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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?

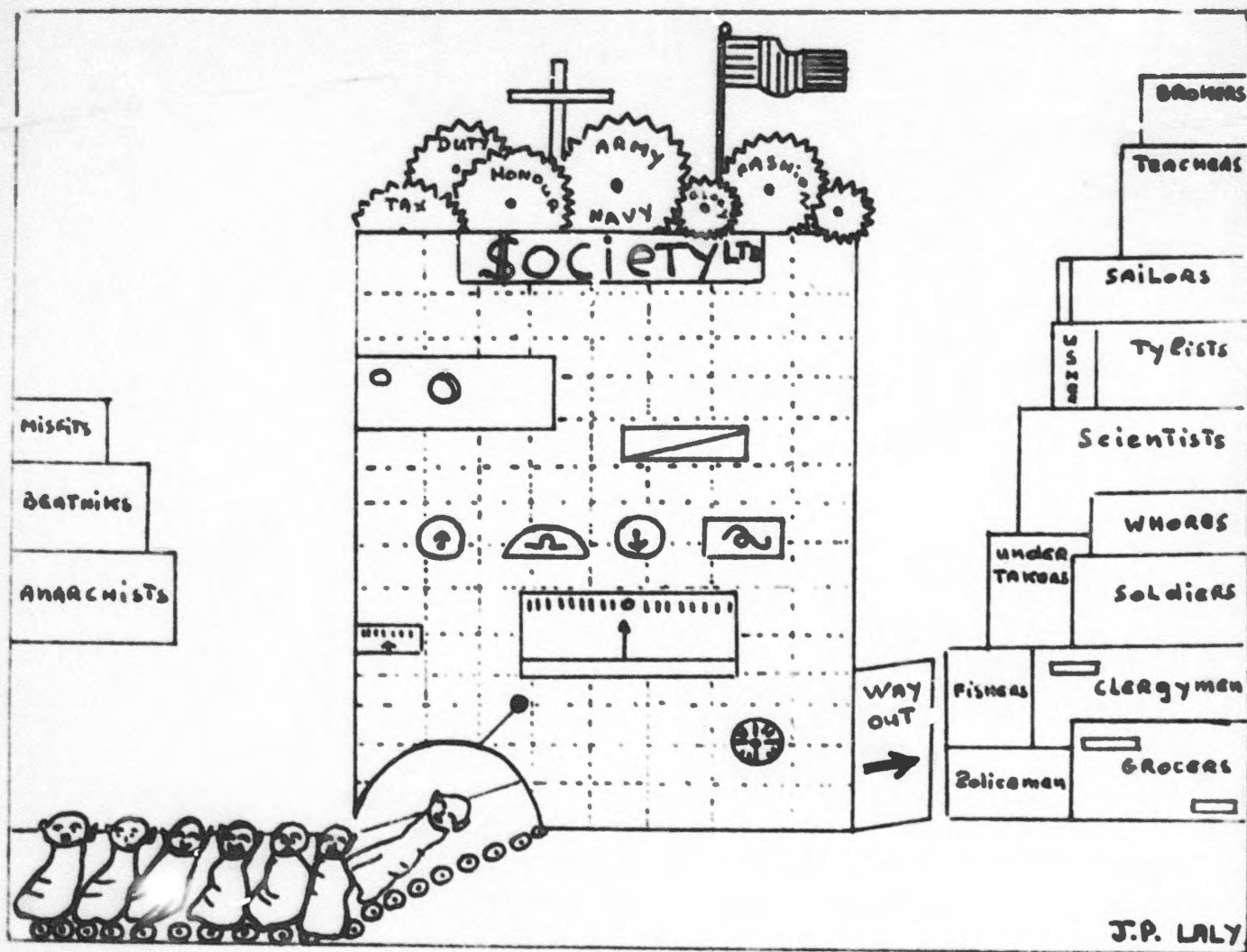
"Egoism is the claim that the Individual is the measure of all things. In ethics, in epistemology, in aesthetics, in society, the Individual is the best and only arbitrator. Egoism claims social convention, laws, other people, religion, language, time and all other forces outside of the Individual are 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

EIGHT PENCE
JULY/AUGUST
196

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J.P. LALY

"IRONY is made of IRON"

ANARCHISM VERSUS SOCIALISM

S.E.Parker.

The trouble with discussing socialism is that the word is such a vague one. Anarchism, in comparison, is clear and precise. An anarchist is someone who is without belief in authority - an individual who wants to live his life without having to submit to a will external to him. Anarchism is therefore the philosophy of living without authority, as its etymology suggests.

But what is socialism?

The Little Oxford Dictionary is blunt: "Socialism: principle that individual liberty should be completely subordinated to the community." Professed socialists themselves, however, have eschewed such bluntness and the most contradictory doctrines have been labelled "socialist". There have been, and are, national socialists, christian socialists, libertarian socialists, state socialists, marxist socialists, spiritual socialists, idealist socialists and so forth and so on. The only way one can get any sense out of the bewildering confusion of "true interpretations" is to find some belief or principle common to all socialists which distinguishes them from other people.

Since, for socialists in general, the economic question is paramount - every problem tending to be reduced to the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism - there is one belief which all socialists, from Statists to libertarian communists, share, and that is the belief in the need to put the ownership or control of the means of production into the hands of some collective body, be it the government or "society". Socialism, above all, is, as Augusté Hamon has said, a "social system in which - a social doctrine by which - the means of production are socialised". It is my argument that this wish to make society the owner and provider of the means of life is to put a new authority over the individual in place of the old and is therefore not anarchism. Anarchism stands for leaving each individual free to provide for himself what he needs and is therefore not a complement of socialism but its opposite. It follows that those anarchists who think that anarchism is a form of socialism are deluding themselves and sooner or later will have to choose between them, for they cannot logically be both.

Undoubtedly there are some socialists who are genuinely concerned for the freedom of the individual and believe that by taking the means of production away from the capitalists and giving them to society, or the State as representative of society, they will abolish the subjection of the many to the privileged few and so secure the liberty of each individual. But how would this alter the position of the individual producer? Under capitalism he has to submit to the will of a handful of monopolists. Under socialism he would have to submit to the will of the collective. He would have no freedom to produce and exchange as he wishes and without

this his individual freedom cannot exist.

The socialist might reply that when the means of production belong to all then everyone will be an owner. But of what use is it to me to be an owner of something in common with, say, 1,000,000 people? To own one millionth of something is in effect to own nothing. Under socialism, therefore, the individual would be a proletarian - that is, a property-less person - and control of the means of production would be in the hands of an abstraction called "society", and the interests of this abstraction would be superior to the interests of the individual. Everything would be for the "common good".

It is not enough to say that the individual would still own his clothing or his tooth-brush, and that only the means of producing these things would be owned in common. As Benjamin Tucker pointed out this means "the liberty to eat, but not to cook; to drink, but not to brew; to wear, but not to spin; to dwell, but not to build; to give, but not to sell or buy; to think, but not to print; to speak, but not to hire a hall; to dance, but not to pay the fiddler."

Socialism, being a species of humanism, is a doctrine of indiscriminate solidarity. It suppresses direct exchange between the producer and the consumer and has for its ethic the obligation of each to work for the benefit of all. It assumes that since each individual will have the right to a guaranteed living, he must also have the duty to put all he produces at the disposal of the collectivity. The producer cannot choose who will benefit from his production; the consumer cannot choose who will be his producer. Socialism is thus a herd-philosophy, the practice of the bee-hive. Its consistent application would deny all freedom of choice and it is therefore a totalitarian system. Even if in theory there would be no laws in a socialist society to enforce the subordination of the individual to the mass, there would be a socially sanctioned system of moral coercion to achieve the same end.

Economic freedom - any kind of freedom - for the individual can only exist where there is a choice of alternatives. Anarchism can only be pluralist, allowing any kind of economic relationship that will satisfy the individuals involved. To tie the individual to collective ownership is not anarchism, for anarchism can only exist where there is the possibility for infinite change and variety.

The fundamental issue between anarchism and socialism was well put some time ago by Francis Ellingham when writing of the difference between individualist anarchism and libertarian communism. He wrote that this difference concerned:

"...who is to be the subject of the process of production, consumption and accumulation?"

"Is it to be the individual, working as an independent economic unit - either alone or, if he chooses, in association with other individuals? Or is it to be the community as a whole, working as a sort of super-family, and necessarily incorporating

the individual, who thus becomes a cell in a larger economic organism?

"Either the economy could be of such a nature that it necessitated association (and let us never forget that economic necessity can be at least as tyrannical as any government), or it could be based on the individual unit, leaving each individual free to associate, but never submerging him in any group from which he could not withdraw without economic ruin."

The libertarian communist ideal is, he continues,

"....only a variation on the Marxist ideal that the State will 'wither away'. There are no rulers in the Marxist paradise, which, in that sense, is an anarchist world. But the supposedly 'free' individual is merely a cog in a gigantic social machine, held together by sheer force of economic necessity."

Where socialists go wrong in this matter is in their assumption that the individual can only be free - i.e., self-governing, self-owning - when his interests are combined with those of all other individuals. They believe in the collectivization of interests. But I am not free if my interests are inseparable from yours. My freedom lies in my opportunity to differ, in dis-unity, dis-connection, dis-sent. I am freest when interests are individualized, when I can be sole sovereign over my person and can dispose of the things I produce, or the services I can offer, as I see fit.

Anarchism lies in the direction of the individualization of interests, economic or any other, not their socialization.

Socialism is a religion of Society - it is the sacrifice of the individual to the Collective.

Anarchism is the philosophy of the individual - it is the affirmation of individuality, the proud denial of legitimacy to any institution, group or idea that claims authority over the ego.

(The above article is based on a talk given to the London Anarchist Group at the beginning of this year. At the request of an editor of "Freedom" it was sent in this form for publication by that paper. Although accepted for publication it has still to appear.)

The truth is that the common man's love of liberty, like his love of sense, justice and truth, is almost wholly imaginary..... he is not actually happy when free; he is uncomfortable, a bit alarmed, and intolerably lonely. He longs for the warm, reassuring smell of the herd, and is willing to take the herdsman with it. Liberty is not a thing for such as he. He cannot enjoy it rationally himself, and he can think of it in others only as something to be taken away from them....The average man doesn't want to be free. He simply wants to be safe.

H.L. Mencken.

DIALOGUE WITH THE DEVIL

Pat Parker

- GOD: Wipe England off the map! It's beginning to get on my nerves, and, besides, I need the space.
- DEVIL: (Eagerly) Hydrogen bombs or germs, Father?
- GOD: Good gracious, neither! What a waste of precious energy that would be. Besides, it wouldn't be amusing. (Tugs at his beard reflectively) No, no, they must die happily praising me, my Son, What are they most fond of eating and drinking?
- DEVIL: Tea - nauseatingly sweet; beer - insipid as water; custard - covers everything not covered in gravy; gravy - covers everything not covered in custard. Most everything else comes out of tins or frozen packets.
- GOD: Arrange for an immediate bombardment from the air. Keep the tins and packets, just send down the contents. Follow them up with syrupy tea, then gallons of the most watery beer you can brew, a few tons of gravy and top it all with thick, sweet custard.
- DEVIL: (Smiling delightedly) I'll see to it at once, Father (Begins to move away, but turns back) By the way, who are you moving in instead?
- GOD: Chinese, Africans and Indians - their eating habits are far more civilised. (The Devil moves off - God calls after him) And don't forget some glace cherries and strips of angellica to finish it off. Always remember, my Son, that my work must be aesthetically pleasing.

POEM..

Tracy Thompson

Time's mad flight.
 From his wonted station
 To an unknown, strange position
 Somewhere in incipient night
 Was love's brief triumph but
 The cost was dear, upsetting
 The order of things and begetting
 A new disorder, out of the rut
 Of the expected, true, but this
 Is dangerous business, stuff
 Of anarchy? No, only the routine rough.

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RIGHT WING INDIVIDUALISM IN THE UNITED STATES

Lyman Tower Sargent

3

H.L.Hunt..

H.L.Hunt, one of the wealthiest men in the world, is one of the few writers of the right wing who has attempted to set down a definite positive political philosophy based on individualism. This was done primarily in his utopian novel "Alpaca" (1) although his other books, "Govern Thyself", "Why Not Speak?", and "Fabians Fight Freedom", contain further suggestions. *In decades of book searching I have never come across these books! Even great wealth does not sufficiently help to*

Since, to my knowledge, "Alpaca" is the only utopian novel *thus. J.E.H.* produced by the right wing in the United States today, and since it *6.* contains virtually all Hunt's proposals, I shall deal exclusively *97.* with it. As a novel "Alpaca" leaves a great deal to be desired: the writing tends to be florid, and the characters are romanticised beyond belief; but if utopian novels were judged solely on their literary merits few would have ever been published and even fewer would be known today.

Alpaca is a Latin American country which has languished for years under a dictatorship of an unspecified nature. As the book opens our hero, Juan Achala, is seen sailing from Alpaca with the firm resolve to study diligently in order to develop a new constitution that will save his beloved country from the pernicious grasp of the dictator.

It soon transpires, after a brief romantic interlude, that the basis of the Alpacan Constitution must be the individual. As Juan, or Achala as he is called throughout the book, says, "....we must begin with the individual before we can benefit society, which consists of individuals"(p. 16). Having bowed towards individualism, he immediately adds, "And the crux of all that, I can't help thinking, is the protection of the individual's mind from becoming slanted toward acceptance of totalitarian government and from the great danger of having his mentality arrested or destroyed completely, not only by sly propaganda, but by the evil drugs and psychic pressures of unscrupulous despots."(p.16) Thus, he immediately rejects individualism in favour of some form of thought control. It would seem that this statement implies a complete lack of faith in the intelligence of the people, a point which causes problems later. Also, it should be noted that his real concern is benefitting society; his individualism extends only to the fact that society is made up of individuals.

The hypothesis, which seems to be gradually being confirmed by these articles, that individualism for most of the right wing in the United States means the rugged individualism of most Social Darwinism, is amply illustrated by the Constitution of Alpaca. Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution reads in part as follows:

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"Each citizen shall be endowed with a voting power based on his age, experience, tax paid to the nation during his previous tax year, active interest in government and investment in government..." (p.147) The result of the provisions which follow is to give all power within the country to the wealthy. In addition it is possible, and actually recommended, for individuals to delegate their voting power, without restriction, to someone better qualified to select among candidates (pp. 63-66)

Hunt divides the Alpacan government into four parts: executive, legislative, judicial, and military, with the last subordinate to the first three. Thus, Hunt has no feeling that individualism precludes a strong government. Also, the Alpacan system institutionalizes two political philosophies, liberal and constructive. The liberal philosophy he defines as "Stressing privileges for the masses; progress unhampered by tradition, human rights superior to property rights, paternalistic government, social gains and associated and similar objectives." The constructive philosophy is defined as: "Stressing conservatism, inviolate property rights, individual initiative, the profit motive, free markets, protection against governmental monopoly and associated and similar objectives." (p 179) Since Hunt signs his correspondence "Constructively yours", it is not difficult to place his position and the general tenor of the Alpacan Constitution. Each group will be represented by five officially sponsored, but unpaid, writers who prepare materials which reflect the views of their school. It would seem likely that the liberals are seen as a permanent minority and that other possible philosophies would not be recognised at all.

On the other hand, freedom of the press is guaranteed, as is freedom of religion. Freedom of speech though, is strictly limited. The Constitution reads, "Discussions of governmental affairs and persons are confined to printed media, precluded from radio, TV, and the cinema and shall not be voiced in public meetings attended by more than 200 people." (p.180) Within these limits, freedom of speech is, of course, guaranteed.

The Constitution is informally submitted to the people of Alpaca and is so enthusiastically accepted that the dictator resigns without protest. Here Hunt expresses a faith in the good sense of the people as a whole which he has earlier rejected. As noted in the first part of these articles, the belief that the masses of the people are basically good but can be easily misled is a basic theme in American thought. Hunt seems to be one of the best representatives of this viewpoint.

Hunt's political thought, which he argues is based on individuals, seems actually to rest on his opposition to authoritarian governments. It is difficult to imagine how individualism is to be fostered by a strong government acting to limit the ability to choose among philosophies other than the constructive and the liberal. The key to Hunt's thought seems to lie in his confusion concerning the nature of man. Man cannot be trusted to have complete free speech, but, on the other hand, he will have the

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"intelligence" to recognize that the limitations placed on him by the Alpacan Constitution are for his own good. Man's major act as an individuals is to destroy his individualism. Hunt not only fails to resolve this problem but does not even seem to recognize it as a problem.

(1) H.L.Hunt. "Alpaca". Dallas: H.L.Hunt Press, 1960.

ENTRE NOUS

Now that MINUS ONE is professionally duplicated and has more contents the cost of production has increased. For this reason the price is now 8d per copy and the subscription rate for 6 issues is 5/6 (Existing subscriptions are not affected).

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Are any readers interested in the idea of holding an international meeting of individualist anarchists, not for the purpose of passing vague resolutions about unrealisable situations, but as an opportunity to get to know other individualists and to exchange ideas and experiences? If so, please contact this review and send in suggestions.

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Anyone attracted to the fascinating but often ephemeral publications of dissenting minorities will appreciate Agcom Directory One, published by Agoric Communications of Southern California, Box 2116, Santa Monica, California, U.S.A. Price per copy 2 dollars (retail). Edited by Kerry Thornley and Carol Leach, it lists about 100 periodicals dealing with such subjects as panscruicism, neoanarchism, new left, old right, civil liberties, egoism, psychodelics, etc. It has a flattering reference to MINUS ONE and is a very useful source publication for all those whose minds peck at the diet of intellectual mush served by so-called "quality" journals or the smoothies of the academic world.

LITERATURE

"Anarchism and Individualism" by E.Armand. 1/3, inc. postage.

"Individualist Anarchism: An Outline" by S.E.Parker. 3d. inc. post.

"The Ego and His Own" by Max Stirner. 15/11, inc. postage.

and

a new pamphlet on individualist anarchism by Jean-Pierre Schweitzer:
O IDIOS - three essays on individualist anarchism. 1/3, inc. post.

2 EGOISM AND JUSTICE

James L. Walker

The idea of justice precedes that of justice. Dr. Maurice de Fleury in his book, "L'Âme du Criminel", says: Assuming the legend of Cain and Abel to be true, the brothers had a quarrel and when Cain struck Abel, the latter struck back. The fight continued for some time. Just when Abel was directing a blow, his arm was struck and fell helpless by his side. The impulse to deliver the blow returned to his brain as consciousness of purpose frustrated and this was the first sense of that want of correspondence which is called injustice.

If at such a juncture a tree or rock should happen to fall upon the victor or a lion make him his prey, and the vanquished escape, the latter would thank a supposed providential interference, build an altar and found a worship.

Out of a great number of cases of hurts - injustice - the sufferers build such theory of justice as corresponds with their idea of the satisfaction of their demands.

"Just right" is what fits a place or case. Adjustment and even justification are words used in a mechanical sense. Justice, however, cannot be predicated till we come to relations between persons. It is evident that in the notion or sentiment of justice there are present two elements: first, fitness in general, as in common with accuracy; secondly a recognition of something more, which may be the sentient nature of the object. We do not speak of justice save where there is a possibility of suffering.

There are a great many applications of the term justice, but in all of them it has some relation to sentient beings and to fitness. The differences apparently spring from different standards of authority, rules of privilege, right, immunity, etc. Every uproar among men is a proof of injustice, in the same way as the creaking or screeching of a machine is an evidence of parts all adjusted.

The loudest advocates of justice complacently overlook the fact that nobody extends justice to the inferior animals.

The adjustment of relations between man and man will probably be best where each is alive to his own interests and convenience. In the absence of this condition justice is the wacry in quixotic campaigns, the success of which in any instance serves to destroy some privilege and emancipate some ignorant, helpless folk to become tools of fanatics and victims of speculators. The free are those who free themselves. These and these only can or will do themselves justice and they are prevented from doing themselves and each other justice most of all by the prevailing belief in justice as a "ruling principle". The motto: "Let justice be done though the heavens fall," is a perfect example of fanaticism, equal to insisting on some one performance, though any amount of loss and suffering

results. But the very men who harp on justice are the ones who delegate the trial and execution to functionaries chosen haphazard, and make a religious duty of submitting to injustice whenever these functionaries are ignorant, corrupt, prejudiced or mistaken in their judgement. The idea that any person might do himself justice, though doubt existed that the act were justice, is horrifying to the good socialists, because the executioner was not appointed by society. Justice, then, is a prerogative of society, a favour rather than a right, in their view. They become involved in perplexities. The heavens may fall, but not the dignity of the state. They deny justice to save respect for its mechanism. An unjust law is enforced by the same authority which enforces a just law. It is enforced, all knowing that it is unjust, to the end that it may be repealed. Somebody is made a victim of injustice in order that by forcible wrong, thus done by authority, another branch of authority may be induced to alter a decree and issue another decree (which will be certain to accomplish another wrong to somebody).

Revenge is not justice, but simply the impulse to do hurt for hurt. It lacks measure, balance. It is at most a propensity which makes for the extermination or humbling of aggressors.

The egoist does not worship justice. He recognizes the impossibility of its existing as a donation. The ruler or the society which decrees justice is the shepherd who manages his flock, not for the sake of the flock, but for his interest in it. The egoist aims at the accommodation of interests according to the capacity of the contracting parties. Egoist with egoist must recognize, and on reflection will rejoice at the prospect of a rule of not trespassing where - he had better not. From this he can arrive at a position of comfort in having allies of great value to him, through their not being afflicted with any superstition. They multiply his power and he adds to theirs.

As to justice in the sense of meting out punishment to persons according to their alleged moral delinquencies, the idea gives place to that of protecting ourselves and serving our convenience. We may suppress a dangerous madman and a dangerous sane man as a measure of prevention, not having the old moralistic horror of responsibility in the case of ourselves dealing with the madman, and not having the moralistic furor against the sane offender. We need not therefore resort to casuistry in case of slight doubt if we are determined that it is unsafe to risk permitting either to live. Thus egoists will not let an offender off on technicalities or scruples if they deem it necessary to expel him or kill him, and thus, too, if one has killed another the inquiry will be as to whether or not the slayer merely anticipated an intelligent verdict by a jury.

Let us beware of the craze for justice. It is the mask of social tyranny. It demands a delegated authority and a prerogative in this authority. Thus it builds a citadel of injustice; so that the man who does himself justice is declared by the law to be guilty of a crime against it, the monopoly of administration of justice.

THE WHORE

a first poem in english

Jean-Pierre Laly

a whore
a kerb

she says nothing
I do not say anything

I need her
I lust after her
green wide sorry eyes
and pale complexion

she would like my money
I pity her
she to whom I am a mere passer-by

I look at her face
she seems young

suddenly a man is interested
they go away together
together in my eyes

she is pretty
delicious figure

I follow them
he follows her
they enter a hotel

I see her legs climbing stairs
I suddenly love her
I would like to protect her

I wait on the kerb
what I am waiting for?
I wait for the whore
my love!

after a while back she comes
and mixes with the crowd

she is the same
at the same place
as if nothing had happened

11
A REFUTATION OF INDIVIDUALIST ANARCHISM

Roger Tite

Individualist anarchists are right in condemning the lack of freedom in the present capitalist economy and right in demanding freedom for individual production and an equal opportunity for free exchange, but this condemnation and this demand are stated by libertarian socialists and syndicalists also.

In the pamphlet "Individualist Anarchism; An Outline" by S.E. Parker it states: "What does it matter if the means of production are under the control of a handful of private monopolists, the State, a federation of syndicates, or a Commune, if the individual has no economic independence or freedom of choice?" But many syndicalists would say that under a federation of syndicates, and many libertarian socialists would say that under a commune, there would be economic independence, with individuals singly or in groups taking control of the means of production, with all individuals being free to change their work as they wish and joining a different group as they wish. Even if this would not be the case, surely there would be a great difference in freedom between a society in which the means of production are controlled by the bureaucratic State and one in which they were controlled by a genuinely democratic federation of syndicates? In the second, even if the individual did have to adapt to the group it would be enormously less authoritarian.

Secondly, Mr. Parker's outline of individualist anarchism gives no indication of how a new free society is to be achieved. It states: "Individualists do not want to wait for the dawn of the 'free society' before they get any benefit from their ideas. It is today that concerns them, not a hypothetical tomorrow. Since they start from themselves, they do not need others to begin their 'revolution.'"

This excerpt completely misses the point of the libertarian struggle for a new society. Of course we do not wait for the new society before we get any benefit from our ideas; but in the present society we are not free to act upon our ideas. It is for this reason that libertarians must unite so as to create a new society. We also believe in self-liberation ("The emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the workers themselves" as Marx would have said) Libertarians also believe in their own will but they also believe that their will combined with that of others into a collective force is the only method of changing society. Obviously, nothing will be achieved by isolated individual revolts against the status quo. The belief in collective struggle is not a "millennial narcotic...for present miseries", but a rational hope which will both give one the strength to stand up for libertarian ideas from day to day in the outside world as it exists, and also enable (us) to organize a collective movement for liberation.

Therefore an individualist can quite logically serve the cause of libertarian socialism because in doing so he is helping to create a new society in which both he and everybody else will be genuinely free.

The individualist anarchists are quite right to reject myths of "the dialectic of history", "the inevitable outcome of the class struggle" etc., but the liberation of society can only be achieved by a combination of thousands of individuals - the social system will not be changed if they "rely on nothing outside of themselves".

Finally, individual anarchism is impracticable as to the nature of the post-revolutionary society. Who is to decide who is to use a certain part of the means of production if two people want it? A user also cannot own a piece of property - he can only use it. When he dies his children have no more claim on it than anyone else. Property cannot be owned individually, but owned collectively and loaned out by the genuinely democratic public authority to individuals for use as long as they need that property. No Society could survive in which there were no rules except those which each individual chose to accept. There is no reason why in an individualist anarchist society a group should not arm themselves to gain domination over the rest. People's councils, democratically elected, must act as the people's representatives to uphold the new society against any counter-revolutionary individuals or groups which will undoubtedly exist to begin with. The councils will also arbitrate between the individual free men who make up the new society.

(If any reader thinks that my attack on socialism is directed at a caricature Roger Tite's article should change their mind. His naivety reveals more clearly the gulf between anarchism and libertarian socialism than a more sophisticated person could have done. Having denied that a federation of syndicates or a Commune would not allow freedom of choice or economic independence, he goes on to prove that this is what they would do. What else does a "genuinely democratic public authority" which would make rules the individual would have to accept mean? His "free society" is no more than another way of crushing individuality.

Not being interested any more in social engineering I cannot tell him how a "new free society" is to be achieved. It is a waste of time to weave dreams about an ideal state of affairs in which the interests of the individual and those of society will be harmonised. Not only is such a state of affairs impossible, it is also undesirable. Utopia is stagnancy, the end of innovation and the reign of servility. The conflict between the individual and society will continue to the end of the human species and is the best guarantee against the complete victory of conformism that we have.

S.E.P.)

STOP PRESS

It has been suggested that the international individualist anarchist conference be held in London on either the second weekend of August or the second weekend of September 1966. Anyone interested should contact MINUS ONE. Accommodation will be provided.

Jeff Robinson

Few people would wish to deny the real progress that psychology has made in the treatment and cure of the mentally sick, in showing what makes us tick and in banishing many superstitions concerning the human mind and human relationships. However, superstition and ignorance are not the only failings of the human mind. The dogmatic fervour with which some devotees defend and propagate psychological systems can be just as irrational as any old-fashioned superstition. A society in which psychology reigned supreme would probably be just as pedantic and intolerant as any Catholic State of medieval Europe. The fact that psychology results from scientific empiricism is beside the point, Christianity was fairly reasonable when it began, but look what its supporters have made of that.

An example of silly psychological dogmatism occurs in the Viking portable edition of selected works by Thoreau, which is probably the best paperback Thoreau available in this country. An epilogue to the 1964 edition of this book takes the form of an interpretation of Thoreau's unconscious mind in the light of Freudian psychology. This epilogue is written by Carl Bode and is based on an unpublished doctoral dissertation written in 1957 by Raymond Gozzi, most of the conclusions of which result from an analysis of the imagery in Thoreau's writings plus certain biographical data.

The whole epilogue rests on the assumption that Thoreau suffered, in his boyhood, from a pronounced Oedipus complex. He wished to possess his mother and obliterate his father, and an unconscious guilt feeling arising from this complex, the thesis goes, was so severe that it remained to warp his whole emotional development and was the cause of his attitudes to life and society. His opposition to slavery and the State was really opposition to his father, his retreat into the world of nature was really motivated by an attraction he felt for the strictness and immutability of nature which he saw as a mother figure. Thoreau was searching for a substitute for his own father and looked for one in Emerson and John Brown. Finally, when the State hanged John Brown following the raid on Harper's Ferry, Thoreau felt such a burden of guilt that he unconsciously felt he could only expiate it by his own death. He therefore, at an unconscious level, contracted tuberculosis and died content two years later.

Now, it may be possible that Thoreau had an Oedipus complex and a lingering sense of guilt, but to try to explain all his attitudes and the major events of his life solely in such terms seems to me to be plain ridiculous. All of the reasons Bode puts forward to support his argument in the epilogue can be refuted by drawing on the biographical data provided in the introduction to the same book which contrasts sharply with the conclusions of the epilogue.

Thoreau's resentment at the authority of the State, the epilogue says, grew from his resentment at the authority of his father. The

introduction states that Thoreau's opposition to the State grew out of his opposition to negro slavery and the Mexican war. Does this mean that a psychologically well-integrated person is indifferent to war and slavery or does the conclusion only apply to Thoreau?

The introduction states that Thoreau's love of nature was pronounced at an early age, while the epilogue says he sought a mother figure in nature. Did he then seek a mother figure in nature when he was a boy? The introduction says that the adult Thoreau's love of nature was intensified through contact with transcendentalist ideas then widespread in New England. If Thoreau's transcendentalism was "really" the result of his searching for a mother figure what was the transcendentalism of others occasioned by?

The epilogue states that Thoreau, though dying at the conscious level of tuberculosis, at the unconscious level ended his life of his own accord. Psychosomatic illnesses - rashes, nerve pains, headaches, etc - are very real things, but to catch T.B. one must come into contact with the germs. How does one psychosomatically contract T.B.? Can one "unconsciously" seek out another person with T.B. and inhale the germs without the conscious mind knowing of it?

The introduction says that Thoreau fell in love with young women, probably twice, and that he proposed to a girl named Ellen Sewall, but her father forbade the match. The epilogue says that "with the imputed exception of a girl called Ellen Sewall Thoreau had not interest in young women." Thoreau's two or three friendships with older women are explained in the epilogue as part of the search for a mother figure. Yet is it surprising that a man with such a rarified and intransigent mind as Thoreau's sought feminine company with mature, intelligent women like Lidia Emerson rather than in empty headed little gigglers? If Thoreau had not sought the company of women at all doubtless he would have been branded a homosexual.

But, wait for it, according to the epilogue, at the unconscious level, Thoreau was an incipient homosexual. The evidence for this is that his writings contain many references to male sexual symbols - pine trees, oak trees, snakes and unclimbed mountains. But Thoreau lived in and wrote about a heavily-wooded part of America with many snakes and mountains. If he hadn't mentioned these local phenomena in his writings the omission would have been pounced on as evidence of suppressed homosexuality.

But Thoreau's writings, according to the epilogue, are also full of suggestive female sexual symbols such as swamps and water. Again, if Thoreau had written "Walden" without once mentioning that it is a pond, how the Freudians would have chuckled with glee.

I could fill this whole issue of MINUS ONE with examples like these, but one more will suffice. The epilogue by Bode first appears in the 1964 edition. The introduction has been there unchanged since the book first came out in 1947. And who wrote the introduction? Why, Carl Bode! Because they don't support his Freudian thesis Bode denies in his epilogue things he states as facts in his

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To S.E.Parker And Other Self-Styled "Individualists":

I bought a copy (No.13) of MINUS ONE in an attempt to see your viewpoint. Here are my impressions. :

First, there is much in your paper that no anarchist would quarrel with. But there are some points on which we clearly disagree. For instance, State and Society. All anarchists oppose the State, that is, the authoritarian apparatus imposed on society. Without the State, society would still exist. Your position appears to be that you oppose society. This is against most anarchists' views, yet you quote the well-known French middle J-P S. as saying "society is not the affair of the anarchist" - he clearly does not know many anarchists. (1)

Then there's crime. Do you consider the vicious slaughter of children in the Moors Murder Case a "mighty, reckless, conscienceless crime"? Do you approve of such mighty crimes? (2) Do you, as Pat Parker says, believe the "function" of the "individual" is to separate, to inspire hatred? These are not the views of most anarchists. (3)

Such views as these are anti-social, and even in the dim recesses of the mind of J-P. S. the fact that man is a sociable creature has penetrated. You call yourselves "individualist-anarchists". As I see it, this is like saying "canine-dog". The first part is in the nature of the beast and need not be stated. Therefore its only purpose is to distinguish you from the majority of anarchists who do not use this clumsy label. However, all anarchists consider themselves as individualists (4). Where do you differ then? In being opposed to society and to revolution. It would be more honest of you to call yourselves "anti-social non-revolutionary anarchists". But I have no doubt you will continue to use your present inaccurate and mis-leading title.

David Coull.

(1) It is clear to anyone who has read J-P. S.'s article just what he means by "society" and why he considers individualists as "anti-social".

(2) It might be interesting to know why certain philanthropic "anarchists" are so obsessed with the "Moors Murders" that they cannot even let the bourgeois legal process take its course before they pronounce judgement (At the present time one defendant is appealing). I don't approve of such "crimes" and if my son had been a victim I might well have done "justice" myself, but that does not alter the fact that to function as an anarchist is to function as a criminal - i.e. a law-breaker and mocker of the "sacred" - and if the "Moors Murders" are anti-social acts then so are the acts of any individual who takes no notice of legal sanctions. In which case, the only point at issue is which anti-social acts are to our taste and which are not.

Letters, cont....

(3) Whether David Coull "believes" it or not his function in his letter is to "separate" and even to inspire "hatred", since I doubt if his most ardent sympathiser could describe as having been written in a loving spirit! In fact, many warm-hearted lovers of humanity seem to inspire an awful lot of division and hatred by their efforts to counter the "anti-social".

(4) It is plain that it is Mr. Coull who does not know the "majority of anarchists", otherwise he would know that all professed anarchists do not call themselves individualists. Certainly "individualist-anarchist" is a pleonasm, but as long as certain anti-parliamentary collectivists think that anarchism and socialism are compatible individualist anarchists will have to use their "clumsy label" to distinguish themselves from such people.

S.E.P.

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Who's For Psychology? Cont...

introduction - such as Thoreau's love for Ellen Sewall. Nor is the epilogue put forward as a simple hypothesis. Perhaps this was Bode's original intention for words like "assume" and "guess" appear near the beginning, but Bode gets so carried away with his new toy that a tone of confident assertion soon appears. Someone should certainly analyse Mr. Bode.

Having read a Freudian interpretation of Thoreau, I'd like to get Bode, Gozzi, an Reichian, an Adlerian and a Jungian, lock them up together and let them interpret Thoreau till they're blue in the face. Perhaps Thoreau's ghost would be hovering near, chuckling quietly to itself.

MEETINGS

are held the second Sunday of each month (except August) at 10, Churton Street, London, S.W.1. (Off Vauxhall Bridge Rd., Victoria). at 7.30 p.m.

July 10: Rt. Rev. Archimandrake Gillet on
"The Spiritual Urge".

Sept 11: Arthur W. Uloth on
"Lawless Societies".