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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

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ANARCHISM VERSUS STATE SOCIALISM

by George Bernard Shaw

(This brief essay was first published in Henry Seymour's paper the "Anarchist" and was reprinted by him as a separate publication in 1889. Shaw, I believe, used to claim that it did not represent his point of view, but was meant to present that of an anarchist. In view of the anarchistic strain in much of Shaw's writing, it is possible that this claim expressed embarrassment rather than accuracy. Be that as it may, I was once told by an old Irish revolutionary, the late Mat Kavanagh, that Shaw used to get very annoyed when "the boys" used to sell it outside his meetings, particularly when he was lecturing on "The Impossibilities of Anarchism"! - S.E.P.)

Give a dog a bad name and hang him. Give a man a bad name - anarchist, for example - and hang him, by all means. Anarchist is a very bad name indeed. The comfortable landlord or capitalist cries to the collectivist "What you propose would land you, not in Utopia, as you expect, but in anarchy". The collectivist retorts, "What have we at present but anarchy everywhere?". But the capitalist knows better than that. He points to the omnipresent "iron laws", which on other occasions the collectivist himself has often pointed out, and presses for instances of anarchy. The collectivist, thus hard put to it, retracts his generalization, but maintains that though there is system and socialization in production, there is anarchy in exchange. By which, as it presently appears, he means that exchange is controlled by a few private persons; that it is a monopoly; that, in short, what he is complaining of is not anarchy at all, but despotism. But he does not cease to use the word anarchy, nor will he admit that he has misapplied it; for the collectivists believe in the infallibility of their pope, Karl Marx; and he said some hard things once of anarchism, as indeed he did, in the exuberance of his talent for hard hitting, about every "ism" that was not unquestioning Marxism. And so from both camps mud is thrown on the name of anarchist. Then, it will be asked, why offend people's sensibilities with it? Why not drop it? Simply because our enemies know better than to let us drop it. They will take care to keep it fastened tightly upon us; and if we disown it, and yet, when challenged, cannot deny it, will it not appear that we are ashamed of it; and will not our shame justly condemn us unheard? No: we must live down calumny as many men, from primitive christians to quakers, and from quakers to socialists, have lived it down before us upon less occasion. What socialists have done in England, anarchists may do; for England is the fatherland of laissez-faire; and laissez-faire, in spite of all the stumblings it has brought upon itself by persistently holding its candle to the devil instead of to its own footsteps, is the torchbearer of anarchism. It is easy for the collectivist to declare that Adam Smith, with his inveterate distrust of all government, and his conviction that people can manage their own business better than any authority, was half a fool, and half a creature of the mercantile classes: but the greatest work on political economy of the eighteenth century is not

a proof of the author's folly; nor is there much evidence of servility either in his comparison of a merchant with a common soldier, greatly to the advantage of the latter, or in the contemptuous allusions to "furious and disappointed monopolists", and like terms, with which his economics are interspersed. Adam Smith could hardly have anticipated that his lessons would be held up to odium by professed champions of liberty because the oppressors of mankind were clever enough to be the first to profit by them. But the time has come for English socialists to consider whether the great Scotchman was really such a fool as some collectivists seem to take him for. The compromise of liberals and conservatives on the Franchise was really a coalition brought about by the pressure of the growing democracy on two parties, whose differences had long ceased to exist except as factious habits. The monopolist is at last face to face with the socialist; and must presently appear to all Englishmen that instead of two sorts of monopolists - whig and tory - opposing one sort of socialist; there are really two sorts of socialists - anarchist and collectivist - confronting one solid body of monopolists. The collectivists would drive the money-changers from Westminster only to replace them with a central administration, committee of public safety, or what not. Instead of "Victoria, by the grace of God", they would give us "the Superintendent of such and such an Industry by the authority of the Democratic Federation", or whatever body we are to make our master under the new dispensation. "Master" is certainly an ugly word for a "popular government", the members of which are but trustees for the people. "Trustee" is good; but is not a father better than a body of trustees? Shall the English nation be orphaned? The Russians have a father in the Tzar: why should we not have a Tzar? What objection would he be open to that does not apply to a popular government just as strongly? - nay, more so; for should either misbehave it is easier to remove one man than six hundred and seventy. Or is there freedom in a multitude of masters, as there is said to be wisdom in a multitude of counsellors (a remark made long before the British House of Commons devoted its energies to proving the contrary)? The sole valid protest against Tsardom, individual or collective, is that of the anarchist who would call no man master. Slavery is the complement of authority, and must disappear with it. If the slave indeed makes the master, then the workers are slaves by choice, and to emancipate them is tyranny. But if, as we believe, it is the master that makes the slave, we shall never get rid of slavery until we have got rid of authority. In favour of authority, from its simple enforcement by the rod in the nursery, to its complex organization in "the minor state of siege", there is much to be said on every ground except that of experience. Were there twice as much, it is the mission of the anarchist to obstruct its coming and to hasten its banishment; to mistrust its expediency however specious the instance; and to maintain incessant protest against all its forms throughout the world.

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From the belief that the levying of taxes and (the) conscription (of men?) is right and proper follows the belief that it is the duty of the subject to pay the taxes and fight in obedience to command. If you grant the right to command to anybody or to anything, be it the king, parliament, church, or conscience, you as a natural consequence inflict the duty of obedience on those who are subject to the commander.

from "Slaves to Duty"
by John Badcock, Jr.

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A race of altruists is necessarily a race of slaves. A race of freemen is necessarily a race of egoists.

John Basil Barnhill.

EN MARGE

by S.E.Parker

The Prophet Alarmed.

In his new pamphlet on "The Unavoidable Crisis" Jeff Robinson's theme is that "human progress" is impossible and that the world cannot be changed for "the better". He argues that, despite all the discoveries that have been made and the social changes that have occurred, men are still basically the same as they were in the New Stone Age and in some respects worse off.

Furthermore, we are today faced with "the unavoidable crisis" which is compounded of the population explosion, the totalitarian threat implicit in biological and chemical research into the manipulation of personality, and the ever-present threat of nuclear, biological and chemical warfare.

Jeff Robinson sees any effort made to reverse or halt these trends as being doomed to failure. Whether enacted by democratic or revolutionary means the end result will be, at best, the shifting of the problem from one aspect to another of this air-conditioned nightmare, or, at worst, a new tyranny in place of the old, if not total destruction.

Only by opting out of "doom-laden conventional society" can the aware individual, alone or in small communities, manage to survive.

No social pessimist will take exception to much of what Jeff Robinson writes - particularly in regard to the idiocy of politicizing. What is questionable, however, is his interpretation of certain historical periods and the values he attaches to them.

For a start, he believes the New Stone Age (why not the Old?) to have been the best epoch for human beings. He writes: "Life was then unquestioned and in harmony with natural surroundings". Apart from the obvious query, how the hell does he know?, I wonder why an unquestioning attitude to life should be praised. Cows in a field seem unquestioning and, as far as can be observed, are usually "in harmony with natural surroundings". For the lack of pains they are rewarded by being milked and eventually eaten. Is this what Jeff Robinson wants?

Continuing his imaginative projection backwards Jeff Robinson holds up the New Stone Age religion for our admiration. Again, how he knows what this was he does not say, but nonetheless he assures us that "New Stone Age religion was a reasonable thing. It was based on awe of nature's forces coupled with the desire to propitiate these forces so that man could keep his place in the scheme of things. This is reasonable in that humility before nature diminishes man's own vanity and hubris, the arrogant belief that man can ultimately master nature."

Such a piece of priestly sonorosity deserves to be shot down. Just what is meant by man's "place in the scheme of things"? What place? Which scheme? Who assigned "man" there? And by what criterion? Writing of this kind smells of spiritual spookery and is only a hairsbreadth away from the unctuousity of "God ordered our estate" And this from a professed individualist anarchist....

Jeff Robinson later admits that "such ideas....are based on fear" and laments the fact that "the forces which gave rise to fear in 4000 BC should (but don't) inspire terror in 1971 AD".

From whose point of view is this attempt to resurrect animism "reasonable"?

Unfortunately this priestly lament is continually sounded throughout the pamphlet. The decline of the number of intelligent people who become "religious" is deplored, and so is the "degeneration"

of "religious leaders" into secular leaders. We are invited to weep because "Christianity" became "enfeebled before the onward rush of barbarous materialism" after the Industrial Revolution and to be shocked by the "clamorous demands for more materialism" of today. And so on and so forth. What religion is, what materialism means, the reader is left to guess. To read Jeff Robinson one would never know that an anarchist is logically an atheist.

The author is confused about what kind of "society" he thinks would satisfy "the masses". He praises the New Stone Age because life was then "unquestioned" and stable. He then asks what kind of society would appeal "to the broad conservative instincts of the masses" and answers: "a pluralist society, one with such a variety of aspects that there was something to appeal to almost every taste, interest and aspiration that humans possess". But if the best type of social life is an unquestioned one appealing to "broad conservative instincts" then it follows that a mohist way of going on would be the most suitable, not a pluralist one. Plurality means the existence of difference, innovation, competition, conflict - in fact all those things that call into question every aspect of life and are the very antitheses of conservatism. How does Jeff Robinson square his support for pluralism with his complaint that "In all societies there is a small number of people who cannot leave things alone and are forever tinkering with new ideas and the possibility of new processes".?

Jeff Robinson appears to be torn between individualism and a yearning for the consolations of religion (albeit more pagan than christian). Since they won't mix, what is it to be: Ave or Vale?

(The Unavoidable Crisis and Ways of Avoiding It is available from Gregory Hill, 2 Church Crescent, London, N.10. Price 7p)

St. Max and The Critics.

1971 in Britain has been marked for individualists by a couple of unusual events in the literary world. I refer to the publication of two volumes about Max Stirner. One is a full length critique of his life and ideas by R.W.K. Paterson called "The Nihilistic Egoist Max Stirner" (Oxford University Press £3.50). The other is a book of selections from "The Ego and His Own" made and introduced under that title by John Carroll (Jonathan Cape £2.95). I do not propose to deal with either of them here since I have reviewed them both for a forthcoming issue of the monthly journal "Anarchy". It is enough to say that the first is a hostile study almost swamped by existentialist jargon, but containing quite a lot of interesting information and drawing some valuable parallels with other thinkers (particularly with Nietzsche, not, however, with other anarchists) and the second is useful for Carroll's stimulating if sometimes off-beam introduction, and for those who want to take their Stirner in instalments rather than all at once.

So far I have only seen two reviews in the national press: Philip Toynbee's review of the two books in the "Observer" for April 11, and an anonymous review of Paterson's book in "The Economist" for April 12. Both present a study in what passes for intelligent criticisms in the "quality" press and are good examples of what Ayn Rand has called "the argument from intimidation". Had the tabloids bothered they could hardly have done worse.

Mr. Toynbee, who has before shown his talent for smearing Stirner, manages to write a fairly lengthy review without getting anything right except a few biographical details. He is so enchanted by his own whimsy that he cannot even be bothered to consult a competent dictionary to ascertain that "egotism" is not the same as "egoism". Throughout his review he blithely refers to Stirner's "egotism" without noticing that both authors, correctly refer to his "egoism".

It is not surprising, therefore, that he confuses Stirner with Fichte and announces that Stirner "trumpeted forth...the ultimate apothecosis of the ego". Now Stirner makes it very clear several times

that he was concerned with his own, mortal ego, not "the ego" which is just as abstract and bloodless a conception as the other mental phantasms he attacks. He explicitly disassociates himself from the Fichtean Ego, and Mr. Paterson, whom Toynbee is supposed to have read, points this out. But, then, one can hardly expect someone who confuses egotism with egoism and immorality with amorality to notice a crucial distinction like this.

Toynbee is quite content to try to identify Stirner with either the "Right" (i.e. fascism) or "such contemporary figures as Charles Manson and the Weathermen". He does not deign to give us the reason for such an identification - perhaps because there isn't one - but one who has grasped what "The Ego and His Own" is really about can only wonder how its creator can be compared to the true believers of fascist mass movements or such possessed creatures as Manson and the Weathermen, - and call to mind Stirner's description of the world as a madhouse. Toynbee writes: "Though St. Max hated all forms of collective life it is easy to see how his immorality (sic) and egotism (sic) could be expanded to justify the absolute right of the tribe or State". Really? How? Blank out!

Toynbee concludes his review by dodging behind an ad hominem attack: "I find Stirner as repugnantly boring as any of his later reincarnations. He is of mild interest as a historical and pathological specimen, although his ideas are as childishy brash, naive, pretentious and contradictory as the 'ideas' of Genet and his like. But God is not mocked: the poor man had to spend many of his later years translating Adam Smith into German."

Of course, Stirner's fate could have been worse. Were he alive today he might have to earn his living translating Philip Toynbee into German.....

The "Economist"'s anonymous review, "Grab Gospel", is even more puerile than that of Toynbee. Its author promotes Stirner from Manson and Genet to more elevated intellectual heights: Stirner's "philosophy has just the right blend of cloudy metaphysics and pseudo-psychiatry to commend itself to the impressionable followers of Herbert Marcuse, R.D.Laing, and Wilhelm Reich".

No reference is made to any of Stirner's ideas except for a few distorted words and inaccurate analogies. Like Toynbee, the author concludes with an ad hominem attack and reaffirms his opening prophesy that Stirner is "ripe for revival" as a "cult figure" on "the pop market". (The next time I am in the vicinity of that hippy haunt Finch's Pub in London's Portobello Market I shall a sharp lookout for earnest groups of hippies discussing the intricacies of Stirnerian egoism, but I have a feeling that it would take quite a few pints of their best bitter beer to convince me that this is what I will see!)

Both Mr. Paterson and Mr. Carroll have produced works which show evidence of considerable research and scholarship. I strongly disagree with both - particularly the first - on certain issues, but at least they deserve attention from those who want to find out what they have to say about Stirner. In contrast, the two reviewers mentioned deserve nothing but contempt. They have neither read the books they allegedly reviewed, nor know what it is they are supposed to be criticizing. Yet the respectable press would trumpet them forth as "experts" if asked why they were given these books to review.....

Someone whose work for individualism I respect suggested to me that it was better to leave the Toynbees to their bellowing and whining and get on with pushing one's own ideas - it was more fun that way. Each to his taste. I have an appetite for controversy over things like this and so find some of my 'fun' in blasting away. I only wish the targets on this occasion were more worthy. Nietzsche once remarked on the value of cultivating one's enemies. But what enemies!

Tucker In Print Again.

I have received from the Libertarian Bookshop, 95 West Green Rd., London, N.15, a reprint of Tucker's pamphlet "The Attitude of Anarchism Towards Industrial Combinations" - an address delivered by Benj. Tucker in Central Hall, Chicago, September 14, 1899, before the Conference on Trusts held under the auspices of the Civic Federation. This is a well produced, duplicated, edition price 3p (by post 5p in stamps. USA 10 cents), 10 copies, 27p by post. "Published with funds made available by not letting the government steal what they chose to term 'income tax'". Bravo Libertaria!

MAN MEETS BOOK - Some Notes On Reading Stirner

by William Flygare

(The following Notes are taken from the Introduction to a new edition of Max Stirner's "The Ego and His Own" prepared by Wm. Flygare of the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies., Japan. The section and paragraph numberings refer to this forthcoming edition, not to the current one edited by James J. Martin)

An honest book's the noblest work of man
Thoreau

The present presumption arises from three considerations:

- 1) The importance of Goethe's poem,
- 2) some wildly discordant reading reactions, and
- 3) some apparently ignored structural characteristics.

Mine Ought's On N'Ought

A Goethean melancholy Jacques? (Shakespeare put the possessed down as "actors").

It is most strange that no edition of "The Ego and His Own" has ever included the light-hearted drinking-jingle that Stirner adopted as his theme-song. He himself may have taken the reader's knowledge of the poem for granted.

Stirner's strains sometimes strain for their spontaneity, but, ironically enough, the self-consuming Joy in being one's own man is the one that is so selflessly contagious.

In the translation, some liberties were taken with the wording but not with mood and manner. Bringing out various implications of "Sach' stellen" and "Nichts" was attempted. The trick spelling "n'ought" is meant to mean the opposite of "ought" (meaning "owed", i.e. having owed another's property) since "nought" is only another spelling of "naught" - all of which means "nothing" in sound....or sense.

Mine Ought's On N'Ought

My thoughts 'n' oughts are nothing fixed
Hooray!
for Joy's the world that's down unmixed
this way!
and all who'd be good mates of mine
to clink 'n' drink just suit me fine
for lees of life and wine!

I'd trained my trade on gold 'n' gain
Hooray!
but so I sold my joy for pain;
I say,
the coins were rolling here and there,
but every time I chased a where
the here was over there.

To women then I gave my heart
O belles!
but how those damsels made me smart
O hells!
The false were true to others, true,
but true ones bored me through and through;
the best.....were not for woo.

Next, I thought I ought to roam
Hooray!
but then I lost my ways of home
that way,
and nothing seemed to suit me quite;
the board was bad, the bed a fright,
and no one got me right.

I tuned my dream to name and fame
 Excel!
 but better men put me to shame
 O hell!
 or when I gave some good I had
 they made me out to be a cad;
 my good was worse than bad.

I sought the right in battle might
 Hooray!
 and often was our might so right
 (hooray!)
 the enemy's land was ours to run;
 but still the score was won to none,
 and a leg became undone.

So now I call my calling nought
 So what!
 The world's all mine that comes unsought
 that's what!
 Now that it's song and sup all day,
 come clink 'n' drink me all the way
 these lees to the last hooray!

Man Dates Book

These good people do not know what time and trouble it takes to learn to read.
 I have been working at it for eighty years, and I can't say yet that I am completely successful.

Goethe to Eckermann, Ja. 25, 1830.

Here are some haps from men who have dated Stirner's daughter. In their eyes, Stirner (is):

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| 1. a) anarchist | b) not anarchist | |
| 2. a) leftist | b) rightist | c) neither |
| 3. a) condones murder | b) condones rapacity | |
| 4. a) super-man-ic | b) sub-man-ic | |
| 5. a) repels artists | b) attracts artists only | |
| 6. a) too subjective | b) too objective | |
| 7. a) vague about the ego | b) not worth bothering about | |

All of these readers are learned professionals, some famous, and generally generous. The foils following their reading reactions are contradictions rather than corrections.

1. a) In attempts to define "anarchism" (e.g. Kitzbacher), and in descriptive and historical accounts (e.g. Woodcock), Stirner is dealt with as one of the six or seven outstanding anarchists.

According to Marcus B. Mallet, Anarchism

"....belongs to the 'primitive tradition' of Western culture and springs from the philosophical concept of the inherent and radical goodness of human nature...."

Dagobert D. Rune's Dictionary of Philosophy, p.11.

Stirner might qualify:

44.9: "We are perfect altogether, and on the whole earth there is not one man who is a sinner!"

Then again he might not:

42.35: "Possibility and reality always coincide."

42.37: "As men are not all rational...., it is probable that they cannot be so."

b) An anonymous writer says of "The Ego and His Own":

".....The work is apparently an anarchist attack on all human society—on cooperation and institutions of every kind. The ego is the supreme law, and external obligation and submission are concessions to what Stirner called "spooks" with which the world is infested. In fact, however, Stirner was not an anarchist; what he attacked were the ideological compulsions that are not based on the real needs of humanity, and he believed that the individual could only achieve his full development when he had been freed from these compulsions." (*italics mine*)
Encyclopedia Americana, 1961, vol. 25: p. 654

45.15: "No concept expresses me."

2. a) James J. Martin reports,

"Most of the nineteenth century critics "generally lumped him in the "Hegelian Left." (p. xiii of the present text)

2.57: "I am no longer a ragamuffin, but I have been one."

2. b) Private correspondent / reports that John Carroll, editor of Jonathan Cape Selections from "The Ego and His Own",

".....has classified him as belonging to the "European Right".

This classification would also be Marrian.

I wrote back,

".....Come to think of it, the interpretation of Stirner's being 'part of the European Right' is vaguely possible; while he objected to current and past authoritarianism, he objected to the new authoritarianism even more. It would be interesting to see what the Cambridge don has to say."

2. c) S.E.Parker, in his "Individualist Anarchism - an Outline, states,

"Individualism is something quite different from the caricature common to both "Left" and "Right".

(Stirner and Walker are the two mainstays of this editor of MINUS ONE)

"A plague on both your houses!"

(Said thrice; a horrible imprecation in those days; was Mercutio done in for outdoing the cast?)

3. a) Camus, in "The Rebel", devotes only four lines to Stirner in which he concludes the he "condones murder."

Wherever Stirner mentions murder, the subject is not murder at all! Giving Roman and Spartan infanticide as an illustration (26.20), he is attacking the humbug of "birthrights"; the mercy slaying of an infant by a dying mother (41.35) is the description of a tragic reality beyond the judgement of those "not in it"; in picturing Russian border sentinels, he is pointing out

28.13: ".....with what unction the butchery goes on in the name of the law...."

and in his own "self-entitling", he is revealing the psychological reality as to why he himself would or would not commit murder....or anything else.

In "The Myth of Sisyphus", Camus set out to solve the problem of suicide; in "The Rebel, he set out to solve the problem of murder; Stirner was only incidental to his purpose. Camus does not mention their common stand on rebellion.

(To be continued)

Love your neighbour as yourself. Now what has that gentleman done to deserve our love?
Norman Douglas.

VALUE - THE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS ABOLITION (Cont)

by E. Armand

(translation by Francis Ellingham)

may acquire rightfully: J.E.
An individualist definition of value - Given a milieu in which (each individual being regarded as a producer) the producer possesses, by an inalienable right, the means of production, and disposes as he pleases, without any restriction, of the result of his personal effort; in which he only produces what he is qualified to produce by himself, whether he works alone or in partnership. Given a milieu in which no-one knows the exploitation of man by man, or governmental or administrative intervention to the slightest degree - on what foundations would the value of economic utilities be established? How would it be defined?

It is necessary to note that in any such milieu cornering would no longer be possible and that even thrift could not be changed into hoarding in view of the limits to the productive capacities of the individual.....

It is rational, in this case, that the value should be the normal expression of the individual effort of the producer, that is to say should correspond to what the product has cost in trouble and in labour. Suggested by the supplier, the value is questioned by the demander in proportion to the more or less lively intensity of his need for the utility concerned.

To give a product a value which corresponds to the trouble it has cost is fairness itself, since it is obvious that the greater or lesser perfection of its manufacture depends on the care taken over it. The question of the soil and climate set aside, a field which has been painstakingly tilled will produce - all things being equal - more than one which has been neglected. And it is the same in all spheres of production. The trouble which a product has cost can mean not only the trouble of obtaining it, but also that of all the efforts made to present it to the consumer. To base the value of a product on the trouble it has cost is to practice give-and-take between "consumer" and "producer", the only basis on which it is possible to establish relations between men actuated by the will never to injure others. To value a product according to the efforts made to obtain it, amounts to offering for such and such a consumer-utility which you need, a product or an exchange-value all the more advantageous or profitable as that utility is in better condition.

It stands to reason that in the terms "individual effort", "product", "trouble", "labour", "work", there enter all the necessary ingredients for the complete determination of value: scarcity of raw material, freight charges, debt redemption on plant, etc.

Regulators of value - If it is a question of utilities in general use issuing from a large number of producers, competition is the obvious thing to be used as a regulator of value, which in that case will vary within very narrow limits, and those variations will usually be related to the quality, or to the perfection of manufacture, of the article offered.
usually!

If it is a question of articles in less general use, uncommon, precious, special, appealing to a small number of people, it is clear that, competition being limited, the value would be the object of more elaborate bargaining between the supplier and the customer. The more originality, initiative, skill and subtlety the producer showed in the manufacture of the article, the more the value of that article would be affected by those qualities. It must not be forgotten, to revert to the question of the regulator of value, that to the associations of suppliers there would correspond the associations of customers.

Competition in its absolute sense, and the associations of producers and consumers, would be sufficient, in my opinion, in an individualist

milieu to act as regulators of value. If it is true, as a matter of fact, that in consequence of the inexperience of the producer the product does not always correspond to the effort which it has cost, it is no less obvious that through the play of emulative competition the careless would find themselves led naturally to take more trouble over the quality of their output.

Justification of measurable value - What would be the use of the power, for the producer, of fixing a value to his product, if that value was not measurable by another value? For, let us not forget, it is that quality of being measurable which makes an article susceptible of being exchanged. An article cannot be exchanged, is never exchanged, if its value cannot be measured, whatever means of intercourse may be available. A petty Negro potentate - if any still exist - can exchange two pounds of gold-dust for an academician's costume, or equally a pair of ivory tusks for a bank-messenger's cocked hat: there is always a relation between the articles exchanged, a measurable value. In this case, the two pounds of gold-dust are measurable by the academician's cast-offs, the pair of tusks by the bank-messenger's cocked hat.

A consumer may not even need the article he obtains, but appropriates it as a means of barter for a utility which he will find at the house of a third party whom he knows to be anxious to get the aforesaid article.

It is therefore useful, not only that the value of the product offered should be measurable, but that it should be so in such a way that the consumer may be able to obtain other products unobtainable at the spot where the exchange takes place.

Various standards of the measure of value - Measurable, but by what? By another utility or article for consumption. And all sorts of utilities or articles - perishable and non-perishable - can act as a measure for the value of a given product. It can be reckoned, if it is a question of production in partnership, that an hour of average work is equivalent to the time necessary to produce a pound of corn, for example (At Modern Times, a settlement built up by the American individualist, Josiah Warren, time determined value. Moncure Conway, who visited it around 1860, was shown a voucher made out in this way: "Owing to X - a doctor - five hours of professional services or 80 pounds of corn."), or x pounds of oats, or x cubic feet of firewood, or x hundredweights of coal, or x yards of cloth of a specified quality, or x pounds of iron, or steel. In other words, if the article has taken in its making, changing, shaping, conveying, etc, six hours, its value is equal to 6 pound of corn.

It is possible, finally, to resort to a standard of value of a more portable kind and come back to an instrument of exchange used since time immemorial, namely, ingots of rare and precious metals, the least liable to rust, such as platinum, gold silver. Thus:

1/3 oz. of platinum	is the measure of	x,
1/3 oz. of gold	" " " "	y,
1/3 oz. of silver	" " " "	z.

hours of average and normal work.

A few lines will elucidate that phrase "of average and normal work". Suppose a producer, in order to manufacture a given article, needed to make an effort of ten hours' work of an unusual kind - for example, to obtain certain materials which went to make up the thing offered - it is logical that he should increase the average and normal value of the article by the number of working-hours equal to the special effort he needed to make.

In an individualist milieu, a producer or an association of producers could moreover issue bearer-bonds representing the value of his or their products and keep these last in stock. The representational bonds would circulate, would be used as instruments of

exchange, and, after a longer or shorter period, would return to their place of issue to be paid-off in products - the same products of which they represent the value and of which the producer, or association of producers, holds the stock. Moreover, after a time, associations of carriers would be built up which would save the individual producers long and tiresome journeys, although it is necessary to allow for the perfecting and general use of individual means of locomotion, such as small aeroplanes. In the same way associations of product-custodians would form, relieving the producer of the worry of watching over their products, and at whose establishments the bearer of the bond would only have to present himself in order to obtain the utilities to which his bond entitled him.

^{that value in utilities ... warrants, vouchers, certificates, etc. 72.}
This system of representational bonds could replace, with advantage, the use of small ingots of precious metals. It requires less space, it offers more profitability.

In an individualist milieu the standards of value would vary endlessly. They would compete, and this competition would ensure their improvement. Each person, each association, would rally to the system most in keeping with - if it is an individual, his temperament; if it is an association, the object in view.

This individualist point of view is presented here solely as a particular way of regarding economic relationships. Individualists are to be found who do not relate the value of a product to the trouble it has cost to bring it to perfection. Others may be encountered who accept the idea of remuneration for the service rendered basing it solely upon the liking they feel for the producer, upon the pleasure they derive from his company.

There are certain individualists who abolish every idea of value in the process of production or of distribution within the group of which they are part.

It is possible, of course, to raise against the individualist conception of value which we have just set out, and against the results to which it leads, objections which all come back to this fundamental basis: fraud or dishonesty.

Individualists do not deny these objections, and here is the reason why:

They are not among those who assert that when he is born man is "all good" or "all bad", that is to say careless or otherwise about harming others. They show that the chief concern of a human being is his own preservation, and that if he is influenced by heredity, so is he also by environment. Nevertheless, they think that it is possible for him to cultivate himself to the extent of turning the facts of heredity, and the phenomena of external influences, to account, and of bringing them together so as to spark off a self-determinism, a special mentality, a "mind of his own", to use a common phrase.

Well, then, whether it be a question of statist social environments, collectivist, communist, or others, their economic life depends on two factors: either the mentality of their members will be such as to rule put any resort to legal compulsion, the economic conditions corresponding exactly to the ambitions of all - or the economic conditions will not correspond, hence a resort to force, to coercive action.

It is impossible to escape from this dilemma: either a mentality proportionate to the effective rules of the milieu - or a resort to compulsory regulation with its retinue of inspectors, of supervisors, its price-list of restraint and its gaols.

But to establish the fact that the hour for the materialization of "our kind" of individualist position has not yet struck will not prevent it from satisfying the understanding, from answering to the economic conceptions, of those who have adopted it.....

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Retrospection usually provides a comprehensive danger-free view of human disasters. In the case of American individualist anarchists (Book Reviews, Minus One No. 27), I do not believe this process can yet be fully applied.

A major obstacle lies in the lack of material available about the era which brought about the divorce of individualist and collectivist anarchism and the absorption of the latter into various brands of statism. Heightened patriotism, brought on by World War 1, and polar radicalism, spawned by the Bolshevik Revolution, were fended off by staunch anarchists. Still, these events seem to have forced both camps to seek recruits whose emotional situations necessarily dissipated antistatist thought and prohibited even occasional solidarity. Spilling over into decades of prosperity (1920), poverty (1930), and massive "war effort" regimentation and propaganda (1940), this trend could not avoid reducing American anarchism to a remote philosophy.

There is little doubt that the strain continued, however distorted. Stephen Pearl Andrews, whose tendency towards oligarchy closely resembled those of Proudhon and Bakunin, was enshrined by Fabian socialists. Tucker's ideas rocketed down through the years among the "rugged individualists" of American business. This division, which you believe to be "a more realistic perspective", appears actually to have made both arguments prey for their statist counterparts.

Obviously, there should be contention between the individual and the social. But this division should always be separated from personal and group banditry, executed in the name of "holiness" or supernatural and illusory power. Failure of individualists and collectivists to make common cause against this larger enemy reduces their own arguments to trivia.

Recent research in cybernetics and entropy has provided a wealth of material on the mechanical limitations of systems and governments which verges, sometimes, on Luddite and Nihilist preference for reducing matters to a natural state. The philosophical implications are staggering. It is here, rather than in the past, that promise can be found.

J.F.C. Moore,
President, Centre for Libertarian Studies.

(Mr. Moore misses my point. The conflict between the individual and the collective to which I referred has nothing to do with the alleged adoption of Andrews by Fabians or Tucker by "big business" - I'd like some proof one day of this often made allegation -. It is precisely because of attempts at social engineering - in which both Andrews and Tucker engaged - leading inevitably to attempts at taming and tailoring the individual to fit into some ideal society that I consider individualism to be incompatible with the collective, no matter what title this might be given. Hence the more realistic perspective of later, mostly European, anarchist individualists.

As for the lamentation about the "divorce" between individualist and "collectivist" anarchists, when were they married? Agreement about a , possibly common point of departure - the denial of legitimacy to the political State - does not mean agreement about the path to follow. And in this case the path leads in opposite directions.

S.E.P.)

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED (to be reviewed in the next issue)

"Social Anarchism" by Giovanni Baldelli. Aldine.

"Friedrich Nietzsche - Dytharymbe a Dionysus le Crucifie." by Daniel Giraud.

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