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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



Pa Marge

THE FREEDOM OF "FREEDOM".....

S.A.Parker

Some weeks ago a particularly nauseous piece of prole-cultism appeared in "Freedom". I wrote the following letter in reply, but this evidently so offended the majority of the new editorial group that they voted against it and it was returned to me. Since no reasons were given for its rejection I can only assume that this was done as part of the unexpressed policy of denying a free forum to individualists that seems to have become increasingly applied since the new editors took over at the beginning of this year. One thing is clear and that is that as the freedom of "Freedom" dwindles the duller it becomes.

For the benefit of those readers unfamiliar with the geography of Bristol: Clifton and Redland are pleasant districts in North West Bristol; Bedminster is a dreary working class district.

"15.10.65.

"Dear Editors,

I have a regular job, I do not dress like an extra for a concentration-camp film, I do not like being ponced upon - but I think that J.C.'s "The Case Against Bums" is one of the most narrow-minded, puritanical outbursts I have ever read in the anarchist press. It is a prize example of inverted snobbery disguised as 'revolutionary' concern. Satan help us if J.C.'s 'free society' came into being! I have no wish to live in a world made by "average Labour-voting" Bristolians and I only wish I had had the good sense to live in Clifton when I was in Bristol, instead of Bedminster where I did live.

One of the most onerous burdens anarchists have to carry is this association with the dreary cult of 'the workers', of those 'ordinary down-to-earth' millions who have willingly been the fodder of their pastors and masters throughout the ages. An anarchist milieu can only be created by individuals who have the power and capacity to become extra-ordinary. Anyone who is such a weakling that he is scared away by a few 'eccentrics' is not worth having anyway. I agree that most 'unconventional'ness is simply yet another uniform, but I do not see what can be gained by looking like a 'short-back-and-sides', cloth-capped member of the proletarian army.

After more years than any of us alive can remember, the response of the vast majority of workers to anarchist ideas has been either indifference or hostility. Whether we like it or not, anarchists have been, are, and are always likely to remain, a small minority, and no amount of breast-beating rhetoric is going to change the fact. If any proletarian cultist can produce evidence to the contrary let him speak up."

x x x x x

Some self-appointed guardians of public "morality" in the shape of the Blackburn, Lancashire, Police have accused Dave and Tina Morris, the editors of our contemporary "Poetmeat", with publishing obscene literature - an anthology of erotica and its reverse called "The Golden Convolvulus" Kenneth Tynan mildly says "fuck" on a television programme and the hordes of wowers scream their indignation. But Tynan is a "national figure" and voices are raised in his defence in the press and elsewhere. Dave and Tina Morris are known only to a comparative few and they have no powerful voices to defend them. They could do with the moral and material support of anti-puritans. Address: 11, Glenatis Street, Blackburn, Lancs.

(Sorry - it is Dave Cunliffe and Tina Morris, not WDave and Tina Morris!)

APOLOGIES are due to the poets of MINUS ONE whose poems have had to be held over due to lack of space.

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAINAllistair MacHenry.

Edward Abbey is best known for his "Brave Cowboy", a simple tale of a man born out of his time, an odd job man on a horse who lived mentally in a freer and more romantic past and who strove to maintain his independence in the modern American West, where, as elsewhere, many things militate against non-conformity. Fleeing for his freedom, if not for his life, having outwitted police and soldiers with helicopters, jeeps, walkie-talkies and assorted modern fire-arms, the brave cowboy finally comes to grief beneath the wheels of a speeding truck, accidentally and ironically crushed by the wealth, power and "progress" he had spent his life avoiding. A watered-down film version of "Brave Cowboy" entitled "Lonely are the Brave" and starring Kirk Douglas appeared a few years ago and made its point, though it did not carry the punch of the novel.

A more recent novel by Abbey, "Fire on the Mountain", (Mayflower 3/6) pursues the same theme of the individual whose liberty and independence are threatened by the onward march of "progress", which in this book takes the form of an extension to a government rocket range which threatens an old rancher with eviction. As this happens in a country where money is the national yardstick, and where the administration has learnt that quiet legislation works better with people than overt ruthlessness, the old man is offered generous compensation and his point of view is patiently considered. But he realises that whether the eviction is legal and politely done, or whether it is illegal and ruthlessly done, it still adds up to eviction. He wants to finish his days in his home, so he decides to resist. Against the background of cactus desert and gaunt, sun-scorched New Mexico mountains the drama is played out. The old man barricades himself in his house and resolves to win or die. Soon he finds himself alone, not just physically but in his ability to resist, for neighbours who had also meant to stay give in, the boy who pledges devotion is too young to help and the friend who shared the old man's bitterness joins the authorities in urging capitulation. And so the old man dies, not, as he had vowed, by police bullets and tear gas, but by a heart attack brought on by worry, anger and strain.

"There's a word for people like you," says the old man's sympathetic but realistic friend, "the word is anachronism."

"Anachronism?" asks the old man, not having heard properly.

"About the same," his friend replies.

A recent victim of "progress" near my home town was an old man who had fled from Hitler's terror in the 1930s and, not finding England the haven of freedom he had hoped for, retired to a small caravan and eked out a living with a rag cart and violin lessons. I read recently that the old man was dead, crushed while drunk beneath a speeding lorry on a bye-pass that was a lane in the age that the old man mentally inhabited. I went to see his caravan, but found it already practically demolished by the hooligans who, along with welfare workers and respectable house-dwelling neighbours, had plagued him during his stay there.

Rebel when you can, conform when you can't, is a sound maxim for individuals. But don't be surprised if "progressive", conformist society rebounds at you from some unexpected quarter, which may be a strain-induced heart attack, or a great lorry roaring at you through the American or English night.

RED AND BLACK

Welcome to a new anarchist journal, "Red and Black", published by J. Grancharoff, Box 47, P.O. Kingsford, N.S.W., Australia. The contents of the first issue are an uneven mixture, the best being the editorial by I.B., the feature on Virgilia d'Andrea by J. Grancharoff, and a short story by Frank Moorhouse. Price 3/6 (Aust) by post.

FREEDOM - "the anarchist weekly-for workers control" is obtainable from 17a, Maxwell Rd., London, S.W.6. 7d. (including postage).

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PROLOGOMENA TO AN ANARCHIST PHILOSOPHY

J-P. S.

Psychology

The anti-social individualist

Homo sum; nihil humani a me alienum puto.
(Terence - Heauton Timorumenos, 1,1,25)

An anarchist psychology, being concerned primarily with the individual, should acknowledge all human instincts, inclinations (or urges) irrespective of their social value.

"Nothing human is alien to me", says Terence, and this includes selfishness cruelty, violence, and other anti-social tendencies against which Judeo-Christianity has been unsuccessfully campaigning for the last 3,000 years.

Such tendencies have been called "primitive" as opposed to "civilized", "barbaric" as opposed to "humane". "It is a part of us that is still in the cave."

The most enthusiastic of our Christian day-dreamers even declare that Man is now rid of his "primitive tendencies".

But these are few and the more serious christian apologetics still denounce Man as an evil-doer and sinner.

Anarchic realism

"If it is said that even God proceeds according to eternal laws, that too fits me, since I too cannot get out of my skin, but have my law in my whole nature, i.e. in myself."
(Max Stirner - "The Ego and His Own", Pt 2)

The individualist is aware of all human urges - and he accepts them. He accepts them for two reasons: *The urge to dominate others, as well? J.Z.*

Firstly, he knows that it is quite useless and harmful to try to suppress or eradicate psycho-biological inclinations which are as inherent in Man as are the branches in a tree.

Civilization has controlled sex, repressed violence and cruelty, but the latest research in sociology and psychiatry shows that it has failed to root them out. I am particularly thinking of Levy-Bruhl's works, and more recently of Dr. Aubin's "Man and Magic". In this book (published in 1952) Dr. Aubin - director of Charenton, France's most famous mental asylum - shows very successfully how natural instincts such as violence or sexual "perversion" are found in children and "primitive" races, are suppressed in the "civilized" adult, and reappear in the mentally ill who have freed themselves of social trammels.

All our Christian civilization has succeeded in doing by suppressing our animal self, is to create conscience and guilt.

"Christianity....is the corruption of souls through the concept of guilt"
(Nietzsche - "The Twilight of the Idols"
p. 223.)

"Man with his sublimated cruelty resulting from the cooping up of his animal nature within a polity, invented bad conscience, in order to hurt himself, after the blocking of the more natural outlet of his cruelty."
(Nietzsche - "The Genealogy of Morals"
chap. 14.)

Anarchic Epicureanism

? Secondly, the individualist is out to derive as much pleasure out of his short spread of life as he can. The fulfillment of his mental and biological needs (nutritive, excrementary, sex, aggression-submission, spiritual,

and intellectual) are essential to his full enjoyment - he is an Epicurean in the most perjorative sense of the word.

The anti-natural individualist

"We call 'against nature' what in fact is against the custom"
(Montaigne - Essays)

Christianity has always been trying to convince us that its standards and ideals are in conformity with the "laws" of Nature.

This fallacy has been exposed again and again, not only by such individualist philosophers as de Sade or Nietzsche ("If nature was offended by these tastes she would not prompt us to indulge in them" - de Sade, Justine, p. 193), but also by modern research in human sciences (see H.J.Eysenck, etc.)

The anti-intellectual individualist

Whilst Church and State have been repressing Man's "anti-social" tendencies, the rationalists have been waging a war against his emotional and spiritual urges.

The spiritual urge exists - to a different degree - in all men, though some may be spiritually "dead", as it were, just as some are sexually "dead" (frigid). St. Paul already classified men into the pneumatikoi (spiritual) and the psukikoi (earthly materialists).

Though the most common form of spiritual activity is religious, it is, by no means, the only one. Poetry, singing, and even the consumption of alcohol are considered by some as spiritual or mystical activities: "The sway of alcohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature."

(W. James - Varieties of Religious Experiences
p. 387)

The rationalists stress the fact that most mystical practices are generally based on ignorance and superstition.

We are quite prepared to admit that. But as individualists we claim the right to indulge in irrational behaviour, if such is our pleasure. *

x) *Refer: at our own expense a risk!* 7.2.

The ego, as Stirner very well pointed out, is essentially sensual and volitional and it is not our wish to repress it.

Conscious schizophrenia

Man has always been faced with the opposition between his emotional desires and his intellect.

Due to the rationalist "fashion" many people today try to find some intellectual backing to support their emotional volitions, attempting, as it were, to "rationalize the irrational" - a good example of this is racialism and nationalism (see Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Alfred Rosenberg).

The individualist makes no such attempt. He simply accepts the duality of his personality. He deliberately operates a dichotomy between his reason and his emotions and adopts an attitude of conscious schizophrenism (as opposed to the pathological state of schizophrenia).

All men are, in fact, schizophrenists; the individualist alone is fully conscious of it.

(To be continued)

RIGHT WING INDIVIDUALISM IN THE UNITED STATESLyman Tower Sargent

The recent growth of the so-called radical right has interested and bothered many people. Although a right wing in American politics is not new, as witnessed by the McCarthy era and the earlier Palmer raids, the seeming strength of such organisations as the John Birch Society and the militant posture of others such as the Minutemen has caused more widespread concern than previously. In particular, the takeover of the Republican Party by its right wing and the subsequent nomination of Barry Goldwater for President forced many people to recognize that the extreme conservatives in the United States had become a force to reckon with. Although Goldwater became more moderate during his campaign and was decisively defeated, the radical right is not dead.

The ideas of this movement have caused a certain amount of soul-searching among anarchists because there are some obvious similarities between the two positions (1). For example, both emphasize individualism, and both reject governmental control of almost all aspects of life. Whether or not the right rejects the state is debatable and will be discussed later. It will be my purpose in the forthcoming articles to consider the political philosophies of the leading writers on the far right, particularly the writings of Ayn Rand, Barry Goldwater, H.L. Hunt, and organizations such as the John Birch Society. Perhaps there are more similarities between the two extremes of political thought than either side would care to admit, perhaps not.

There are a number of problems with attempting such an analysis. In the first place, as with many anarchist publications, the literature of the right wing does not circulate very widely and is sometimes quite difficult to obtain. Secondly, there are very few treatises of political philosophy produced by the right. Ayn Rand's novels, H.L. Hunt's "Alpaca", and Barry Goldwater's writings come the closest to expositions of the political thought of the right wing, but even these cannot be labelled systematic treatises.

In addition to the question of source materials, there are some definitional problems that must be faced. What, for example, constitutes the right wing or radical right? In part, it is the purpose of these essays to define the political thought that characterizes this outlook, but a few tentative comments may still be made to partially delimit the individuals and groups that constitute the right. Those individuals and groups that are placed right of centre advocate slower change than do those that are placed left of centre. The further one moves towards the right the more change is slowed down until, at some undetermined point, you reach the radical right who tend to find their political goal somewhere in history rather than in the present or future. The people of the radical right were once called reactionaries, but the term was dropped because the new movement cannot be labelled such as easily as the earlier ones. They seem to want to do more than simply turn the clock back. They are concerned with particular issues of the present day. Unfortunately, this description of the spectrum of political philosophy is over-simplified, and therefore these articles, of necessity, will be exercises in definition.

Finally, the word individualism causes other problems. Perhaps, the two extremes of political thought mean different things by individualism. If, for example, the individualism of the right refers to the "rugged individualism" of Social Darwinism, the definition of this term will do much to distinguish the right wing from the left wing. Again, therefore, these articles must be concerned with definitions.

Although it is not the purpose of these articles to trace the development of the right wing in U.S. politics, it might be useful to speculate a bit concerning the reasons for the existence of such a movement. It should be noted that my comments would probably not be accepted by many American historians, and, thus, it might be wise to take them with a large grain of salt.

No matter how early or late their arrival, European immigrants to America have brought inflated hopes of establishing a more perfect society or a better life as part of their baggage. These hopes have frequently been crushed for the individual, but their optimistic aura has become part of the American mind. The people of this country have consistently seen it as better, somehow closer to the Garden of Eden, than any other piece of land. Americans have assumed that the United States provides the unique possibility of an ideal life, uncluttered by the evil traditions and institutions of the old world and, hence, capable of sustaining a simple, innocent, and timeless perfection.

A good illustration of this belief pattern and the struggle to maintain it in the face of reality is found in the writings of Mark Twain. At the beginning of his career Twain sees an unbounded sphere of perfection in America, but the geographic limits of the Garden steadily contract until, in his "Huckleberry Finn", only the Mississippi River, flowing free of its shores, is left. In the later work "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court", the entire myth of American perfection is held up to ridicule but the hope of an ultimate reconstruction is frantically maintained. By the time of his death, however, Twain had sunk into extreme bitterness and believed that no area of innocence remained at all.

Fortunately or unfortunately, many Americans still believe in America as the Garden of Eden where men are able to live the perfectly innocent life. The cycle of belief, disillusionment and reaffirmation is a basic factor in American history. Perfection is continually being corrupted - the timeless is perpetually being forced to explain change. Here, again, the Edenic parallel is used. When the disparity between the dream and the reality become too obvious to ignore, a snake is discovered in the Garden and must be driven out to restore perfection. Consequently, there has been a constant procession of snakes: Europe, immigrants, cities, industrialists, anarchists, drink, socialists, most recently Communists, and always Jews. In turn, each scapegoat is symbolically defeated or, more often, neutralized by some sort of amalgamation into the realm of the dream. Americans can then return to their euphoric assumption of perpetual innocent perfection until the next threat necessitates still another ritual cleansing. (2) How can one discuss "America" & its living conditions without discussing the degree of economic freedom prevailing in any particular era & area? J.Z.

In many ways, the radical right conforms to this general outlook. Painfully aware of the complex international urban industrial society in which they are forced to live, there is an almost hysterical desire to retreat to the supposed simplicity of an earlier era. For some, the cause of all the problems in American society is the Communist conspiracy, led, of course, by the Jews and English bankers. The entire right wing contends that there has been a serious moral decline in the United States from aggressive individualism to group-oriented weakness. This has led them to feel a necessity for immediate, wide-range corrective action.

In the following articles I shall attempt to present a systematic description and analysis of those individuals and groups who espouse "right wing individualism". In doing so, I shall make numerous comparisons with all degrees of anarchist thought to indicate the areas of agreement and disagreement, and finally, I shall try to place the current movement on the right within the perspective of American history.

((1) Note the exchange of letters in "Freedom" earlier this year over the political ideas of Barry Goldwater. & prejudiced generalizations? J.Z.

((2) The following books are studies of American history that approach their subjects from about the same view as presented above: Henry Nash Smith: "Virgin Land" - New York, Vintage Books, 1950; John William Ward: "Andrew Jackson - Symbol For An Age" - New York, Oxford University Press, 1962; David W. Noble: "The Paradox Of Progressive Thought" - Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1958; Carl L. Becker: "The Heavenly City Of The Nineteenth Century Philosophers" - New Haven, Yale University Press, 1932; R.W.B. Lewis: "The American Adam" - Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1955; and Ernest Lee Tuveson: "Millenium and Utopia" - Berkeley, University of California Press, 1949.)

This "anarchist" pays attention to popular prejudices but not to economic liberty or the lack of it. J.Z. 11. 8. 1977.

IN THE KINGDOM OF THE SPOOKSRenzo Novatore

2 "There exist only Beauty and Force, but to hold themselves in equilibrium the brutal and the weak invented 'justice'".

Raffaele Valente.

Once I thought it to be only a fearful dream, but it was in fact a bloody reality.

I am surrounded and caught between a double circle of fanatics, rabble and fools.

2 The world is a foul, pestiferous church where all are expected to worship an idol as if it were a fetish, and where rises an altar on which they must sacrifice themselves. Even those who light the iconoclastic pyre on which to burn the cross with its god-man, even these have yet to understand the call of life or the cry of freedom.

2 After the legendary Christ had spat at the face of man the most bloody of insults by urging him to deny himself so as to be nearer God, along came the French Revolution which, in savage irony, made the same appeal by proclaiming the "rights of man."

According to Christ and the French Revolution man is imperfect. The cross of Christ symbolizes the possibility of becoming man; the rights of man symbolize exactly the same thing. To attain true perfection it is necessary, according to the first, to become divine, according to the second, to become human. ? free enough!

2 But Christ and the French Revolution are at one in proclaiming the imperfection of the individual man, the real ego, by affirming that it is only by attaining the ideal that man can reach the magic peaks of perfection. — consisted of MANY different uprisings & aims! J.Z.

x) Rather, the flaws of his subjugation to other imperfect men.

Christ tells you: "If you patiently climb up desolate Calvary and have yourself nailed upon the cross, becoming my image, the image of the man-god, you will become perfect, being fit to sit at the right hand of my father who is in heaven." And the French Revolution tells you: "If you enter into the symbolic cloister of human justice, in order to be sublimated and humanised by the grace of the moral rule of social life, you will become a citizen, and I will grant you your rights and proclaim you man." But he who dares to throw the cross and its man-god, or the clumsy 2 tablets of the Rights of Man, into the fire and proclaim the free individual — such a man is an upstart, an evil-doer who is threatened by two sinister spooks, the Divine and the Human.

On the right the sulphurous and eternal flames of Hell, which punish sin; and on the left the dull grinding of the guillotine which punishes crime.

2 The cold and spineless cowardice of human fear, produced by subjugation to mystical and morbid sentiments, has succeeded in conquering the healthy and primitive injustice which was force and beauty, youth and audacity. So-called progress, so-called civilization, so-called religion, so-called idealism have entombed life in a deadly circle where the most repugnant spooks have established their rule. — says one of the most repugnant spooks — in the pursuit of his violent empire. J.Z. 11.8.97.

The hour for the end has come. We must break out of the deadly circle and escape. If the chimeras of divine legends have terribly influenced human history; if human history has involved the mutilation of the real, individual man — then we rebel! It is not our fault if the symbolic wounds of Christ have given birth to the social infection that proclaimed the rights of man. If men want to stagnate in systematised dens of social putrefaction, then they must put up with them. We others love the sun, and we want to give ourselves freely to the violent ardour of its kiss.

2 That is what individual rights & liberties are — to all too many who call themselves anarchists. J.Z.
I would expect any crime & atrocities from such "liberators" & "spinkers" & "prophets". J.Z.

When I look around me I want to vomit. On the one hand, there is the scholar in whom I must believe if I am not to be ignorant. On the other, the moralist and philosopher whose commandments I must accept in order not to be a brute. Then there is the genius I must glorify and the hero before whom I must bow.

Then come the comrade and the friend, the idealist and the materialist, the atheist and the believer, and a host of definite and indefinite apes who bear down on me with their advice and want to put me on the right path. Because, it must be understood, the way that I am is bad, as are my thoughts, my ideas - all of me.

"I am a man who has deceived himself." These poor madmen are obsessed by the idea that life has intruded them to be pontiffs officiating at the largest mission because humanity has been called to great destinies.

These poor and pitiful animals, deceived by false ideals and transformed by lunacy, have never been able to understand the tragic and joyous miracle of life, any more than they have been able to see that humanity is not called to any great destiny.

If they would learn from what has gone before, they would at least know that their would-be fellows do not share their desire to break their backs jumping the abyss that separates one from the other.

But I am what I am, and the rest is of little importance. *-So says any criminal with victims!* J.Z.

And the croaking of these multi-coloured chatterers only serves to deepen my noble and personal wisdom. *- He suffered from delusions of grandeur.* J.Z.

O apostolic apes of humanity and social progress, do you not hear that which sounds above your spooks? *- His spooks are worse!* J.Z.

2 Listen, o listen! It is my laughter which rises and echoes furiously in the heights!

(English version by J.R. and S.E.P.,
from a French translation by E.
Armand - L'UNIQUE, Nov.-Dec. 1954)

(Biographical note: Renzo Novatore was an Italian individualist and illegalist who was killed in a battle with the Carabinieri in 1922. He was the editor of several reviews and left behind him two large pamphlets: "Al Disopra de Arco" (Above Archism) and "Verso Il Nulla Creatore" (Towards the Creative Nothing).)

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My thanks to all
S.E.P.

KARL WALTER

Karl Walter died on October 18th. He was a delegate to the International Anarchist Congress of 1907, a friend of Kropotkin and Tom Keell, and author of several books, including "Many Maternities and Some Changelings" reviewed in MINUS ONE. "Freedom" says "He called himself an anarchist communist, but he was really an extreme individualist, as he had been all his life." Seven days before he died he sent me a cheque for £3 and a note saying simply "Congratulations". I met him once in Bristol in 1960 and remember him as a kindly old man who argued fervently for anarchism as a scientific approach. *-As if communist anarchism were scientific!* J.Z.

x) How can a communist be an extreme individualist?

Even if a consistent volunteerist, he is NOT an individualist regarding property. J.Z.

S.E.P.

(in the envelope.)

To The Editor,

I am assuming that Francis Ellingham is correct in interpreting "conscious egoism" as "spontaneity". I have no private interpretation of Stirner as I find his book unreadable. Four questions arise from Francis's article:

1. This refers to my letter in Issue 8 in which I asked whether a person's behaviour can really be called spontaneous when factors of heredity, upbringing and environment have already, to a large extent, moulded that person's personality and attitudes. Francis answered in the text of Part 3 to the effect that spontaneity means being what you are at the time even though (as is the case in real life, of course) what a person is at a given time is the result largely of factors outside himself. Implied in Francis's answer, as I read it, is the idea that a Stirnerite would live just according to any old rag-bag personality, mind, etc., that heredity, education and environment happened to have given him. A Stirner-ite, then, would not by deliberate choice and conscious effort try to improve himself - perhaps by overcoming slavish habits, fears and complexes - because to do so would be contrary to the theory of spontaneity.

2. Francis wrote in Part 4 that Stirner's, Lao Tzu's, etc., admonitions that individuals cease chasing after moral abstractions (spooks) and instead be spontaneous is dangerous in that spontaneity itself can come to be regarded as a duty and thus, paradoxically, the individual "contrives to be spontaneous."

But if a person follows Stirner's, Lao Tzu's and Francis's advice and succeeds in freeing himself from all "spooks" then his resulting behaviour cannot be anything other than spontaneous. So all Stirner, Lao Tzu and Francis need have done was present negative criticism of the "spooks" and left it at that. The paradox only arises because Stirner, Lao Tzu and Francis are thoughtless enough to discuss and advocate "spontaneity". What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over.

3. Francis never said what use spontaneity is in buying groceries or getting a job. At times he gave me the impression that spontaneity applies only in ethical matters; at other times he seemed to be saying that one is wholly spontaneous anyhow, thus turning his concept into a metaphysical subtlety lying on some outer fringe of the free will / determinism controversy.

4. I found the link up with Zen not very convincing. In Zen everything depends on intuitive realisation, a spontaneous breakthrough to the Zen experience: satori. But whereas this satori is in a sense spontaneous to the student who experiences it, its occurrence is due to the perception and wisdom of the attendant Master who, seeing the student is on the threshold of satori, pushes him over by one of the famous tricks - pulling his nose, throwing a statue of Buddha on the fire, etc. And to arrive at the threshold of satori involves the student in a long period of deliberate meditation, often over many years.

So if there is a link up between Francis's concept of spontaneity and Zen why, when the latter is so difficult, isn't the former?

Jeff Robinson.

Dear Editor,

A few points about my recent series on Stirner and egoism.

First, some corrections of the published text. In the sixth paragraph of the first page of the third article, the sentence beginning "But because you are" should have read "But because they are egoism that you are". And in the seventh paragraph on the second page of the last article, the clause beginning "until it is realized that there is nothing" should have read "...that if there is nothing".

Now for some of the criticisms.

Jeff Robinson (MINUS ONE, No. 8.) seems to think that (a) the doctrine of the essential spontaneity of the self implies "free will", and (b) "free will" has been incontrovertibly exploded by philosophy and psychology. Neither of these things is true. By "spontaneous" I mean "not due to conscious volition" (Concise Oxford Dictionary). In that sense of the word clouds move spontaneously across the sky, although they have no will of their own and their movements may be predictable by weather-forecasters. And there is no general agreement about "free will" among philosophers and psychologists: nobody has yet produced a scientifically demonstrable answer to this problem. Personally, for mainly intuitive reasons, I do not believe in "free will". That is to say, I do not believe in in Henley's famous lines "I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul." I believe that my soul-ship (my whole, natural self) sails along quite spontaneously, according to its own laws, while the so-called "Captain" (my conscious mind) is really only part of the works.

Domenico Pastorello, in his confused and largely unintelligible remarks (MINUS ONE, No. 10), shows much disgust at my interpretation of egotism, but no sign of understanding it or even trying to understand it. It would be a waste of time to point out all his obvious logical mistakes, or his incredibly careless and absurd misrepresentation of my views. Why is he so disgusted? I suppose it is mainly because I talked about "the compassion of the true saint". Let me reassure Mr. Pastorello that I am not suggesting that he, or anybody else, should try to become a saint. All I am saying, on the contrary, is that sanity - which is the basis of true compassion - consists in accepting ourselves as we are. If Mr. Pastorello comes to accept himself he will come to love himself, and if he comes to love himself he will find himself spontaneously loving others. Certain tribes, such as the Arapesh of New Guinea and the Zuni Indians of New Mexico, are amazingly unaggressive. It is not even true that all animals are aggressive. Recent research on monkeys goes to show that the higher primates are essentially pacific and co-operative, and only fight each other in overcrowded and unnatural conditions. It is not surprising if men, in the highly artificial environment of our crazy modern civilization, sometimes behave like poor demented brutes, but it does not follow that such brutality is part of their essential nature. By propagating the old-fashioned and obsolescent theory (so convenient for the capitalist classes) that man is basically an aggressive animal, Domenico Pastorello is helping to keep the so-called civilized world in darkness and slavery.

Francis Ellingham.

POUR PARAÎTRE fin 1965, LES ESSAIS FANTASTIQUES DU DOCTEUR ROB par Ixigrec. S'aventurant hors du réel, nos héros découvrent des mondes étranges, suprenant ou terrifiants et des mondes harmonieux dignes des possibilités futures du génie humain. En souscription aux Editions La Ruche Ouvrière, 10, rue de Montmorency, Paris (3e), France. Prix 8F - Franco 9F.

One of our readers, who lives in Spain and is unable to send money out of the country, would like to borrow Draper's "Conflict Between Religion and Science" for three months. Anyone who can help please contact this review.

Readers knowing French may be interested in "Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) ou 'L'Homme Revolte'" by Micheline Flak. This was originally given as a talk in March 1965 to the Foyer Individualiste of Paris and is now published as a pamphlet by La Ruche Ouvrière, address as above. No price is given.

THE LONDON INDIVIDUALIST ANARCHISTS
meet the second Sunday of each month at 7.30 p.m. at 10, Churton Street, Victoria, S.W.1. (Off Vauxhall Bridge Rd.)

Dec 12: Anarchism, Logic and Metaphysics.
Jan 8: ~~For~~ Stirner and Conscious Egoism. &c.

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