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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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**ENEMIES OF SOCIETY:**  
**An Open Letter To The Editors Of "Freedom"**

**S.E.Parker**

(Based on a talk given to the London Anarchist Group at the "Lamb and Flag", July 9, 1967)

Having been a regular reader of your paper for over twenty years I am writing to give you some of my thoughts about "Freedom" and its relation to anarchism. I don't intend to range through all the issues that have appeared during this time, but simply to have a look at "Freedom" as it was at about the time I began to read it and then to have a look at it as it is now. For this I shall compare two issues - one for March 9, 1946 and the other for July 8, 1967.

The main theme of the 1946 issue was the imperative need for the workers and peasants, the masses, to bring about a social revolution. In an article called "India - The Menace of Famine", we were told that "The setting up of workers' and peasants' committees to administer the land and industry for the benefit of all, and the relief of starvation; these are the constructive necessities of the time." Another article on the situation in France announced that the "French workers begin to understand" and that the chances for "revolutionary minorities have become preponderant." And the Egyptian masses have to "understand their true role and take a really revolutionary path, overstepping the infantile fallacies of nationalism." While the author of an article on conscription said that "The one fear apparent in the government (as it is the fear of all tyrants) is the fear of the people themselves. They dread that the masses will rise against the existing order and establish a society of peace and equality wherein liberty becomes a cornerstone and not a crime." And George Woodcock indicted the "petty bourgeois" outlook of the Levellers "which made them concerned to create a society of small proprietors and to deny with pathetic vigour the anarchist communist doctrines preached by Winstanley and the Diggers. Winstanley's social vision, combined with the revolutionary vigour of the Levellers and expressed in widespread direct action in the taking over of land, might have brought real freedom to England and changed the history of the world."

*"Only if it had been done the capitalist way, by purchase, on terms." J.Z.*

Have you ever given any thought as to what happened to all these pious hopes? Did the Indian masses do as you suggested? Were they even interested enough to listen? How much nearer are the Egyptian masses to the real "revolutionary path"? Do you think that their recent hosannahs for Nasser showed they have "overstepped" nationalism? And the French workers - the once white hope of Bakunin and Kropotkin - have they understood? Is de Gaulle trembling in his shoes at the impending rising of "the people themselves" who will "establish a society of peace and equality"? Were these hopes any different from Woodcock's



restrospective speculations as to what would have been in the Levellers had done as he said they should have done 300 years later?

I have not noticed any serious analysis by you as to why these hopes remained pious. No doubt in the heady, disillusioned atmosphere just after World War 2 they were understandable. I know, I shared them. But over twenty years have passed and they are littered with the ruins of shattered hopes and exploded wishes. Yet even in those days a dissident voice was heard disturbing the euphoria of the approaching revolution. A reader wrote:

"Strikes, syndicalism, and class war mean little in themselves. Class war is a fact, but has, in my view, little direct connection with anarchism which knows no classes and certainly is not (either historically or actually) very representative of working class aspirations....."

But you took little notice of such an argument then and seem to have forgotten it altogether now if your back page is any guide, nor, indeed, the frontpage of the July 8 issue for this year. Here there is an article on Aden which reads like a rehash of the 1946 articles. Once again the solution is "a revolution, not only in the Aden territories, but throughout the Arab states, to ensure that the wealth from oil monopolies, at present held by a small minority, is used for the benefit of the whole population." I would be interested to hear what response you get from the Adeni masses. Not to be outdone the back page features a report from Japan in which it is stated that the "majority of the people of Japan" want the war in Vietnam to end. The writer does not say how he reached this conclusion, and I doubt very much if he could.

So the theme of the people in revolt continues to be plugged. What have you got to show for it after twenty years? Indeed, I could say after eighty years, since you and your predecessors have sung the same song since 1886 when the first issue of "Freedom" appeared. Yes, I know you have told us of the black flag waving over factories in Korea; you have gone into raptures over the East Berlin Rising of 1953, the Hungarian Revolt of 1956, the first day's of Castro's regime in Cuba, and the sit-downs of the Committee of 100. You assiduously scrape around for such examples in the hope that all these odds and ends of "revolutionary action" will add up to a convincing proof of the potentialities for anarchism in the masses. You don't, of course detail the far more numerous examples of these same masses' active or passive support of the rulers who milk them. So you have had Korea, East Berlin, Hungary, Cuba, not to mention Mexico, Russia and Spain. No doubt you could go back to the beginnings of history citing cases of "direct action" or the "creativity of the people". You still cannot show how these can be extended to supplant the authoritarian systems, not indeed that they do not carry within them seeds of new forms of

authority. Have you ever considered Eric Hoffer's contention that usually the masses get what they want - a stronger master - from successful revolutions and that only the intellectual precursors are disappointed?

Added to this is the problem of organization which you have never faced squarely, tending to brush it off with a few incantations about "decentralization". Simone Weil, in her syndicalist days, put the problem succinctly when she wrote:

"Can the workers' organization give the proletariat the strength it lacks? The very complexity of the capitalist system, and consequently of the problems that the struggle to be waged against it raises, carries into the very heart of the working class movement 'the degrading division of labour into manual and intellectual labour'. Spontaneous struggle has always proved itself ineffective, and organized action almost automatically secretes an administrative apparatus which, sooner or later, becomes oppressive."

What is your answer to this? Where are the forces for your revolution and how are you going to organize them? After all, if the Adeni masses need a revolution you might at least spell out to them what it means.

Of course, one line of retreat from your totalist approach to revolution is to stand with the editor of your brother publication "Anarchy" when he agrees with Malatesta that libertarian socialism is "only one of the forces acting in society, and history will advance, as always, in the direction of the resultant of all the forces." But if you were to do this, if you junked the proletarian myth, as the logical carrying out of this view would entail, then bang goes your creed of social salvation, whether in the form of being washed in the blood of the social revolution or the progressive revelation of gradual enlightenment. Malatesta, however, was no pioneer of permanent protest, as this quotation might suggest, since he believed that One Day the particular social force he favoured would triumph over all the others. But he almost hit the bull's eye that time.

The fact is - "historically and actually - that anarchist ideas are the property of only a small number of individuals who make anarchism their interest and push it as such. The "creativity" and "desire for freedom" of the People is so much populist moonshine and is the product of guilt-ridden intellectuals who want to expiate their social sins. The real worker never corresponds to the mythical worker dreamed up by revolutionary theorists. Sometimes he is an interesting individual; more often than not he is a bore, a boor and a herd-animal. In this he does not necessarily differ from his so-called betters except that his crudity tends to make him more honest. Really, all this investment of revolutionary virtue in the exploited, this haranguing of them in minute papers they never read, is only



an elaborate disguise for a moralism which lays down how they ought to behave and which throws a multi-coloured cloak over how they have behaved, do behave, and will behave - save, of course, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, Karl Marx or Michael Bakunin, separately or altogether.....

The trouble is that what you call "anarchism" is at best merely a hodge-podge, halfway position precariously suspended between socialism and anarchism. You yearn for the ego-sovereignty, the liberating individualism, that is the essence of anarchism, but remain captives of the democratic-proletarian-collectivist myths of socialism. Until you can cut the umbilical cord that still connects you to the socialist womb you will never be able to come to your full power as self-owning individuals. You will still be lured along the path to the lemonade springs and cigarette trees of the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

People like you have been denounced as "enemies of society". No doubt you would indignantly deny being such and claim that you are trying to save society from the vampire of the State. You delude yourselves. Insofar as "society" means an organized collectivity having one basic norm of behaviour that must be accepted by all (and that includes your libertarian communist utopia) and insofar as this norm is a product of the average, the crowd, the mediocre, then anarchists are always enemies of society. There is no reason to suppose that the interests of the free individual and the interests of the social machine will ever harmonize, nor is it desirable that they should. Permanent conflict between the two is the only perspective that makes any sense to me. But I expect that you will not see this, that you will continue to hope that if you repeat "the free society is possible" enough times then it will become so.

One day, however, some of you may grasp that the world does not go the way you think it should. You will then either give up and go along with the present Social Lie, or shrug off the accumulated pipe-dreams of both it and the hope of social salvation and make yourselves, your living egos, the bedrock of your lives. An anarchist is someone who acknowledges no authority, not even that of Anarchy. Maybe he cannot deny or destroy the existence of archism, but he can refuse to be its creature, he can be his own, belonging to neither God nor Man, neither Society nor the State. This, at least, I have learnt during these twenty years.

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The mass in modern times believes it is sovereign. As sovereign it is free. The exercise of the collective will may mean tyranny for every individual, but men will hardly resent it while each man believes that his will is part of the collective will. Men are sensitive about their freedom when the sovereign is another. They are less so when "the people" is sovereign.

Everett Dean Martin

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## AUTOMATION AND ANARCHISM

Lyman Tower Sargent

Many writers of the Left see the coming of automation as something to be feared. On the whole anarchist theorists have preferred to ignore the problem, perhaps on the ostrich assumption that if you don't notice something it will go away. ("Anarchy" has published a few very good commentaries on automation so there are exceptions) Since it is my belief that if the world experiences a major revolution in this century it will be the automation revolution, it is essential that all schools of thought recognize the importance of automation for their theories. It is also my contention that this automation revolution is peculiarly significant for the anarchist. First, I want to look briefly at how automation is likely to change contemporary society. Then, I shall try to see how these changes affect anarchist theory on the assumption that unless the bomb is dropped, the world will be automated.

Probably the major change from the viewpoint of the traditional radical will be the disappearance of the proletariat as a class. Obviously there will still be workers, but of a very different type than most of the world knows today. The unskilled labourer will be no more. Even the traditional skilled labourer will gradually begin to disappear until he is completely supplanted by the machine. (For example, a machine has just been tested that lays bricks much faster than can be done by a highly skilled worker.) The "blue-collar" worker will be supplanted by the "white-collar" worker who will in turn be gradually supplanted by machines. All this will, of course, be gradual. Construction workers of various types will be needed for many years to come; the machines will have to be built and repaired. But the proletariat of old, if it ever really existed, is doomed.

Second, we will see the growth of leisure. Men will no longer spend two-thirds of their time at work or asleep. They will more and more be thrown back upon themselves. They will have to choose how to spend their time. They can drink, play, read, or go crazy from boredom. People will make fortunes exploiting men's leisure rather than his muscle.

These two points are similar in some ways to the societies described by Zamiatin in "We" and Huxley in "Brave New World", although there are many possible variations on these themes. Zamiatin's society is based on machine-rule, and Huxley's stresses leisure-time activities, and thus it might be instructive to look briefly at the patterns of society that these authors and others see as the result of automation in the twentieth century. Most suggest the following:

1. A paternalistic but ruthless government.
2. Much changed sexual relationships - most see some sort of free love system. (Free love is regulated in "We")



3 Some type of state socialist economic system.

4 The citizenry as little more than extensions of machines.

This, in essence, is the challenge of automation. It is a dismal picture, but it still holds some hope for the anarchist.

As I indicated above, all of these changes will most likely take place gradually thus giving more time for the development of viable alternatives by various radical theories. But the first problem for most radicals, excluding the individualist anarchist, is the necessity of getting rid of the myth of the proletariat. The working class myth is a drag on anarchists, Communists, and socialists. The proletariat has been generally unrevolutionary in the past, and, if the United States is any indication, growing affluence leads to less social concern on their part rather than more. Therefore, it is pointless to constantly dream of the great proletarian uprising. (Personally, I think that if it were ever to come, it would establish a dictatorship, not anarchism.)

Secondly, the anarchists must rid themselves of any notion of "The Green Revolution" or a return to the land. Whether we like it or not we now live in an urban oriented world and unless the pill is spread more rapidly or somebody drops the bomb, the population of the world will preclude most people from having any contact with Nature except in city parks.

Thirdly, the anarchist, and this point is peculiarly relevant to the individualist, must decide if he really believes that an anarchist society is ever possible, or if he must direct his theories at the position of the anarchist within a non-anarchist society. Actually, in this case it is possible to have your cake and eat it too. One can believe in the eventual success of anarchism while at the same time recognizing that you must now live in a non-anarchist world. Thus, it would be possible to develop two levels of theory, one directed at an eventual automated anarchist world and one for a period of transition recognizing that you might never reach the ultimate goal. The individualist anarchist must opt for the latter alternative since he is going to have the same problem if anarchism succeeds. (The odds against an individualist anarchist society ever developing are, I think, overwhelming.)

In what positive ways, then, can automation affect anarchist theory? In the first place, as I mentioned above, as leisure time grows the individual will be forced back more and more upon his own resources; he will have to choose how to spend his time. (If we reach "Brave New World" or "We" this choice will disappear, but I don't think we have to reach these societies.) The individual will be better educated. This is obviously a mixed blessing since many educational systems are designed to produce a nicely, well adjusted automaton who can make the appropriate responses to stimuli, but again it doesn't have to do this, and the development of the new student left in the United States indicates that systems



backfire at times. This "new man" should be more willing to accept the notions of anarchism and will have the time to live as an anarchist.

But what does this mean? Does it mean voluntary poverty so that one does not support the government with taxes? Does it mean permanent protest? Does it mean attempting to correct the evils in the current system? If it means the last, does this imply an acceptance of the system? (This whole problem of reform versus revolution is perhaps an insoluble one for the radical. He almost has to choose reform, but by doing so he most likely puts off the revolution.) It is undoubtedly means all of these, but not necessarily for the same person. For example, we all respect the individual who chooses voluntary poverty so as not to support government, but most take other paths, hopefully for the right reasons. The anarchist must protest. Even in an anarchist society the anarchist would have to be a protester, pointing out the authoritarian tendencies of some groups or the bad treatment of such minority groups as the individualists. He can protest by marching with a sign, by word, by pen, but he must protest.

The anarchist must ensure that the machine actually adds to his freedom and does not limit it. Society must be made to operate for man, not for the machine. In "We" the government is replaced by a machine, and machines require that men do not "bend, fold, or mutilate", and they require that men act in an ordered and orderly manner. The anarchist must ensure that machines do the work but do not run their lives. One is reminded of Samuel Butler's "Erewhon" where all machines were destroyed or put into museums because they were evolving into higher and higher stages of "life" and were beginning to control, not be controlled. This is the great danger of automation. The life of leisure that the machine can produce must not also produce a machine-man. The anarchist theorist must develop a theory of permanent protest, diversity, and freedom, and he must begin to see the world as it is and will be, not as visualized by Morris or Malatesta. The proletariat is withering away; the "Green Revolution" is dead. The anarchist theorist must work within an automated, leisure-based, overpopulated, urban world. He must rid himself of the old propaganda, the old myths.

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Has "Homo Boobians" any talent for.....self-reliance? He has the same talent for it that he has for writing symphonies in the manner of Ludwig van Beethoven, no less and no more. That is to say, he has no talent whatsoever, nor even any understanding that such a talent exists. Liberty is unfathomable to him. He can no more comprehend it than he can comprehend honour. What he mistakes for it, nine times out of ten, is simply the banal right to empty hallelujahs upon his oppressors. He is an ox whose last proud, defiant gesture is to lick the butcher behind the ear.

H.L. Mencken.

## IN DEFENCE OF STIRNER

Enzo Martucci

But not only bourgeois thinkers, like Zoccoli and Serafini, have stormed against Stirner. Revolutionary or pseudo-revolutionary thinkers have done the same.

Marx, in his book "The German Ideology", spits venom at the author of "The Ego and His Own". Gille, in his "Outline of a Philosophy of Human Dignity", violently attacks Stirner as the theorist of an individualism which is not at all anarchist. Kropotkin tries to shatter him in a few words and believes he has won the game.

Following these great masters, who wanted to change the world, but had neither the courage nor the logic to persevere to the extreme limits at which Stirner arrived, the disciples parrot the judgements of their oracles. Some time ago a Sardinian who calls himself a follower of Malatesta wrote to me from America and asked "Don't you find yourselves in contradiction, you and that German philosopher who call yourselves anarchists and predicate egoism without understanding that anarchy is only love for humanity and cannot be realized without general agreement?"

I replied then, and I repeat now, that there is no contradiction if we call ourselves anarchists - that is, without government - and at the same time proclaim ourselves egoists. On the contrary, I want to be without government in order to be able to realize my egoism freely and completely, without being restrained and sanctioned by a sacred authority.

But what is egoism? It is an incoercable need that impels every living creature to provide for itself, to satisfy and enjoy itself, to avoid pain and preserve its life. The individual has no other end than his own ego, he cannot get out of his skin and all that he does he does for himself. He does nothing for the sake of others. When I deprive myself of my last piece of bread and give it to my neighbour who is hungry, I do so because the pain in my generous heart at his torment is less bearable than my hunger. If his agony did not pain me I would not give him my bread. Therefore I am an egoist, as is the sadist across the street who enjoys torturing animals and beating his wife and children.

The ascetic who renounces the pleasures of the flesh and consumes himself in penance, thinking that his temporary sufferings will be compensated for by the eternal delights of heaven; the idealist who feels happy fighting for his ideal, which in reality exposes him to persecution and brings him misery; the ambitious man who uses every means and risks his life to conquer power; the miser who condemns himself to stinting and deprivation for the pleasure of hoarding money; the hedonist who, to enjoy the sexuality of the



(of a) moment, squanders his money and spends his old age in poverty; the rebel who gets the satisfaction of striking at the master he hates and pays with his life or segregation in prison - these are egoists.

We are all egoists, even if the actions of one are different or opposed to those of another - the temperaments of individuals being as diverse as the passions that move them.

Altruism does not exist. It is no more than a christian falsehood preserved and secularized by Auguste Comte with his Religion of Humanity when it seemed that the old faith was losing its power.

Therefore, to predicate egoism means also to arouse it in those in whom it has been made dormant by the theological and metaphysical narcotics administered by their masters. And when these slaves have rebelled and opposed their own egoism to the insatiable and hypocritical egoism of governments the situation will change. Then there will be no more resigned sheep on one side and commanding wolves on the other - only anarchism.

Anarchy, then, is not love for humanity but simply lack of government. In this absence of government, and in the freedom that will come from it, those who feel love will love, and those who do not will not, and will maybe fight each other. We do not understand the motive which identifies freedom with universal harmony and would create one idyllic type of life in place of innumerable different ones. Therefore not even anarchy will produce a general agreement based on an absolute conformism, but many free and relative agreements - unions of egoists - and many discords ranging from individual isolation to struggles between individuals and groups. This will be a return to nature, to the jungle, you say. Yes, but the natural jungle will be shown to be a thousand/preferable to the asphalt jungle.  
times

However, the question between anarchists and archists has been badly stated from the beginning. In fact we are not concerned whether anarchy or archy can cement the best social relations, or bring about the most complete understanding and harmony between individuals. We try, instead, to discover which is the most useful for the realization and expression of the individual - who is the only existing reality. Is it anarchy, which offers me a free and perilous life, in which I might fall from one moment to another, but which allows me to affirm myself at least once? Is it archy, which guarantees me a controlled life in which I am confined and protected, but in which I can never live as I feel and will?

Which is preferable - intensity or duration?

Michelstaedter has said that preoccupation with tomorrow limits



living today.

I am for today. The sheep, even if they call themselves anarchists, long for tomorrow. And they die waiting for the sun of the future to rise.

x

To the anti-stirnerism of the bourgeoisie, the marxists and the libertarian socialists (Bakuninists, Kropotkinists, Malatestaians) must be contrasted the pseudo-stirnerism of John Henry Mackay and E. Armand.

Pseudo-stirnerism gives us a sweetened Stirner who tends towards the same end as the libertarian socialists - that is, social harmony. But they do not think it can be achieved, as do the latter, by means of Bakunin's impulse to unity or Kropotkin's mutual aid, but rather through individual egoism. In order not to be attacked by others and have my life and freedom threatened, I respect the life and freedom of others. It is not from love of my neighbours that I do not look for well-being in their suffering, but from personal interest.

But Stirner said nothing about this. He understood very well that in certain cases I cannot obtain the satisfaction of some of my needs without damaging the needs of others. If, for example, I want your woman, and you do not want to give her up or share her with me, I would have to snatch her away, use violence, or try seduction, to make her love me and induce her to leave you. If I did not do this, if I suppressed my passion and left her with you, I would spare you sorrow, but would inflict it on myself. I would not put myself in danger of your revenge, but I should have to renounce an ardently desired joy. And so, going from one renunciation to another in order not to clash with others, I would end by never having lived my life at all.

Therefore struggle is inevitable, and it is impossible to eliminate it from any kind of society or co-existence.

But there will be other cases in which my interests will correspond with those of my neighbours. Then I agree with them and add my force to theirs' in order to achieve a common end. In this way is formed a union of egoists. But this union is based on a free agreement that can be cancelled at any time. Stirner explains it very clearly:

"You bring into a union your whole power, your competence, and make yourself count; in a society you are employed, with you working power; in the former you live egoistically, in the latter humanly, that is, religiously, as a 'member of the body of this Lord', to a society you owe what you have, and are in duty bound to it, are - possessed by 'social duties'; a union you utilize, and give it up undutifully and unfaithfully when you see no way to use it further. If a society is more than you, then it is more to you than yourself; a union is only

your instrument, or the sword with which you sharpen and increase your natural force; the union exists for you and through you, the society conversely lays claim to you for itself and exists even without you; in short, the society is sacred, the union your own; the society consumes you, you consume the union."

Therefore the union of an egoist with other egoists is simply a temporary arrangement which can be quickly followed by disunion and struggle. It is not and cannot be a stable society based on the universal rule of "I respect you as long as you respect me".

Armand claimed outright that an individual could not break an agreement unilaterally - that is, leave an association without the consent of his fellow members. But this would mean that he would be dependent upon the others, he would be their slave, their property - just what Stirner did not want. To Armand's argument that I cannot abandon comrades who will not give me permission to do so because I must have regard for the pain my leaving would cause them, I have already replied that I do not concern myself with those who are not concerned with the pain they cause me by holding me back when I want to leave.

Certain authors confuse individualism with utilitarianism, Stirner with Bentham, the personal pleasure of the unique one with that of the majority or even of all. And they write works like Mackay's "The Anarchists" and "Armand's "L'initiation individualiste anarchiste" which certainly do not contribute to the understanding of real Stirnerian thinking.

(Translated from the Italian by Stephen Marlotta)

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THE DAWN NOT COMING UP LIKE THUNDER ANYMORE

Tracy Thompson

The dawn not coming up like thunder anymore  
more like the dawn not coming up,  
only a few brass saxhorns  
to greet the sun,  
as if the sun weren't worth the effort.  
The absence of aubades,  
like the absence of matins,  
like the general absence  
and all the little absences  
that make the modern world what it is  
and isn't, for one thunderous dawn,  
even if only in imagination.



Controversy

## MORALITY VERSUS EGOISM

Robert LeFevre

I have noticed the letter from Dr. Murray Rothbard which appears in your publication, "Minus One", for July of 1967. By this means I discovered for the first time that some of my views have been the target of discussion in an earlier publication apparently under the title: "Slings and Arrows". That earlier publication escaped my notice, so I wish to use this means to thank Dr. Rothbard for coming to my defence in the absence of my knowledge that I had been attacked.

I have often been puzzled by the emotional intensity of those Dr. Rothbard classifies as "Stirnerites", but your own observations following his letter have helped me to understand. If I grasp your point correctly, you object to moral instruction on the ground that this merely replaces the State and/or God and the idea of external punishment of prison or hell with the idea of internal punishment and guilt.

In other words, the Stirnerite must insulate himself against any concept of error at all. Whatever a Stirnerite wishes to do is "right" by definition, since there is no real "right" or "wrong" and the will of the individual is triumphant and always justified even against self-correction.

But how does the Stirnerite become a Stirnerite? He can only move to this position by correcting prior conclusions he may have reached. Thus, the Stirnerite must use the process of self-correction UNTIL he becomes a Stirnerite, after which further correction becomes impossible.

This is to say that the Stirnerite, in order to maintain his position, must do so with a closed mind. Any possibility of acceptance of any other thought than Stirner's would lead the Stirnerite into an unacceptable position of admitting the possibility of error (guilt?) and this must be rejected as an inviolable absolute. Thus, the Stirnerite is guilty of the very worst of crimes which he lays at the door of the mystic. For he has created a god and he worships at the shrine without the willingness or even the capacity to consider that his god may be a false god.

Worse than this, this god of the Stirnerites is his own ego, which is always right. And like most mystical structures, a prophet of this mystique has been provided in the person of Stirner who, like the ego, can never be wrong.

With this before me, I can understand the religious intensity of the Stirnerite who is so fearful of being shown in error that



it is a part of his theology that guilt (recognition of error) is impossible. I am now wondering if the real problem here may not lie in the too sweeping rejection of guilt as a necessary result of the recognition of error. It seems to me that moral instruction does not necessarily lead to the acceptance of guilt, although I grant that this is always a possibility. What the Stirnerite seems to imply is that moral instruction is, of necessity, unnatural and therefore contrary to nature. And why should anyone have a sense of guilt simply because of his nature? Obviously, to feel guilt because of the function of a man's nature would be a kind of folly IF that were all that was involved. But this is to see man as having a one-dimensional nature, not as he is, but as Stirnerites think he is. And that is the prime folly of the Stirnerite faith for it rests upon a one-dimensional philosophy which is hopelessly contrary to the nature of man.

Man is a creature in contradiction. He is an organism that is motivated by a complexity of drives which serve to check and counter-check. He is capable of nobility and virtue, in his behaviour. He is equally capable of ignominious and ignoble conduct. And all of these drives stem from his ego. He is paradoxical, quixotic and ambivalent. But the high priesthood of the Stirnerite cult rejects all ambivalence by the happy hurdle method known to all fiction writers. He re-defines man as a creature who cannot be right or wrong, who has no complexities and no inward struggle at all AFTER he has attained to the faith.

It is marvelously simplistic and beautiful. It also denies reality. By his fear of finding himself guilty of ignobility the Stirnerite defines ignobility as equivalent to nobility, pretending to see no differences in behavioural patterns.

May I respectfully suggest that the publisher of MINUS ONE is guilty of non-Stirnerite behaviour in his efforts as a publisher? For, referring to other portions of his comments to the Rothbard letter it appears that it is none of the publisher's business what Mr. A or Mr. B does or thinks, since his concern is purely with himself. But since his concern is purely with himself, he can have no interest or concern with the thoughts or behaviour of others. And having no interest or concern with the thoughts or behaviour of others, why does he publish articles which may or may not stimulate others to particular courses of thought or action? Apparently he has some kind of non-Stirnerite motivation for he pretends to find some of my thoughts and actions in error. But they cannot be in error, for there is no error, by definition. It is moral judgement, utterly unworthy of a true Stirnerite.

Might I suggest that "guilt" when it is no more than a recognition of prior error, is the principal method by which we all learn? We learn by "trial and error", not by the process of self-justification. I wonder if Stirnerites wish to be known

as people who are incapable of learning? If so, their minds are locked in concrete and there is no point at all in communicating with them.

So, in one sense, it might be reasoned that Stirnerites are cowed by an enormous spook - the fear that they might even think for a moment that they had done or thought something incorrectly. This fear is so gigantic that they cannot even admit it into their consciousness.

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IN REPLY

S.E.Parker

2 "Moral people skimmed off the best fat from religion, ate it themselves, and are now having a tough job to get rid of the resulting scrofula."

Max Stirner

Mr. LeFevre's whole wondrous case against "Stirnerites" rests on his fallacious identification of "guilt" with "recognition of error". In his view any action which is liable to go "wrong" (and this means every action) is by virtue of this a moral or an immoral action. But I find a mistake in a mathematical calculation is my correction of this "error" a moral action? Mr. LeFevre seems to believe that it would be. But this is to completely confuse the issue even from a moralist standpoint. "Moral conduct", wrote Lans Freed, "is conduct motivated by the aim of acting self-sacrificingly, is obedience to the 'voice' whose first command is 'act not as you desire to act, nor as you consider it expedient to act, but as you feel that you ought, morally speaking, to act'." (Social Pragmatism) A moral action is therefore an "ought" action purely and simply. To argue otherwise is to apply moral value judgements to areas in which, morally speaking, they do not apply.

The "Stirnerite", egoist standpoint is that a "right" action is simply one appropriate to the end desired, and a "wrong" action one inappropriate to the end desired." In other words, there are expedient and inexpedient actions for an egoist - nothing more. There is no question of moral "guilt" involved if an egoist makes a mistake and recognises that he has done so. He merely corrects it if he can, and if he cannot he takes more care next time. Now, from a logical angle, it follows that if there is no real "right" or "wrong" then a "Stirnerite" is "by definition" always "right" I fail to see. Perhaps Mr. LeFevre follows a different logic to mine. *a) End of whom? Just the actor or for all upon whom he acts? J.Z.  
Is the action an aggressive or defensive one?*

I do not know any member of the "high priesthood of the Stirnerite cult" who rejects "all ambivalence". They can't belong *Is it harmonising & peace promoting or a kind of declaration of war? J.Z.*

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to my church and certainly ha-ven't read their Stirner properly! However, I promise Mr. LeFevre I will raise this grave matter at the next Bayreuth College of Cardinals Conference when the spirit of Saint Max will be amongst us to assist us in our debates. Seriously, an egoist is only concerned to "define" himself, contradictory or otherwise, not "Man".

Because I wrote that what Mr. A does to Mr. B "only concerns me if my interests are threatened" it by no means follows that I cannot concern myself with other individuals or their ideas. If Mr. B is a friend of mine I have an interest in him and will concern myself with his defence if I can because my interest is being threatened by Mr. A.

Again, I am interested in certain ideas and concern myself with publicizing and discussing them. One of my means for doing this is MINUS ONE. But I only do so because it pleases me to, not out of any moral obligation to preach a gospel, save the world, or even point out the errors in other people's thinking. If these ideas did not interest me I would not bother about them, anymore than I do about an argument between two orthrinologists as to the best way to catch butterflies.

ornithologist

birds

"Stirnerites", therefore, are not cowed by any spooks. I doubt if they lose much sleep over any guilty fear that "they had done or thought something incorrectly". I leave the spook of morality to haunt the devisers of systems of moral instruction who, by "definition", have a vested psychological interest in guilt and fear.

No one who has read and understood "The Ego and His Own" would ever regard Stirner's ideas as sacred or unquestionable. It is up to the reader to make what use he can of the ideas it expresses. "The Ego and His Own" is neither a revelation from above nor from below. It is a consistent exposition of individualist anarchism; it can inspire or enrage, according to one's taste; but it is nothing more than a book written by an individual. To try, even in sarcasm, to label it as a holy gospel simply puts the labeller out on a limb. He has only himself to blame if someone saws off the limb behind him.

#### LETTERS

Gorillas live in groups of 25 to 30 - not alone with their females as Mr. Martucci wrote in MINUS ONE No. 19. They have one female each and often prepare a bed for both of them.

Evolution started with animal species and has impelled superior species to surpass inferior ones. There are no individualist



sardines! Only in superior animals can we find solitary individuals. In the beginning, says Theilard de Chardin, there was not one Adam, but a multitude of Adams.

In my view, not all men are equal. Evolution continues, but it no longer modifies different human species, but single individuals. Its purpose is not to make yellow people superior to white or black people, but different individuals in different countries to the underdeveloped majority. Johnson and Kosygin can understand each other, as can the pope and the atheist. These are privileged individuals who are products of the best chromosomes received from parents who are at the apex of the human race. Capitalists are a privileged race, as are intellectuals and cultured men. But certainly not sports champions, who are not human, but a race of privileged beasts!

In the march of evolution the masses will be put aside, as has happened to thousands of other species, to open the road for man.

I am proud to be an individualist, certainly not on the level of my ancestors, but a son of millions of bipeds, suffering and trying to be something better.

Everything becomes different with this view of evolution, and a thousand problems find their solutions satisfactorily.

Naturally an individual is a brain, not just a whole of 400 muscles and some bones.

Domenico Pastorello

x x x

P.W.Goddard states that the X-ray laser is possible only in theory. I got the information that it is also possible in fact from an article in the "Guardian" (11.2.67). I never meant to imply that this weapon has been perfected and deployed, but the article makes it clear that it will be made in the near future. There is not the space here to outline how the technical difficulties have been overcome.

Francis Ellingham correctly states that the sort of man Krishnamurti is talking about observes and understands "his whole psychological process...and in this way inner conflicts may be resolved, and a state of serenity....may come into being."

Now, during true enjoyment of a poem, a symphony or sex, there is no part of our mind "observing and understanding" the "whole psychological process". In true enjoyment we truly lose ourselves and anyone whose mind is such that one part consciously observes the rest is not partaking of the full experience. This has nothing to do with ordinary escapism.

Krishnamurti does advocate that we "endeavour" to observe and understand our psychological processes while they are occurring. He does not say that in the cases of music, poetry, sex, etc., one cannot "observe" a thing in retrospect.

Consequently, I argue that Krishnamurti's ideas, when applied to music, poetry, etc., result in a marring of the full enjoyment of these things. This is why I advocated that Krishnamurti be "taken in small doses".

However, don't let Francis Ellingham, or myself, put you off Krishnamurti. There is much that is both true and useful in his writings.

Alistair MacHenry.

x x x

I have read several issues of MINUS ONE and various other pieces of individualist literature and have reluctantly come to the conclusion that individualist anarchists are selfish and irresponsible. In No. 19 you say "What Mr. A does to Mr. B and vice versa only concerns me if my interests are threatened and then I act in self-defence, not from any standpoint of 'right'."

I realise that this is your personal opinion and not that of all individualists, but I think the majority of them would agree with you. That is one of the reasons I am not an individualist anarchist. As Eugene V. Debs once said: "While there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free." How many of your readers agree with that statement?

Robert Hallstead.

(For a further elaboration of my remarks on Mr. A and Mr. B see my reply to Robert LeFevre on another page. As for Debs' statement, if it was intended as more than a rhetorical flourish then I can only say "More fool he!" If he really intended to wait for the liberation of the last Hottentot before getting any freedom for himself he must have been a masochist of the first order.

S.E.P. )

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.....freedom is power to do something. You are free to do what you have the power to do. But whenever you seek to exercise power over others through organization or group-will, to just that extent you give yourself over to your group or organization and lose power over yourself. For the external authority you aid in increasing will command you as relentlessly as it will any other of its victims.

Everett Dean Martin

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### MEETINGS

are held the second Sunday of each month at 7.30 p.m. at "The Marquis of Granby" (First Floor), Cambridge Circus, Charing Cross Rd., London, W.C.2. (Nearest underground stations; Leicester Square and Tottenham Court Road.)

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P. Constable, 34, Durham St., Holderness Rd., Hull, Yorkshire, would like to contact other individualist anarchists in that area.

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### LITERATURE

E. Armand:	Anarchism and Individualism	1/3
S.E.Parker:	Individualist Anarchism: An Outline	4d
Jean-Pierre Schweitzer:	O Idios - Three Essays on Individualist Anarchism	1/3
Max Stirner:	The Ego and His Own	15/11

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