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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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**MINUS  
ONE**

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KILSE

## THE MORALITY OF CO-OPERATION

S.E.Parker

In the London Anarchist Group pamphlet "Anarchism" Jack Stevenson states: "Anarchists want a society based upon co-operation, not competition.....we want to see everyone co-operating for the common good, not just a few capitalists for the common ill....Co-operation equals friendship and peace while competition equals war."

Here we have the old socialist panacea "co-operation" disguised as anarchism. It is one of the sacred cows of all collectivist thinking that competition is a terrible evil and is only believed in by wicked people like the "capitalists". One could point out that even during the heyday of nineteenth century capitalism there never was any free competition in the proper sense of the term. Workers had to compete among themselves in order to sell their labour to employers, but the power of the capitalists depended heavily upon economic monopolies backed by the legal power of the State. Apart from this, however, a totalitarian state can be described, theoretically at least, as a fully co-operative social system since nobody is allowed to offer any alternative way of going on. The army is a co-operative institution, and so is a prison. "Co-operation" can very easily equate servility and conformity.

On the other hand, Jack Stevenson and his comrades no doubt claim to be firm believers in freedom of speech. But what is freedom of speech? It is a situation in which different opinions can compete with one another! In fact all freedom of speech, publication and association is competition - the presentation of varied, and often contradictory, ways of going on. Of course, Jack Stevenson will retort that he does not believe in the enforced co-operation of the army or prison, but in free, voluntary co-operation. This, however, is rather different to his blunt assertion that co-operation is good in itself and competition evil in itself. If I am free to co-operate, then I must also be free not to co-operate. In other words, I can compete or co-operate as it suits my purpose, and anarchism is neither for one or the other per se but for freedom to do both.

Jack Stevenson's statement, however, involves more than a careless use of the terms "co-operation" and "competition". He wants people to co-operate for the "common good". In place of the co-operation enforced by overt authorities like the State, he wants a co-operation enforced by the internalized authority of "conscience" or the moral imperative of the anonymous authority of "public opinion". He clearly shows this when he writes: "Anarchists believe that we must start

to build a different kind of society with a different kind of morality from that which has been handed down to us." In other words, let us abolish the authority of God and the State and replace it with the authority of Morality. This is not anarchism. It is simply substituting one kind of rulership for another. And the consequence of such a belief is demonstrated by Ian Vine in "Anarchy" No. 46 where he says that "egoists" have no place in a "free society". I wonder just how much "freedom" there would be in a society where everybody would be a moralist? I would prefer a corrupt and sinful priesthood any day to a society of virtuous lay saints.

Woolly thinking about morality and "freedom" is a basic trait of what passes for anarchism - but is more often a craving for a womb-society - as is woolly thinking about co-operation and competition. Invocations of the "common good" and "humanity" still cripple the perspective of many professed opponents of authority. As long as it remains so long will their "anarchism" be nothing but a variant of socialism, a castrated creature eternally torn between liberating the individual and stretching him on the rack of a new moral social order.

*A "new moral social order" can be but need not be a torture "rack", especially when chosen by volunteers & only for themselves - under extraterritorial autonomy while upholding individual secessionism. - PIOT, J.E. 12.9.97*

Books Received: "The Philosophy of Ownership" by Robert Lefevre. A Pine Tree Publication, Box 158, Larkspur, Colorado 80118, U.S.A., 1 doll.

"Universe Fagico" by Giulio Cogni. Editrice Ciranna, Via Cardinale Agliardi, 15, Rome, Italy. Lire 2,000.

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Books Wanted: "Piu Altro", "La Bandiera dell'Anti-Cristo" and "La Setta Rosso" by Enzo Martucci. "Al Disopra del'Arco" by Renzo Novatore. Anyone having any copies or information please contact S.E.Parker, 2 Orsett Terrace, London W.2. As also in the case of "Nietszche and Other Precursors of Individualism" by Paul Carus.

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### Il Nichilista

the latest review of Enzo Martucci is available from him at Via Carducci 98, Pescara, Italy.

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A postal subscription to MINUS ONE costs 5/6 for six issues (Britain) and 6/-- (Abroad).

## INDIVIDUALIST AMORALISM

Enzo Martucci

Is individualist anarchism compatible with a morality?

E. Armand has answered yes and has written: "One can build a code of morality which would yield nothing to the strictest moral system and yet not detract from the most extreme individualism."

I maintain, on the contrary, that individualist anarchism is necessarily amoralist because it cannot be reconciled with any moral system.

It must be pointed out that by "morality" I do not mean that subjective judgement which decides what "I should or should not do", because this varies from individual to individual and can change according to one's feelings, passions and needs. On the contrary, morality is the superior norm, the absolute law, the peremptory order that imposes on everyone, at all times, that which which they must do and that which they must not do.

Stirner shares my conception of morality. In The Ego and His Own he writes:

"People are at pains to distinguish law from arbitrary orders, from an ordinance: the former comes from a duly entitled authority. But a law over human action (ethical law, State law, etc.) is always a declaration of will, and so an order. Yes, even if I myself gave myself the law, it would yet be only my order, to which in the next moment I can refuse obedience. One may well enough declare what he will put up with, and so deprecate the opposite by a law, making known that in the contrary case he will treat the transgressor as his enemy; but no one has any business to command my actions, to say what course I shall pursue and set up a code to govern it. I must put up with it that he treats me as his enemy, but never that he makes free with me as his creature, and that he makes his reason, or even unreason, my plumb-line."

It follows from this that if a rule of conduct is imposed on me by others I must rebel against this imposition because I want live in the way I like and not as my neighbours, who have interests and opinions different to mine, would like me to live. And if my rule of conduct is derived from my reason, I can repudiate it later, still inspired by the same reason, but reasoning differently. Under the influence of new feelings and new interests I might realize the absurdity of the rule I had previously adopted. What is more, I can break the rule which my reason still accepts because my instincts and feelings react against it and have the upper hand for the time being.

If, on the contrary, I continue to obey the same norm, even when my reason condemns it, or when I feel it to be in too flagrant a

contradiction with my sentiments and instinctive needs, it means that I recognise it to be superior to me, that I regard it as sacred and give it an objective reality, a value per se, independent of me. But in this case I am the slave of a spook, the victim of a suggestion.

A free individual cannot therefore undertake to follow all his life a single rule of conduct, and it is absurd to expect him to always conform to the same norm. It is even more absurd and tyrannical to expect the whole of humanity to always accept and follow the same law. All morality declares it is the only, the true morality. In other words, that it is the legitimate rule that all men, in all times and places, must recognize and practice. But the claim made by all moralities is sheer folly because there does not exist, nor can there ever exist, that spiritual unity that Kant considered possible in the future. *Personal law rather than imposed territorial law!*  
7-8. 12.8.97.

In fact, there is no one reason which operates to the same extent in all men. There are a crowd of reasons operating in different ways in different individuals who have different needs, interests and tastes. Consequently, there are always many people who do not accept a rule of conduct because they think it neither useful nor just. And amongst those who do accept it disagreement soon occurs as to how the norm should be interpreted. Let us take for example the Christian commandment:

"Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you."

The early Christians interpreted this as meaning that never, in any way, even in self-defence, should you do to others what you would not want them to do to you. And as they would not submit to violence they would not use violence against the Roman soldiers who arrested them so that they could be thrown to the lions.

But then came other Christians, equally honest and sincere, who interpreted this rule as not doing to others what you would not want them to do to you, but react violently against those who violently oppress you. Thus the Albigenses and the Vendois died arms in hand fighting the Catholic crusaders who attacked and massacred them.

Among Catholics, even among those who, aspiring to the absolute triumph of the Church, were moved by an ardent fanaticism as well as the desire for temporal domination, this rule was interpreted as: "Do not do unto others what you would not want them to do unto you, but use violence, torture and the stake against heretics who, although they do not attack physically, propagate theories contrary to our faith." *(Which, as they believed a vengeful god would use as an excuse to punish all innocents & guilty alike, collectively. Collective responsibility "thinking")*

As a result men like Cardinal Frederic Borrone, who were just and humane in their private lives, were inexorable and ferocious as inquisitors.

*still predominates & is behind the modern & "scientific" weapons, notions of enemies." 7.8.128.97*

It is therefore clear that all norms of behaviour are open to

different interpretations which lead individuals to contradictory ways of living. It is only when, at certain times and places, by means of physical force or of suggestion, some succeed in imposing their interpretation on others, that a single morality triumphs, understood and followed by all in the same fashion. But this triumph is no more than a terrible tyranny under whose yoke writhe individuals reduced to the role of slaves and compelled to obey the sacred law, to think and feel in the same way. Against such claims the individual can only oppose the bent bow of his rebellion.

No doubt Armand would reply that my criticisms are directed against absolute morality, not against a morality that can be accepted by an individualist, that is to say, a relative morality that is only "moral" for those who find it useful and that only lasts for as long as they accept it. But such a morality would also claim to be absolute, to be necessary and universal, and to be the only norm of conduct for all men, at all times and places. Otherwise it is not a law, not a morality - it is only a personal judgement (or an expression of personal taste - Trans.) which would vary from one to the other and which I could change in myself anytime I wanted to. I therefore go back to Protagoras, to "man is the measurement of everything, to Stirner, to the "Unique".

*x) See my series "ON ANARCHY" J.Z.    y) Contract condition rather than whim! J.Z.*

The individualist anarchist recognizes nothing above his ego and rebels against all discipline and all authority, divine or human. He accepts no morality and when he gives himself to the feelings of love, friendship, or sociability, he does so because it is a personal need, an egoistic satisfaction - because it pleases him to do it. In the same way, when he considers it expedient to rebel and fight against other men he does not hesitate a moment in following this other tendency. But never, at any time, does the individualist anarchist want to submit to a rule of conduct common to all at all times. That is to say, the law of the herd.

*One should distinguish foreign owned & used herded herds from volunteer groups. J.Z. 12.P.97.*

(Translated by J-P. S. from a French version appearing in "L'Unique" No. 37)

*F) one volunteer community to the other!*

## THE NEW VISION

Tracy Thompson..

Not only no spontaneity, nothing on the edges even or the outskirts  
odd

Resembling vision. You's think bird-forms, tree-forms never had been,  
The way in which we never can see them, no. And as a concept, even,  
"love"

Is a remoteness from our "thinking." You'd think, if you could think,  
That no artist ever lived here. Whereas until a day or so ago "genius"  
Was breathed among the astute judges, now we barely know what "genius"  
means.

And such ignorance is cause of blissful smiles,  
As we go our carefree, witless, worthless miles.

## MARY'S QUESTION ANSWERED

Jeff Robinson

(Note: A few years ago Mary Stevenson asked in "Freedom" what would be the outcome of the following situation - A group of anarchists are attending a summer school on a remote Hebridean isle when nuclear war breaks out and the rest of Britain is destroyed. Outside help is impossible and the food supply is small and owned by the local crofters. What will happen?)

Mary forgot to mention that the island, Bhaig Ahrasse, is geographically unique. Everyone has heard of the Gulf Stream Drift, the current of warm water that flows from the Caribbean to N.W. Europe. Well, 25 miles north of Butlin's Holiday Camp at Oban the Drift rebounds off the Scottish Coast and back to America. This is known as the Gulf Stream Bounce.

The crofters, old-fashioned and unsophisticated, met together in their traditional communal manner and decided that their only chance was to utilise the Bounce and sail or drift westwards in their fishing boats in the hope of finding sanctuary in an undevastated part of North America. They calculated that if the food supplies were carefully used there would be just sufficient to make the journey. Although not fond of the anarchists they included them in their plans.

When the crofters communicated their plans to the anarchists pandemonium broke out. One individualist, Fred-Bert Higgins, on hearing that the crofters had agreed to voluntarily help the anarchists promptly had a stroke (One of the crofter's wives tried to nurse him back to health, but the more she lavished care and attention on him the weaker he became) The syndicalists regarded the idea of finding sanctuary in America as unrealistic as there was every chance that it was more devastated than Britain. Instead they proposed embarking for Spain where by this time, they claimed, a great free society would assuredly be established. (One of the syndicalists calculated that with fair winds they could be disembarking in Madrid in two weeks) The anarcho-communists were not so much concerned with the destination as with the social organisation aboard the fishing boats. All decisions, they claimed, must be made communally. To have a captain was a monstrous tyranny. The decision, say, to haul in sail at the approach of a storm should be reached by calling a meeting and only after the whole matter was soundly thrashed out and complete unanimity reached would any action be taken. They claimed that any other arrangement was anti-life. They were all still arguing hotly when the crofters arrived and announced that the vessels were loaded - thanks to the help of the individualists - and ready to depart. Both the communists and the syndicalists claimed that the speedy way in which the boats had been got ready showed the undoubted superiority of the communal way of doing things.....

For three months they sailed and met every peril the sea and



(the sea and) idealistic dogmatism have to offer. Becalmed in an eerie fog off Newfoundland the occupants of one boat were terrified to see a monstrous, hairy figure clambering over the bulwark. Only after beating him to death with belaying pins did they realise that he had swam from another boat, his unkemptness magnified by the fog, and had come to organize a branch of the seamen's syndicate! On another occasion some communists ruined the only donkey engine by trying to turn it into a printing press for revolutionary pamphlets. As well as the syndicalist would-be organizer, two other anarchists died during the voyage. Bert-Fred Higgins's tough constitution was no match for the kindness of the good woman who was nursing him, while another individualist, clutching only a copy of Thoreau, insisted on being set ashore on lonely Rockall - two acres of barren, storm-lashed granite, far out in the heaving sea. The crofters, on whom nearly all the work of running the vessels fell, preferred the times when great storms lashed them, for then all the anarchists were seasick. At length, after three months of incredible hardships, a low coastline was sighted which proved to be the Cape Cod peninsula.

The first few months were a time of great suffering. Although the area where they had landed turned out to be safe as regards radiation, they had no way of telling if the same were true inland, so they stayed on the beach. The communists and syndicalists, huddling in the doorway of one of the wood and sailcloth shanties, with the sleet lashing down, and watching the crofters and the hardier of the individualists struggling back to camp with the day's tiny catch of undersized fish, would blame all their troubles on bad social organization....

With Spring, however, conditions improved. Migratory birds flew in from the south and as they thrived inland the community followed them and took over a small village. Food supplies were found in deserted shops and seed corn and vegetables in abandoned barns. Soon a flourishing community came into existence. There were no masters of formal relations of any kind, and the only meetings were impromptu affairs to organize co-operative enterprises such as ploughing the fields. The communists and syndicalists became steadily more dissatisfied and relations between them and the others became more strained. They argued fiercely that the community should be run on anarchist lines. Why were there no communal dormitories, automated factories, sociological surveys and all the essentials of progressive anarchism.....? At last, appalled by the fascist obscurantism they saw all around them, the communists and syndicalists decamped in a body to set up on their own two valleys away. Occasionally they would come back in ones or twos, haggard, under-nourished figures, calling on the crofters and individualists as comrades and fellow-workers to mend their ways and set up a central committee of all workers by hand or brain....

Within a decade the distinction between the crofters and the individualists vanished and the community came to resemble a Scottish village before the industrial revolution, except that there were no landlords, lawmakers or priests to interfere with this happy

(but by no means idyllic) state of affairs. The communists and the syndicalists continued to visit them so regularly that someone was inspired to start a calendar which led to the holding of regular festivals (in honour of the moon not the visits) and so poetry was reborn.

Extract from the Report of Captain Joshua Ogumbo, leader of the first Pan African Survey in the Northern Hemisphere:

"7.8.85. Reached today the area formerly called Cape Cod. Found a settlement of approximately 500 persons. Social organization primitive. Technology nil. Renamed the area after our Beloved Leader, His Serenity, the Divine Czar-Pharaoh Tom Odugambo, Augustus, Optimus et Maximus, Wisest of the Wise, etc. Our troops could have made short work of these savages, but I advised against it for the following reason: While we had the settlement under observation it was visited on more than one occasion by beings who were truly more than men. They can talk non-stop for several days and are passionately concerned with the settlement's welfare. We think that these beings are spirits raised by the settlers to guard them. Our men are brave, but they will not fight against enemies with supernatural powers."

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THE PRAYER OF THE FRENCH PARATROOPER.....

Translated by J-P.S.

Give me, my God, what you have left.  
 Give me what is never asked you.  
 I do not ask for rest or peace,  
 Neither that of mind nor of body.  
 I do not ask for wealth,  
 Nor success, nor even health.  
 All those, my God, you are being asked for so often  
 That you probably haven't got any left.  
 Give me, my God, what you have left,  
 Give me what they refuse.  
 I want insecurity and worry,  
 I want turmoil and fight.  
 And do give them to me permanently  
 So that I know I have them for good  
 As I will not always have the courage  
 To ask for them.

Give me, my God, what you have left,  
 Give me what others do not want,  
 But also give me courage,  
 And strength, and faith.

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## THREE CHEERS FOR THE ANIMALS

Stephen Marletta

There are some, so we are told, who are tempted to give three rousing cheers when a "Bull Kills The Bullfighter". Count me among them.

An American scientist discovered that some cats, like some people, have a preference for leading with the left. So he and his team of Animal Behaviour Laboratory co-workers set out to find if they could break the cats of the habit. Thirty cats were used. The experiment consisted of putting each cat into a cage with the food trough outside. The cage was designed in such a way that the cat could use only one paw to reach out for the food. Most of the cats put out their right paws, but eight persistently used their left, he reports.

To see if he could reverse this preference the scientist tied a miniature "boxing glove" on each of these cats preferred paw. As the bulky glove wouldn't go through the food hole, each cat was compelled to use his other paw instead. After the trials (1400 in all), all except one of the animals went back to using their preferred paw. The exception was a wily old cat who seemed equally at ease with either paw.

The scientist concluded that this cat was truly ambidextrous....

Chi-chi and An-an, the giant pandas the zoo authorities tried so hard to mate, ended in failure. Said Chi-chi's Russian keeper: "It is very sad, but you cannot make her fall in love."

Experts they may be, but will they ever learn that animals are not robots?

Individualism doth raise its ugly head in other species besides man.....

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DRINKING SONG.....

Kerry Thornley

Here's to each fair maid I've met  
that I have never laid as yet.  
Here's to every volume fine  
of which I've never read a line.  
Here's to each bright dream anew  
I didn't ever make come true.  
Here's to each adventure grand  
in which I've never had a hand.  
I'll drink a cup before I die,  
of life, for every drop gone by.

## PERMANENT PROTESTER

("Le Cours d'un View". Louis Lecoin. Published by the author)

It is a staggering thought that Louis Lecoin has been carrying on the struggle since before the first World War. A great deal of his life has been passed in various prisons, and an earlier version of this autobiography was actually called "De Prison en Prison". In this version the story is carried on down to his struggle with the de Gaullist regime on behalf of conscientious objectors.

He is a small man, full of energy, courage and self-confidence. One wishes that one could be the same. I don't think though that he is broadcasting on the same wave-length as MINUS ONE. He is a disciple of Kropotkin, and believes in fighting for the welfare of mankind, rather than looking after "number one". He seems, despite periods of depression and discouragement, to have thrived on it, and I firmly believe that such men as he form the only barrier, however frail it may be since there are so few Lecoins, between us and utter, howling barbarism.

He refused, during his periods of military service, to help break a strike. He spread anti-war propaganda when the first World War was about to begin, and again briefly during the war - briefly because he was in prison most of the time. He fought for Sacco and Vanzetti, and in our own time, after many other adventures, he won at least a partial victory for the French war-resisters. He did not stop the two world wars, or save Sacco and Vanzetti, yet who can say the effort was wasted? The world might even be worse than it is were it not for people such as he, always prepared to make a fuss and fight back.

This book will be of great interest to those who are keen on revolutionary history and anarchism. There are many interesting photographs of anarchists, past and present. The description of his childhood recalls a condition of poverty not known today; in Europe outside Southern Italy and parts of Spain, and seems as if set on another planet. The problems of the modern rebel, in Western society, seem more intangible, less obvious, than hunger, cold, inadequate housing, permanent ill-health, and so on. Clumsily we have (more or less, and perhaps not for long) solved these problems. Yet the world is not a much pleasanter place to live in. People are lonely and lost, and in a muddle.

Lecoin seems to have enjoyed his life, and to have no regrets and bitternesses of any importance. I don't know how this squares with anarchist individualism. Perhaps he was just gratifying his ego after all. Freudians would say doubtless he was working out his Oedipal conflicts (Stirnerites and Freudians show an equal ingenuity in fitting awkward facts into their theoretical systems). Anyway, he lived and lives his life in the way he would wish.

## RIGHT WING INDIVIDUALISM IN THE UNITED STATES

## 5 - Ayn Rand and Objectivism

Lyman Tower Sargent

When one turns from the "individualism" of such thinkers as H.L. Hunt, Barry Goldwater and William F. Buckley, Jr. to the political philosophy of Ayn Rand and her followers, one comes very close to the individualist anarchism of Stirner and Armand. There are, though, certain fundamental differences that will be analyzed further in the next and last part of this series.

Miss Rand's philosophy is summed up in the title of her latest book, a collection of articles by her and her major acolyte, Nathaniel Braden, "The Virtue of Selfishness; A New Concept of Egoism" (New York: New American Library, 1964)

Unfortunately, a thorough description of the very simple philosophy of Miss Rand is made somewhat difficult by two aspects of her manner of presentation. First, most of her philosophy is presented in her four novels, "We The Living" (1936), "Anthem" (1937), "The Fountainhead" (1943) and "Atlas Shrugged" (1957). The analysis of literary presentation of ideas is always complicated at best. The analysis of these novels is simplified by the fact that on the whole they are second-rate pieces of literature. They are fairly decent examples of their type, but from a reading of virtually all the propagandistic utopian and anti-utopian novels, I would say that there have been few that have been well-written. Exceptions would be Austin Tappen Wright's "Islandia", Eugene Zamiatin's "We", and Anthony Burgess's "Clockwork Orange". Secondly, Miss Rand presents her ideas as being something radically new in political thought on the basis of what seems to be a fundamental misunderstanding of the history of philosophy and political philosophy.

These reservations aside, I must admit that her philosophy of objectivism, as she calls it, is a fascinating if, as I believe, untenable presentation of individualism. I say untenable since I believe that individualism is incompatible with the type of capitalism in which she believes, and because her assumption of the possibility of rationalism is, I think, impossible to make in the face of all the historical and statistical evidence concerning human behaviour in the twentieth century. Finally, it should be noted that she is very like many of the other "individualists" previously discussed in her patriotism and her fear of Communism. (Cf. Ayn Rand, "For The New Intellectual; The Philosophy Of Ayn Rand. New York: New American Library, 1961, 10-12)

Returning to a description of her philosophy, one finds at its base the attempt to define the objective, rational ethical system which she irrationally assumes to be possible. Her assumption that such a system is necessary might also be questioned. The primary demand of reason according to Miss Rand is capitalism, "Totally

unregulated laissez-faire capitalism" (Ibid. 25) She argues that "Capitalism demands the best of every man - his rationality - and rewards him accordingly. It leaves every man free to choose the work he likes, to specialize in it, to trade his product for the product of others, and to go as far on the road to achievement as his ability and ambition will carry him." (Ibid. 25-26) Anyone at all familiar with the history of capitalism will, of course, recognize the basic falsity of this picture.

It is always a bit difficult to understand exactly what any given thinker means when he or she argues that man should act rationally. Until the twentieth century virtually all thinkers have contended that man is somehow rational or, as it was often put, man is a rational animal (1), without specifying just what was meant. That great bastion of rationalism, Classical Greece, certainly had its own element of irrationality. (2) Miss Rand seems to define being rational as acting logically or consistently in one's self-interest.

The interesting parts of her philosophy are what she conceives to be one's self-interest and the means of attaining it. Put very generally she sees an individual's self-interest to be the removal of all limitations on the individual will. Many anarchists tend to identify these limitations with the State, which is only a meaningless abstraction; Miss Rand identifies these limitations with collectivization thus making the same error. The important point is, though, that she enunciates a very thoroughgoing individualism. The protagonist of her novel "Atlas Shrugged" puts it quite well when he says, "I swear - by my life and my love of it - that I will never live for the sake of another man; nor ask any other man to live for mine". (New York: New American Library, 1957. 993)

M. Y. O. B. -

2 As indicated earlier she sees the means to this end and in many ways the end itself as capitalism or the great god money. The last line of "Atlas Shrugged" illustrates this point perfectly - "He raised his hand and over the desolate earth he traced in space the sign of the dollar." (Ibid. 1084) *Alas, it was & remains a creature of the government! J.F.*

In conclusion, one can say that although Ayn Rand is neither a good writer nor a good political philosopher, she is the only writer of the right wing in the United States who does actually stress the individual.

- (1) One should note the inherent contradiction in the phrase rational animal.
- (2) Compare the following books: George Boas "Rationalism in Greek Philosophy" - Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961; and E.R. Dodds "The Greeks and the Irrational" - Berkeley, University of California Press, 1951. An individual interested in the problem of the irrational in the twentieth century should consult Roy Arthur Swanson "Heart of Reason; Introductory Essays in Modern World Humanities" - Minneapolis, T.S. Denison, 1963.

## 6 - Conclusion

An honest individualism is, perhaps, the most difficult position to achieve either politically or personally. This series of articles has shown that most, if not all, individualism of the American Right Wing is nothing more than a convenient and misleading label. The concept is tinged with a nostalgia for an ideological past in which it had no greater reality but that is currently bathed in the rosy hues of an individualist Arcadia.

But before making the final rejection of Right Wing individualism, it may be well to reexamine anarchist thinking on individualism for a moment. There certainly have been cases in which one group of anarchists have been unwilling to publish criticisms of their position by other anarchists. More fundamental than this parochialism, however, is the fact that a number of anarchist prophets, Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin and Read as examples, have not emphasized individualism at all. Instead, their dominant concern rests in what may be called federalism and a federalism of groups. The defence of this sort of anarchism argues that the individuals within these groups are free from the tyranny of majority rule, law, religion and all the other sacrosanct hypocrisies of modern democratic mythology. Nevertheless, the danger of extreme group pressure to conform to community standards is not necessarily abated. Even if the standards are boards and sandals, free love, vegetarianism and community property, they are still set by the group. The nonconformists in this country and others have shown such a tendency, while loudly professing a philosophy akin to anarchism in many ways.

Assuming then that anarchism is not entirely free from taint, we can now comment on American Right Wing mutilations of the concept with more understanding. In most cases these groups reject the same modern phenomena that unnerve the anarchists. The artificial centralization of economic and social decisions frighten both extremes of the political spectrum. There is, however, a large and obvious difference in their objections. Despite all the problems in the various anarchist philosophies, the basic concern is freeing each and every man to develop to the fullest extent of his capacities. The American Right Wing views individualism as a synonym for competitive capitalism and the antithesis of Communism - the latter a piece of the devil's handiwork.

Another incongruous characteristic of Right Wing individualism is its nationalism. Most of these groups would prefer the word 'patriotism' since patriotism is the loyalty to the country "which has the best chance of allowing men to compete freely." In this lexicon 'nationalism' is something that other countries have but should not. It is the nationalism of foreigners which gets in the way of United States interests such as airbases in Morocco or sugar plantations in Cuba. Nationalism even means nationalization of foreign industries in which patriot has invested - a Communist plot. Patriotism is the protection of the Right Wing American's trinity: God, Mother and Country.

An additional ideological link exists between the American Radical Right and the anarchist. Both distrust democracy as an obstruction to individualism. They fear the mass decision or mass action as thecrippler of individual fulfillment. Beyond this point, however, the similarity comes to an abrupt end. The Right Wing favours a plutocracy or a government based on wealth. H.L.Hunt's "Alpaca" is the most obvious statement of this position, but it lurks in the writings of others as well. Equality is rejected more through fear than from any reasoned argument. Whether they are at the top or the bottom of the social hierarchy, they feel they do not have all that is due them.

It might well be argued that the American Right Wing is attempting to establish a stable society of unchanging order in which roles are clearly defined. In this sense their individualism is tied to the nostalgia of the family farm. Each man literally or figuratively tills the soil, competes with impersonal material conditions, and earns irrevocable rank among his fellows by the success or failure in his fields. The shift in the United States from country to city has been the great American trauma. The breakdown of relatively simple village life has produced a series of groups desperately searching for a stable order in which they can function securely. Since the idealized American frontier has been given this aura of offering success and rank in direct ratio to effort, the catchword for the Right is "individualism" but the meaning is almost feudal in its explanation.

Directly related to the above is the solace that the Right Wing offers to its members through the scapegoat theories. These groups are fond of utilizing Thomas Jefferson at two points. Jefferson believed "that government that governs best which governs least" and felt that whatever government was necessary should be left in the hands of an aristocracy of talent. The twentieth century "individualists" assume that they are actually or potentially that talented minority and their sole criterion of the aristocrat is his wealth. The majority of the Right Wing which is poor, old, or otherwise cut off from society makes super-heroes out of those like H.L.Hunt who do meet their criterion of success and explain personal failure on the basis of poisoned national and world conditions. Those who do not have money rationalize that the Communists (at the turn of the century it was the Anarchists) have taken over and diabolically prevent them from rising. They cling to the belief that if the good old dog-eat-dog capitalist days were re-established, they could immediately fight their way to the top. (their potential) J.Z.

in conclusion, I would like to add a few personal comments. When I first realized the agitation on the Right, I had some hope for at least an active opposition to current American inertia. What has developed, however, is a vocal money cult. I find no personal virtue in poverty, preferring comfort or even luxury wherever it may be reasonably obtained. Nevertheless, the opposition to governmental policies solely because they cost the individual money is a worthless commodity.\* At one time I also thought that the extreme Right might have some affinities with anarchism. This, too, has been

\* Voluntary taxation & free banking would make GREAT differences. J.Z.



discarded. The Right wants a totally free economic system that <sup>Some insist e.g. on an exclusive gold standard monopolies for broadcasting frequencies patents etc. JZ</sup> appears to me incompatible with anarchism as is their insistence upon a strong governmental system. They want an anarchic economic system protected by a totalitarian state. This is a combination which has no inherent virtues.

*v. Their "limited" government is only partly "totalitarian" through its territorialism.*

**LETTERS**

*Individual secessionism & extraterritorial autonomy for all volunteer communities & their personal laws - would remedy that. J.Z. 12. 8. 197.*

Dear Editor,

Some observations on "O IDIOS - Two Views" (MINUS ONE No. 15.)

First, in the opening paragraph of my "View" there is a serious misprint. The phrase, "society, in the sense of a permanent and voluntary institution" should read ".....involuntary institution." (I should have pointed out, perhaps, that the same misprint occurs on page 14 of the pamphlet itself.) *Competing & voluntary societies or "anarchies" are possible, desirable, rightful, peace-promoting - & by their nature anarchistic. J.Z.*

Secondly, in your "View" you maintain that "Idios" does not advocate "selfishness" in the pejorative sense, and you imply that I misrepresented the author's conception of an "individualist" by "twisting his remarks from their context." In support of your interpretation you quote his statement:-

"Selfishness, violence, cruelty, untruth, prejudice, are neither right nor wrong, they are all part of human nature and as such we must accept them as we must accept our skin whether it be white or black."

Here I would like to make the following points:-

1. The analogy between accepting our "selfishness, violence" etc. and accepting our skin is false, because it is inaccurate to say we "accept" our skin. (Did you ever accept your skin? If so, when?) We neither accept nor reject our skin, we simply do not reject it. I don't know if you can see the difference. Acceptance involves an act of acceptance. Non-rejection merely implies an absence of any act, either of rejection or of acceptance.

2. It is certainly pointless to say that our "selfishness, violence" etc. are either right or wrong. But this means it is pointless either to accept or to reject such behaviour, not that we must accept it. The only intelligent policy is non-rejection. There must be no effort to suppress or eradicate anything; but, equally, there must be no encouragement, no deliberate cultivation. It is utterly futile to try to do a thing about our own "selfishness".

3. Now, if only we can just be aware of our "selfishness, violence" etc. without either accepting or rejecting it - if only we can observe it choicelessly, without calling it right or wrong - it

then undergoes a tremendous change. Our "bad" behaviour is the result of ambition in various forms, i.e. the desire to assert ourselves, ~~the~~ reassure ourselves of our own existence and importance by achieving this and that, experiencing this and that. When we are clearly and directly aware of this ambition, in all its stupidity and absurdity, it just leaves us, and a totally new mentality replaces it -- a state of psychological freedom and self-sufficiency. The individual can now live, fearlessly, and creatively.

4. But the author of "O Idios" has something quite different in mind. When he writes of accepting "selfishness, violence," etc. he means, not passive non-rejection, but active acceptance, encouragement and cultivation. His remark that the individualist is "an Epicurean in the most pejorative sense of the word" is surely open to no other interpretation, whatever the context. Any such "individualist" must be governed entirely by ambition, and therefore extremely unhappy - constantly afraid that his ambition may not be fulfilled. He is doomed to a life of conflict and frustration, in which he will inevitably hurt others and get hurt in return. Such a life is certainly neither right nor wrong. But it is unintelligent, and disastrous for all concerned.

Bristol, 17.10.66.

Francis Ellingham.

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#### MEETINGS

are held the second Sunday of each month at the "Marquis of Granby", 2 Rathbone Street, London, W.1., at 7.30 p.m. (Note new address)

January 8: Alfred Reynolds - "The Futility of Legal Reformism"

February 12: To be announced

Domenico Pastorello has published a pamphlet in Italian entitled "La Lussuria" which develops the theme of the difference between sex as pleasure and sex as procreation. Like all his publications it is issued "hors commerce" and can be obtained from him at 13 Fos sur Mer, France.

Anarchy is not a religion, a morality, or a social system, but a necessity of life.<sup>\*</sup> A necessity that teaches living to the free and is only realized by breaking all theological, ethical and juridical restraints - including those that so-called anarchists would impose.

Enzo Martucci.

\* So, since anarchy does not exist on earth, life does not exist on earth! ZZ.