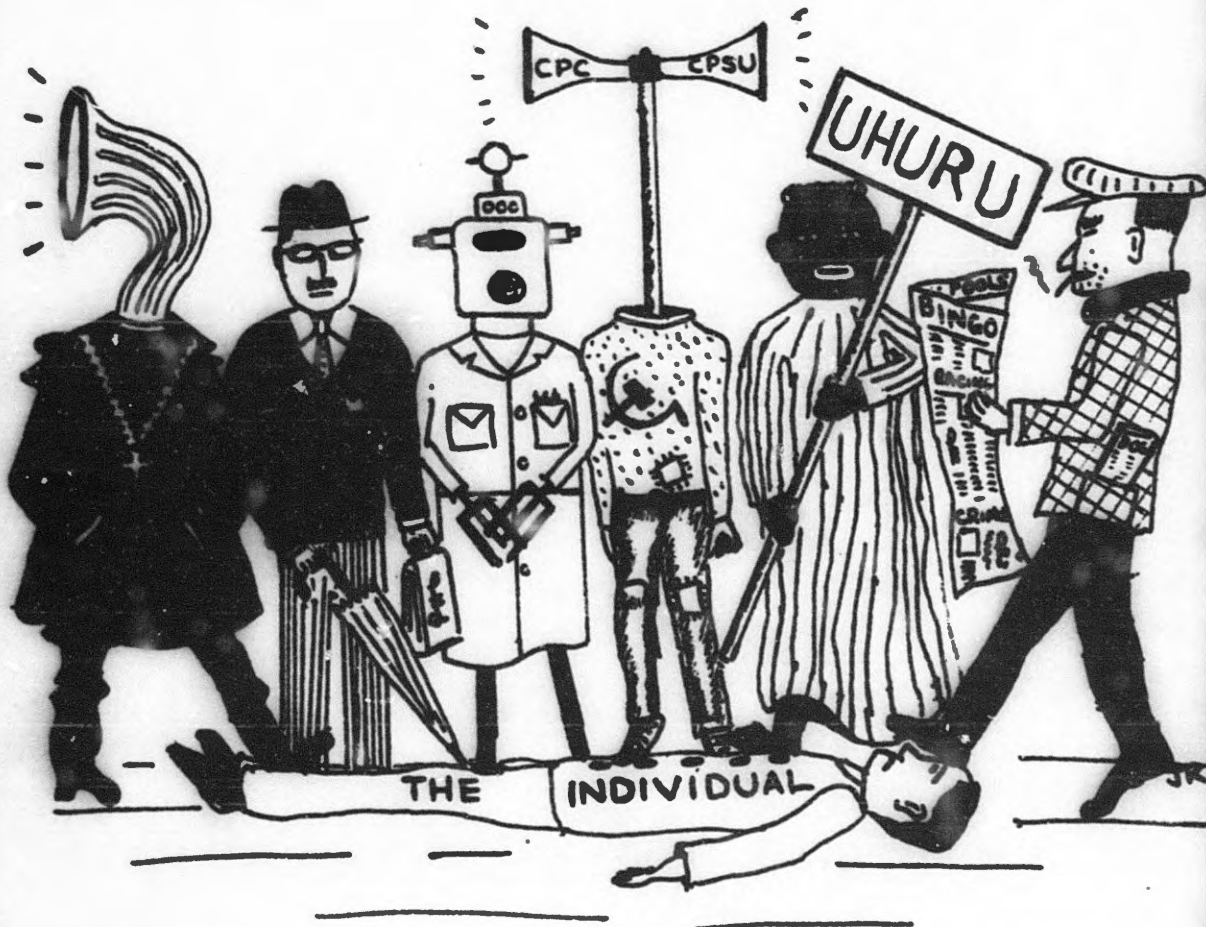
# MINUS ONE

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AN INDIVIDUALIST ANARCHIST REVIEW

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B. ARMAND, FRANCIS ELLINGHAM, S.E. PARKER,  
JEFF ROBINSON, TRACY THOMPSON, A.W. ULOTH,  
AND OTHERS.....

THE FOUNDATION OF FREEDOM

Six years ago, having mixed in Europe and America with individuals of every grade of intelligence, and on every rung of the social ladder, from aristocratic ornaments of society to the goriest toughs in Chicago's State Street saloons, I had formed the reflection that freedom was a myth, that existing economic and social conditions compelled one sooner or later, and in some degree, to adopt a life in which hypocrisy and cant were prominent features. The very factors that in large measure compelled prostitution of the body, compelled, too, prostitution of the intellect, of decency, of honour. For mankind in the main, the only alternative to the justification of moral degradation and crawling sycophancy under the banner emblazoned with the words "one must live," was suicide. I was convinced there was no means of escape from these fetters.

Every discussion of freedom and its promotion is valueless that does not accept as axiomatic the impossibility of securing freedom for the individual in a state where one must earn in a competitive market the means of living (1). Because of this, under present conditions, the lover of freedom is compelled to live his life in tragic circumstances. Psychologically his position is analogous to that of the unjustly condemned prisoner who beats helplessly against the bars of his jail.

Actually, democracy crushed freedom ruthlessly and without apparent effort. Actually, too, and all unconsciously, the upholder of democracy assists in the burial of individual freedom. He commits intellectual hari-kiri. Possibly - one cannot but admit the possibility - he enjoys all this. The success of democracy lies largely in the cheers with which members of society greet the gangrene which afflicts their own mentality. It is as though the ghost of a dead person followed the coffin and cheered lustily as the corpse was lowered into the grave.

The cult of freedom becomes a vanishing cult. The word, as employed today, is meaningless. Its use by socialists, communists, et al, merely expresses a wish for a change of tyranny, real or apparent. There is neither a realisation of, nor an attempt to get at, the root cause. At the other extreme, the imperialists are too busy singing "Rule Britannia" to realise their mental slavery.

Perhaps, in a way, in the slave state, the unawareness of freedom, or the illusion of being free, which are but two phases of the same thing, is a blessing. One does not cry out for what one has never seen or heard of. To the majority, a suddenly granted intellectual freedom would be as dangerous perhaps as was, after the American Civil War, the unloosening of the chains which bound the negroes in the Southern States.

But to the few the position is an intolerable and a terrible one; all the more so through the fact that, ironically enough, they are chosen to bear democracy's cross. The bulk look upon any who quarrel with the spoon feeding by those drum bangers of democracy, the daily newspapers, as mild, uninteresting lunatics.

Society wastes talent: it wastes that immensely rare thing, genius. It compels many of its most gifted members, through sheer self-preservation, to expend the bulk of their time, and in many cases all their time, in doing work that others could do just as efficiently. It crucifies genius on the altar of a worn-out financial system.

Revolution does not necessarily mean release for genius. One looks neither to Russia nor to Italy for freedom. All revolutionary systems that have ever been tried have trodden individualism under foot. The freedom they have offered with much banging and spluttering has been merely an overthrow of established authority in favour of a new dictatorship. It is freedom only in name. Actually, socialism, fascism, communism propose to do openly and completely what capitalism does vicariously and incompletely. They do not propose to go on putting freedom in chains; they intend

2) Does a true "society" exist in the absence of free markets in every sphere, e.g. for ideas & talents? J.E. M.S. 1919

( (1). Under existing "competition" this is very true. It is possible, however, to conceive of a "competitive market", as did Warren and Tucker, in which this would not be so. S.E.P. )

If you won't be my equal, then you must be my subordinate.

The sin is not to commit, but to admit.

Death is a super cinema show.

The State is the lid on the formless world of dreams.

The other day, while walking down Westbourne Grove, I saw Oscar Wilde drive by in his sports car - but the wind had blown his green carnation away.

Pat Parker.

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THE DAY THE RIVER STOPPED  
FLOWING

Night stares;  
Day clutches, fearsome yellow.  
Stillness waits forever.  
Creatures stalk in pride together,  
Men and women walk, but never  
Where the willow  
Dips and dares.

Tony Hulse.

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ORGAN RECITAL AT ST. ALBANS ABBEY

the tower rose  
& as the notes swelled  
the walls melted  
fell drifted  
& the building of years crumbled  
& all that was left was the music  
& the moon shining on a still country

Neil Spratling.

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The LONDON INDIVIDUALIST ANARCHIST DISCUSSION GROUP meets the second Sunday of each month at 10, Churton Street, Victoria, London, S7 W.1. (Off Vauxhall Bridge Rd.)

October 10 : "Anarchism and Ethics."

November 14: "Anarchism and Politics."

December 12: "Anarchism, Logic and Metaphysics."

Time: 8 p.m.

Even in supposed pro-freedom publications one finds often more darkness, confusion & misdirections than guiding lights. PROT. 7.2. n.2.97.



PROPERTY

4

E. Armand

In present society property is only the privilege of a small minority, compared to the multitude of the working classes.

Whatever may be the nature of the object possessed - a field, a house, plant for production, cash, etc. - its owner has acquired it either by exploiting others, or by inheritance, and in the latter case the origin of the wealth is the same as in the former.

Moreover, what do the owners of this wealth do with it? Some use it to obtain, in exchange, a life of comfort and enjoyment, to lead an existence full of leisure, to taste all sorts of pleasures to which money gives sole access. These are the idlers, the parasites, who excuse themselves from all personal effort and merely rely on that of others. To develop their estates, for example, or their farms, they employ a labour force which they pay inadequately and which, while it provides all the toil, does not reap any real gain, does not receive the full wage for its work. If it is a question of personal estate, the capital is used for Statist ends, or for undertakings of capitalist exploitation. Whoever owns more than he needs for his own consumption, or more than he can develop by himself - such a man, either directly, by developing his properties or organizing industrial concerns, or indirectly, by entrusting his capital to industry or the State, is an exploiter of others' work.

Then again, it happened, in the course of history, that the size of certain estates prevented their full and rational development, and that, while there were workers without jobs and families with nowhere to live, vast areas lay fallow through lack of good organization.

It is against this bourgeois property, recognized by the State and jealously defended by it, that all revolutionaries rise up, all those who propagate liberating ideas, and whose ambition it is to improve the living conditions of the mass. It is this that socialists, communists, and anti-Statists of every shade attack and wish to destroy. It is this which, on the other hand, breeds illegalism - theft, instinctive and brutal in some cases, conscious and calculated in others.

Communism has solved the problem by taking away capital and the means of production from the State in order to restore them to the collectivity which has become sovereign in its turn, and which distributes the products to each, according to his effort.

But, whether property be in the hands of the State, of the collectivity, or of the communist milieu, or of a few capitalists, as at the present time, it makes the individual dependent on the community, it breeds the master and the slave, the leaders and the led. Kept in economic subordination, the worker retains a mentality in keeping with his conditions of dependence. He is, strictly speaking, the tool, the instrument, the productive machine of his exploiter - individual or social - it is difficult, in such conditions, to be a fully developed and aware individual.

Let us come now to the individualist viewpoint, which wants the free expansion of the individual ego. Individualism looks at the matter in a different light and brings a solution which does not intend that the individual should be sacrificed to a machine. It claims, above all, for every worker, the inalienable possession of his means of production, of whatever kind it may be - tools, land, books, etc. *Right to acquire*

These means of production can belong to an association or to an individual - that depends on what agreements are made.

The great thing is that the tools, whatever they may be, should be the property of the producer or producers, and not of the State, big firms, or the milieu in which circumstances have caused the individual to be born.

Moreover, it is essential that the worker should dispose freely, according

to his will and necessities, of the product of his labour. He should not have to suffer any outside interference in the use which he means to make of it. The individual or association ought to be able, without having to take into consideration anybody else whatsoever, to consume its own output, or to exchange it either gratis or for something else, and furthermore it should be open to it to choose those with whom it will exchange its products and what it will receive in their stead.

Once the individual owns his tools and his product, capitalism ceases to exist.

And from this transformation of the conditions of work, the individual will get something besides economic betterment; he will derive a benefit from the ethical point of view. Instead of being the wage-earner, the exploited victim of employers, endowed in consequence with a "couldn't care less" attitude towards the making of the product because he does not enjoy it, and wanting to spare his effort because another will profit by it, the individualist producer will take an interest in his work, will seek unceasingly to perfect it, to make new improvements and use his initiative. He will gain self respect from the work he does, a healthy personal satisfaction, and such a lively interest that his work will no longer be drudgery but a source of exhilaration. The same taste for work, the same struggle against routine and monotony will be found in all trades and activities - a taste which at the present time is only the privilege of a minority, more often than not of intellectuals, artists, scholars, writers: all those who work under the impulse of a vocation of of a definite choice.

Property thus understood and applied, no longer has anything common with "property is theft"; it marks a stage of evolution and it seemingly ~~must~~ (must) be at the bottom of complete emancipation, of liberation from all authorities. ~~It~~ will be a restoration of creative power to the individual according to his abilities, properly understood.

R. 7

It stands to reason that agreements can be made between consumer-producers in order to avoid overproduction, by which would be meant (speculation having disappeared) the surplus of production after the needs of the producer had been covered or once, through the play of exchange, those needs had been satisfied. Speculation and exploitation having disappeared, there is no evidence that accumulation holds out more dangers than under communism. To tell the truth, whether it be a question of communism or of individualism, their economic realization in practical terms cannot be separated from a new mentality, from a self-consciousness removing the need for archist control by whatever name it is called.

Anti-authoritarian individualism, in whatever sphere one can imagine it, is a function of the entire absence of control or supervision, both of which always lead back to the practice of authority.

(Translated by Francis Ellingham)

#### POEM..

Flowers, I fear you:  
Yours is no tawdry ideal.  
If of me you'd make your meal,  
Chuckle and swill  
Chuckle and swill

but permit me  
My tears. I shall not argue  
With the infinite ego,  
Be it male or female.  
Like a heart let me weep  
While you seep and creep.  
My bright sword yet  
shall conquer.  
Mine is no tawdry ideal.

Tracy Thompson.

CLASH OF NONENTITIES....

(OSWALD by Kerry Thornley. News Classics House. Chicago.)

When I was a child one of our favourite conundrums was "What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object?" Another might be "What happens when zero encounters zero?" I suppose that when zero is added to zero, is subtracted from zero, or merely superimposed, the result is still the same - zero.

The Kennedy assassination was the same. Here we have a career politician. Can anybody tell me anything original the man ever said or did? And here we have Oswald, a man like Kennedy, possessed of talents of which he never made much use, utterly unoriginal and uncreative. Two maimed men, I would say, because both evidently had intelligence, but their thoughts were so trivial, their ambitions so commonplace. Both sought to be in the limelight. Both reversed. Richard Burton's dictum:

"Do what thy manhood bids thee do.  
From none but self expect applause..."

What they both wanted was precisely that - applause. Perhaps not even power. I feel that the U.S. president is something of a figurehead, perhaps not so much as royalty elsewhere, but still at most merely one member of a governing clique, the spokesman perhaps.

One is sorry for the president's family. One would be sorry for any man's wife and children in such circumstances. Yet Kennedy was prepared to get us all killed on account of Cuba, so I don't feel very sorry for him. He who helped prepare death for others, or went along with those who prepared it, and spoke for them, and justified them, is killed himself a short time afterwards, and all one can say is "poetic justice - for him the H.Bomb has exploded." Under J.F.K. the U.S. nuclear mass murder arsenal was, roughly, doubled! 7.2.10.8.97.

Kerry Thornley wrote a novel "The Idle Warriors", based on Oswald, while he was serving in the U.S. Marines in Japan. Oswald appears to have been a not very good soldier, to have had ideas "above his station" as it were, and to have learnt Russian. It is therefore clear he was no fool. Yet he was so unsettled psychologically that he never achieved anything much, and in fact he was not a very interesting person.

Kerry Thornley knew him fairly well, and found it worth writing a book about him, or two if one counts the novel, and he seems to look upon his former friend as something of an archetypal figure. Although I don't remember the phrase being used, I suspect Oswald for him stands for that old favourite "the rebel without a cause". To me Oswald, like his victim, is simply a bore pure and simple. How odd that two bores, as it were, wiped each other out, for no particular reason it seems. Nowhere in the book is there any convincing explanation as to why Oswald actually did shoot Kennedy. And the reason for this is that probably there was none. Oswald, being a person of confused and trivial impulses, might have done anything or nothing.

There are photographs included showing Americans, white and black alike, weeping at the news of Kennedy's death. It apparently caused some stir. Why? Is this the America of sturdy independence and the pioneering spirit? It sounds more like the British monarchy. I've no doubt people would weep if the Queen were assassinated, but republican America should have got past this stage of political childishness. People die every day on the roads, and in Vietnam, but no one weeps for them.

A.W.U.

The World War made man more bestial and plebeian, more trivial and brutal, and he will again march towards Death without knowing why. How vulgar and idiotic it is to die without knowing why, and not for your ideals..... You must search for your real enemy, fight your own war for your own ideals. You must make your own revolution....

Renzo Novatore

0027



(WHETHER YOU OR I LOVE OR HATE. By Tina Morris. Screeches Publications. 9d)

I like these poems very much. They have what most modern poems lack - a lyrical quality, a linking and sustained emotion, even though the lack of capital letters, and the use of "thru", "yr" and "&", detract from their communicative force and readability.

Most modern poetry is a collection of words. Words placed side by side, but having no relationship, no emotion, to merge one into another. It is about as inspiring as most modern blocks of flats or abstract paintings. One feels that it is the fact that it is "modern" that is of primary importance and that the poetry takes second place. Emotion and communicability are of little importance, the thing being to be "with it" and to write cold, uncommunicative "modern poetry", rather than "old-fashioned conventional (but often moving and beautiful) stuff".

Tina Morris seems obsessed with flowers, birds, eyes, the stars and the moon. She is, withal, gentle, pacifistic, lyrically sad. Her one attempt to describe a sexual encounter fails, I think.

I liked especially:

"last night / i caught you / trying to put out / the light /  
from my eyes / while i slept. & sometimes / there are spiders  
/ on your hands / when you offer me / faded flowers. & i'm  
not altogether / convinced that it was you / who came from  
the river / wearing a crown / of roses.

"In your hand / you hold a narrow / blue moon / which has long  
/ been cold & silent / & will never know / the joy / or agony  
/ of the day's music.

"Time's music moves / twilight trees, calls / stars from swan's  
eyes / on the purple water. Tomorrow there will be / another  
small death / & a song of pain / in somebody's throat.

"Outside / the night is neon / cold and stark / with angry gods  
prodding / new tortures / into other people's frenzied  
nightmares / & longblind eyes seeking a star / in the canvas  
sky.

"I write you the peace / & the stillness / of flowers.  
& send the river / singing to yr side - / carrying my love /  
like an angel / clutching a basket / of stars. I paint you  
the colour / of joy / & an old horse / grazing along the  
river bank / - music pouring / from its eyes."

Pat Parker

*i dislike them very much - also other utterances of P.P. - J.Z. 10.8.97.*

### AN APPEAL

I HAVE ONLY ABOUT ENOUGH MONEY ON HAND TO PUBLISH ONE MORE ISSUE OF "MINUS ONE". Sales and subscriptions do not bring in enough income to even come near to covering expenditure. Circulation has doubled in the last few months but finances have not. If you would like to see this review continue please send in your subscription and / or donation as soon as you can. One regular reader ( and a generous one ) has commented that he is under no "moral" obligation to send in a subscription or donation. That is true. But then I am under no obligation to continue to publish a journal for readers who give nothing in return. A "union of egoists" is not a one-sided thing.

S.E.Parker.

### NOW READY...

"INDIVIDUALIST ANARCHISM - An Outline". By S.E.Parker. A succinct statement, already translated into Spanish for a Mexican anarchist journal. Single copies 4d. post free. 10 copies 1/-. 25 copies 2/6.



By Francis Ellingham.

4. "Egoism", Taoism and Zen.

(Page references are to Stirner's "The Ego and His Own", translated by S.T. Byington, Libertarian Book Club, New York, 1963, and to Alan W. Watts "The Way of Zen", Thames and Hudson, London, 1957.)

We have seen that "conscious egoism", in Stirner's terminology, means conscious spontaneity, the realisation that the conscious mind does not control the natural self but is only a manifestation of it, so that all human behaviour is essentially spontaneous or involuntary. This realization puts a natural end to "self-renunciation" or "possessedness" - to all sense of obligation, every compulsive urge to become a "success", whether as a religious or moral ("holy") man, or as a worldly, acquisitive ("unholy") man. The "conscious egoist" accepts himself as he is. He does not think of himself as being split into a ruling part and an inferior part, needing to be suppressed. He understands that he is a natural unity which can only behave as it does, and his motto is therefore, "I have my law in my whole nature." (P.161.) He has no reverence for any other laws, human or divine, or indeed for anything outside himself. "All things are nothing to me." (P.3; p.366.) That is, he is "non-attached", he does not identify himself with externals, "holy" or "unholy". And yet, paradoxically, the "conscious egoist" has genuine, spontaneous compassion for others, since he understands human nature and is not enslaved by his fears and cravings. Thus "conscious egoism" leads, not to selfishness and cruelty, but to the free expression of a natural, unconventional goodness.

Now, although Stirner was unaware of the fact, all these ideas are to be found in Taoism and Zen Buddhism (which is largely a development of Taoism). In this final article, let us look briefly at the basic similarity between Stirner's doctrine and these ancient "ways of liberation". Through this comparison Stirner's critics may perhaps come to understand him better. His followers too might gain something.

The Chinese word "tao" means "way" or "road". In Taoism it means a natural "way" or process followed by everything in the universe. Lao-Tzu, the author of "The Book of Tao" in the sixth century B.C., wrote that "the Tao's principle is spontaneity" (Watts p.17). "Spontaneity" does not mean disorderliness. Lao-Tzu's statement must be seen in the context of traditional Chinese thought, in which natural law is derived, not from the "word" of a lawgiver (as in the Hebrew-Christian tradition), but from unmotivated, spontaneous, and yet orderly and intelligent processes. The Tao is not a self-conscious God, creating the universe according to a pre-conceived plan, but an unconscious intelligence informing the natural growth of the universe. "The concrete evidence of such an intelligence," Alan Watts has written, "is right to hand in our own thoughtlessly organized bodies." (p.17.)

If Stirner's motto is "I have my law in my whole nature", the Taoist's motto is "follow the Tao". Chuang-tzu, Lao-Tzu's great successor in the third century B.C., wrote an imaginary conversation between Lao-Tzu and Confucius:-

"Tell me," said Lao-Tzu, "in what consist charity and duty to one's neighbour?"  
 "They consist," answered Confucius, "in capacity for rejoicing in all things; in universal love, without the element of self. . . ."  
 "What stuff!" cried Lao-Tzu. "Does not universal love contradict itself? Is not your elimination of self a positive manifestation of self? . . . There is the universe, its regularity is unceasing; there are the stars, their groupings never change; there are the birds and beasts, they flock together without varying; there are trees and shrubs, they grow upwards without exception. Be like these: follow Tao, and you will be perfect. Why then these vain struggles after charity and duty to one's neighbour. . . ?" (Watts, p.26.)

Here is a comparable extract from Stirner, protesting against the humanistic notion that man has a calling or destiny which he must consciously strive to fulfil:-

"A man is 'called' to nothing, and has no 'calling', no 'destiny', as little as a plant or beast has a 'calling'. The flower does not follow the calling to complete itself, but it spends all its forces to enjoy and consume the world as

it can - it sucks in as much of the juices of the earth, as much air of the ether, as much light of the sun, as it can get and lodge. The bird lives up to no calling, but it uses its forces as much as is practicable; it catches beetles and sings to its heart's delight. But the forces of the flower and the bird are slight in comparison to those of a man. . . Now, one might call out to the man 'use your force.' Yet to this imperative would be given the meaning that it was man's task to use his force. It is not so. Rather, each one really uses his force without first looking upon this as his calling.. " (P.326.)

Chuang-Tzu wrote: "There is no greater injury to one's character than practising virtue with motivation." Similarly Stirner declares: "God, the commandments and so on only harm you;" and tells us to listen instead to "the voice of nature" (p.162). Listen to nature, or follow the Tao - in practice these doctrines are surely identical. Their basis is also the same: not science, but an intuitive understanding of the Nature of Things.

However, at this point a critic might raise an apparently insuperable objection. "Listen to nature; or follow the Tao" - is this not just another "calling"? Another ideal way of life, like Christianity or humanism? And so another object of attachment or "possessedness"? Presumably Stirner would have denied this. But if so, what did he mean by "listen to nature"? If he was not calling us to do something, why did he write at all?

To put it another way: evidently "listen to nature" calls us to abandon all sense of duty or obligation, to recover our original, childlike spontaneity. But how can we contrive to do this? Contrived spontaneity is a contradiction in terms. Surely all we can achieve is a new sense of duty, the feeling that we ought to be spontaneous.

Stirner did not give an explicit answer, perhaps because this objection never occurred to him. But here I think Zen Buddhism - a combination of Taoism and Indian Mahayana Buddhism - can help us, because it is primarily concerned with just this problem. How are we to become "enlightened ones" (buddhas), with full understanding of the essential unity and spontaneity of the self? That is, with "Zen" - which denotes "a state of unified or one-pointed awareness." (Watts, p.55.)

As we saw in the last article, intellectual assent is not enough. We have to realize concretely that the conscious mind and the natural self are identical. In Zen, the sudden experience of awaking to that fact is called "satori".

Zen Buddhism, as I understand it, holds that the conscious mind cannot by itself do anything to induce "satori". Ritual, ascetism, formal meditation - all are useless. Enlightenment comes through the spontaneous development of the natural self. This development certainly involves conscious thought, but any conscious effort to attain buddhahood is mere pride and vanity of the "ego" - which in Zen means the conscious mind in its attached, "possessed", "self-renouncing" state. Utter despair may seem the only practical outcome of this view, until it is realized that there is nothing the conscious mind alone can do, there is nothing it need try to do! Thus the sense of duty or obligation simply fades away, quite spontaneously. "Satori"!

One way of expressing this insight is to say that there is nothing in Taoism or Buddhism after all. Here is the great Zen master Lin-chi lecturing his students:-

"It is said everywhere that there is a Tao which must be cultivated and a Dharma (method or doctrine) which must be realized. What Dharma do you say must be realized, and what Tao cultivated? What do you lack in the way you are functioning right now? What will you add where you are?" (Watts, p.151.)

to

The same solution is implicit in Stirner:-

"If religion has set up the proposition that we are sinners altogether, I set over against it the other: we are perfect altogether. For we are, every moment, all that we can be, and we need never be more." (P.359).

If we need never be more; if we lack nothing, it is clear that we do not need Taoism, Buddhism or Stirner. Except to point out the fact that we lack nothing!

I have said it is necessary to realize the identity of the natural self and the conscious mind. Rubbish! There is literally nothing we need realize. That is what we need to realize! And that is realizing the identity of the natural self

and conscious mind! As a Zen master said, "Nothing is left to you at this moment but to have a good laugh" (Watts, p. 144.) It is laughably simple - once you get the point.

The truth is, not that the objection is insuperable, but that it seems so because of an insuperable difficulty in expressing this doctrine. Stirner was not calling us to do anything, he was only pointing something out to us. But it is impossible to point something out without giving the impression that, until we realize it, we lack something. How, then, can we ever point out that we lack nothing, that there is nothing to realize? This is the difficulty behind Lao-tzu's famous words: "Those who know do not speak; those who speak do not know." (Yet he himself was speaking!)

"To know what Zen is," Alan Watts has written, "and especially what it is not, there is no alternative but to practice it, to experiment with it in the concrete so as to discover the meaning which underlies the words." (P. 12) The same, I suggest, applies to "conscious egoism", because it is essentially Zen. If we are going to become "conscious egoists", we shall find ourselves wrestling with the apparently insuperable objection, until we actually see that there is no need to wrestle, that we are already spontaneous, already following the Tao, already perfect. This direct insight is the key to Stirner's whole philosophy of life. *n) How often? J.Z.*

"Don't cling to my words," said Lin-chi, "Rather, stop thinking and trying to find the answers. And do it now!"

And suppose we have done that, how are we to live?

"Don't be deceived by others," said Lin-chi. "Trust yourself. That is all that is required."

There is of course much else to be said about Stirner's philosophy, and about Taoism and Zen, but I have purposely confined this series to the basic concept of "egoism", or spontaneity, which I believe is common to these doctrines. I only hope that I may have stimulated others to find out more from themselves. For if Zen can throw light on Stirner, Stirner can perhaps illuminate the social, political and economic implications of Zen, and so, from a compound of these doctrines, we may be able to develop a profound, comprehensive, and self-sufficient philosophy of individualist anarchism.

#### A COMMUNAL EXAMPLE?

Jeff Robinson

I used to be an anarchist-communist, which means that I wished to see society organised in communes, based on voluntary co-operation and with property owned communally. Something like an Israeli kibbutz, but without nationalistic and religious overtones. My present attitude to communes is that if people want to live in them then let them go ahead, I just don't think they would work, partly because people would have to be like saints, partly because the great majority of the human race are not damn well interested, and the governments would smash them if they began to be interested on a large scale, but mainly because I finally realized that doing things in a communal manner leaves no room for individual responsibility and individual choice, which are the keystones of liberty.

An anarchist-communist friend told me that I might have second thoughts about "communalism" if I saw a successful example in action. He advised me to attend one of the International Libertarian Camps held in France every year where, he said, there was such a wonderful spirit of matiness and co-operation that no one could fail to see the superiority of communalism. So, partly from curiosity and partly to see the mountains, I attended this year's camp held near Aiguille, in the French Alps. Well, I thoroughly enjoyed my stay, there was matiness and co-operation, but where was the communalism? Where were the communal kitchens, communal dining halls, work parties and other communal enterprises I had expected? Instead, people either camped, cooked and shopped as individuals, or else formed spontaneously temporary alliances. About the only things that were communal were



So, if Jack Stevenson reads this, perhaps he will tell me and other readers of MINUS ONE of a successful example of communalism in action.....

**Domenico Pastorello**

. I do not desire to write three pages of discourse to fix my idea. I recognize not only my egoism, but that every person acts in the same way. And I conclude that I have no debt to pay to any altruist, be his name god, country, parents, or inventors. My debts are only those which, pre-existing, I have accepted as less dangerous to me, or I have freely agreed with my associate. No gratitude to any person. If his egoism concurs with mine, as is the case with my wife's egoism and my own, so much the better.

The functioning mind is far from being spontaneous. For me it is the daily result between the conclusions of my ancestors (partly received from heredity) and the fact that I am living day by day in a different ambient, and perhaps with a different brain.

The smell, not at all agreeable to my nose, of remainders of metaphysical superstition, places me very far from every skilful dialectical attempt to wrap reality in the clouds of mysticism. This is very, very far from my position in this world.

## DEATH IN THE MUD

It had a sure instinct for trouble.  
Should have stayed with the brood,  
Or adventured off in a more confident way.

**Jeff Robinson.**

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