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Union of Egoists

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-Kevin I. Slaughter

What is a UnionOfEgoists.com?

This is an informational resource provided by Kevin I. Slaughter of Underworld Amusements and Trevor Blake of OVO, initiated in February and publicly launched April 1st of 2016. The website initially focuses on providing historical, biographical and bibliographical details of a few their favorite Egoist philosophers. It is also integrating the archives of egoist website i-studies.com, the former project of Svein Olav Nyberg, and the EgoistArchives.com project of Dan Davies. Further, it will be home to Der Geist, a Journal of Egoism in print 1845 – 1945. UnionOfEgoists.com will be the best resource for Egoism online.

What is a Union of Egoists?

"We two, the State and I, are enemies. I, the egoist, have not at heart the welfare of this "human society," I sacrifice nothing to it, I only utilize it; but to be able to utilize it completely I transform it rather into my property and my creature; i. e., I annihilate it, and form in its place the Union of Egoists."

– Max Stirner, The Ego and Its Own

What is Egoism?

"Egoism is the claim that the Individual is the measure of all things. In ethics, in epistemology, in aesthetics, in society, the Individual is the best and only arbitrator. Egoism claims social convention, laws, other people, religion, language, time and all other forces outside of the Individual are an impediment to the liberty and existence of the Individual. Such impediments may be tolerated but they have no special standing to the Individual, who may elect to ignore or subvert or destroy them as He can. In egoism the State has no monopoly to take tax or to wage war."

-Trevor Blake, Confessions of a Failed Egoist

MINUS ONE

MAX STIRNER
JOSIAH WARREN
JAMES L. WALKER
RENZO NOVATO
JOHN HENRY MALLORY
E. ARMONO
ALBERT LIGERIO
MARIONA RUSZAKOWSKI
LYNDEN SPENCER
RENNER REDDEN

NO 35
1975

EDITOR Sid Parker



STIRNER AND THE UNIVERSE

by Francis Ellingham

In MINUS ONE No.34 you comment on my article in that issue. You say Stirner is "the philosopher of the separate self", and you complain that his sentence "I am not an ego along with other egos, but the sole ego" is not really compatible with my interpretation of Stirner's 'I' as the whole universe.

Now, if Stirner's 'I' is the separate self, it must be the only separate self, since otherwise it would be precisely what Stirner says it is not, "an ego along with other egos" (1). On your interpretation, then, Marx was right: Stirner must be a solipsist, believing in the existence of only one separate self, his own. (2)

However, if Stirner's 'I' is the whole universe, his view is quite different - but not incompatible with his sentence about "the sole ego". There is only one ego, the universe, but it is as much yours and mine as it was Stirner's. The difference between you and me, though real, is like the difference between the two sides of a coin: each is impossible without the other, and there is no division between them. They are separable in thought, but not in reality. So are all "separate" things. (3)

When you look at any object, the part you see depends on your point of view, and you never see the object as a whole. Similarly, you never see the universe as a whole: you only get a partial glimpse from your particular viewpoint - which, to you, is the centre. Thus, as Alan Watts has written, "Your soul, or rather your essential Self, is the whole cosmos as it is centred around the particular time, place and activity called John Doe." ("The Book On The Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are", p. 61.)

In an infinite cosmos there may be many centres, many selves - separable in thought but not in reality. To grasp this, not just intellectually, but with the whole mind, is to apprehend the universe as a whole. And then one can say, "I am the sole ego".

As far as I can see, such a view of the self must be true. Whether such a view was Stirner's is, I admit, a moot point. All I am suggesting is that Stirner was at least on the way to such a view - and that Marx's objections cannot be disposed of on any other interpretation.

AND A REPLY

by S.E.Parker

- 7 (1) Stirner's statement that he was not "an ego along with other egos, but the sole ego" means that to him he was the sole subject, all other individuals being regarded by him as objects whose relationship to him was one of utility. Equally, anyone else who regarded him or her self as "the sole ego" would view Stirner as an "object". All this is made so plain in "The Ego and His Own"

that I cannot understand how Ellingham can interpret Stirner in such a fantastic manner.

(2) Marx's accusation of "solipsism" merely shows his ignorance. Stirner does not deny the existence of things outside of himself. On the contrary, a large part of his book deals with the problem of how best he can make use of these things for his own benefit.

(3) There is no such animal as "the whole universe". "The universe" is an abstract term we use to refer to the total of individual things of which we are aware or can infer. In other words, "the universe" is not a single entity, but a collection of separate entities which certain people try to make into a "whole" by thought but cannot do so in reality. To talk of "the universe" as "a single atom", therefore, is meaningless. 'I' cannot be "the universe" because the universe is an abstraction. Indeed, Ellingham's use of the words turns it into yet another "spook", a supra-individual transcendence to which the individual, finite self is to be sacrificed. I challenge him to show how Stirner approaches "the universe" in any other than a thoroughly nominalistic and utilitarian fashion.

(4) Ellingham admits that whether the view of the self held by him - and such mystagogues as Alan Watts - was that of Stirner is a "moot point", suggesting, however, that Stirner "was at least on the way to such a view". This is best answered by Stirner himself in a comment he made on the confusion between his 'ego' and that of Fichte's 'ego' as Absolute:

"When Fichte says, 'the ego is all' this seems to harmonize with my theses. But it is not that the ego is all, but the ego destroys all, and only the self-dissolving ego, the never-being ego, the - finite ego, is really I. Fichte speaks of the 'absolute' ego, but I speak of me, the transitory ego."

If this constitutes evidence of Stirner being "on his way" to the cloud-cuckoo land of "I=the universe", then Friend Ellingham is welcome to it.

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DEATH OF RENE GUILLOT

The "Cahiers des Amis de Han Ryner" for March 1975 announces the death of Rene Guillot: He died "after an abrupt and cruel illness. He had just reached 60 years of age. He was well-known at our meetings, together with his companion. He had entered into negotiations with us regarding a new edition of Voyages de Psychodore (Han Ryner). He was one of the principal animators of the Foyer Individualiste, and one of those who contributed to the masterly work by and on E. Armand. We shall miss him very much, together with his good and practical advice."

DEMI-GODS DEMI-DAMNED; OR HALO'S HOODOO'D, RAMSAY MACDONALD.
Ambitions Analysed, Aspirations Assassinated, and Egos Eviscerated
by the Rapid Transit System.

By Malfew Seklew

(Note: The following example of Malfew Seklew (see Minus One 34) in full spate appeared in The Truthseeker, Bradford, England, New Series No.2, 1913, which seems to have been the last issue published. Seklew wrote it under another pseudonym: "Brutalitarian Libertarian". Ramsay MacDonald survived our noble precursors "evisceration" and went on to become prime minister of Britain's first two Labour Governments. In 1931 he deserted the Labour Party to become prime minister of a "National Government". S.E.P.)

Every man has his price - Horace Walpole.

He understands the price of everything, but the value of nothing. -
Oscar Wilde.

The surplus value of his Ego is non est - Tak Kak (J.L.Walker)

The rich prey, while the poor pray - Malfew Seklew

What is pine-apple pie for the politicians, is persimmons for the people - Ibid.

The proletarian's purgatory, is the parasite's paradise - Ibid.

We all live according to our lights, but most men live according to the state of our livers - Ibid.

Things are not what they seem, skimmed milk sometimes masquerades as cream - Ibid.

The conscience of a Government lies in its Exchequer - Ibid.

J. Ramsay Macdonald many years ago left the Highlands of Scotland for the Lowlands of England to make his fortune and to found a family. He worked hard to educate himself, and, after a fearful struggle, became a schoolteacher, afterwards secretary to an M.P. where he picked up the art of artifice; the price of policy-pushing; the cost of conscience; and the value of politics and piffle. He became respectable by marriage and by joining the Liberal Party. Not finding fate favourable to him there, he joined the Socialists, a group of guileless galoots consisting of geniuses without joy or money; altruists full of agony; and jewsmiths looking for work. This human material being malleable in his hands, he used them for his own purposes, and gradually became the Moulder of their Methods, and the Manipulator of their Means. He is considered by some people to be the "Machiavelli" of the Masses; the "Moses" of the "Mumpers"; the macsycophant of "Macsycophants"; and the "Sirdar" of the "Subterfugettes". As leader of the Labour Party in Parliament and boss of the "I.L.P." (Independent Labour Party), he has power to find jobs for altruistic adventurers from over the Border, who can lie without blushing, and apologise with enthusiasm without getting apoplexy, constipation of conscience, or costiveness of conception. As the "Artful Dodger" of the political "Jeremy Diddlers", he strives to do his duty to his employers - and himself. He has his finger on the pulse of politics, and carries the Labour Party in his vest pocket, for the purpose of producing profit for himself and that mob of ultra-moral "Swell-mobmen" of Socialism, who have acquired the art of handling Truth with artistic carelessness without

getting lockjaw, whilst pouring forth altruistic abracadabra, Socialistic Sophisms and Political Piffle.

As a Hinky-Dink politician and ping-pong philosopher he has climbed to success as a Socialist, but it is rumoured that he yearns to enter the Realm of the Rulers of men by becoming a member of the Government, and at the same time a Catspaw of Capitalism and of the Cabinet.

The acid of exasperation and arrogance has developed a cancer on his inner consciousness, and compelled him to turn his eyes towards Westminster for sympathy, and to gaze into the Eyeball of Eternity for that nub of knowledge that will enable him to pacify the pacemakers of progress at Leicester, so that he may escape from the Desert of Disappointment and live once more in the sunshine of success without fear or trembling. He repudiates Syndicalism, because he does not understand Libertarian Socialism, regardless of the fact that Syndicalism is the Surgeon of Society and Socialism, and the vivisector of Evolution, which will save the people from wage-slavery and the Servile State as soon as the Napoleon of Labour arrives on the Scene of Slaughter and Salvation.

Despite the malice of mediocrity, the wails of the wastrels, and the tears of the Talkologists he will arrive, for he is the swiftest microbe of mercenariness and mercy that ever started to walk backwards towards the Millenium without getting corns on his heels, or callosities on his calves, for he knows which way the wind blows, and when to come in out of the snow. Socialism is the Salve of his Soul, Politics the pride of his Power, and Democracy is the Dynamo of his Desires.

Macdonald, the mysterious medicine man of the masses, is no Messiah, but the Bishop of Bunco-steerers and Beatific-Bliss Manufacturers. His motto is: I know that my redeemer giveth. Amen.

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THE DEVIL A PLAGIARIST WOULD BE....

Looking through The Satanic Bible by Anton Szandor LaVey recently I came across a chapter called "The Book of Satan". In a prefatory note LaVey calls it "a small, slim diatribe". Well it is small, it is slim, and it is a diatribe, but it is not the work of LaVey. On the contrary, it has been copied virtually word for word from The Survival of the Fittest (later Might Is Right) by Ragnar Redbeard. LaVey has added a few phrases and excised a few others, but to all intents and purposes he has plagiarized his text from Redbeard. Perhaps old Ragnar would have been flattered at this backhanded compliment. His views on the hocus-pocus that follows, however, would probably need asbestos paper for their printing.....

S.E.P.

ANARCHIST-INDIVIDUALISM THEN - THE PROSPECTS FOR LIBERATION NOW

by Mark A. Sullivan

? Only since 1933, after the death of Joe Labadie, did L.L. show interest in anarchism! J.Z.

(Dedicated to L.L., lifetime student of the human condition, lover of liberty, and friend.)

In seeking to emancipate ourselves from authoritarian relationships and institutions we must first have a clear understanding of the nature and source of authoritarian relationships in general. The paradox of the situation is that the source of authority is autonomy. In order for the person to be enslaved by another he/she must use his/her autonomy, i.e. unique consciousness of the world, in the very act of surrendering it. No one can force you to believe that your own judgement is not valid, that it must give way to another's judgement; this is a decision, a judgement itself, that you ultimately make yourself; albeit, often by default.

No amount of violence usurps the autonomy, i.e. unique self-consciousness, or "owness" of the individual:

"Under the dominion of a cruel master my body is not "free" from torments and lashes; but it is my bones that moan under the torture, my fibres that quiver under the blows, and I moan because my body moans. That I sigh and shiver proves that I have not yet lost myself, that I am still my own."

(Stirner: The Ego and His Own. LBC. P. 158)

In the above situation Stirner has not surrendered his autonomy to authority. He suffers the whip, endures violence, but does not concede authority to his would-be master. Thus authority and violence are not equatable, although authority, once granted, allows violence to go on unprotested. The maintenance of one's autonomy leads one to end the violence at the first opportunity, while a surrender of autonomy, not acknowledging self-ownership, means the absence of the will to protest.

"But as I keep my eye on myself and my selfishness, I take by the forelock the first good opportunity to trample the slaveholder into the dust. That I then become free from him and his whip is only the consequence of my antecedent egoism."

(Ibid. p. 158)

To be free is an external condition, and implies the ability to act unimpeded. The concept of a free society then implies one where each person is able to act unimpeded by external social forces, i.e., other persons. The individualist anarchist, Benjamin Tucker, and his associates, formulated the free society as one where each person enjoyed the greatest amount of individual liberty compatible with the equality of liberty for all; and postulated freely supported defence and arbitration associations as possible means of securing equal liberty. The danger with such associations, however, is that in order for them to operate effectively, the actions and the decisions of even voluntarily supported police and courts involve a surrender of autonomy to the association. One

? The secession option remains reserved! J.Z.

must be willing to abide by a court decision even if one disagrees in order that the decision be binding. In the absence of such surrender, in the absence of the granting of authority, we have the spectre of violence influencing all societal relationships. And while there is a qualitative difference between authority and violence, a quantitative balance may have to be struck between the two of them. To what degree will we risk suffering violence in order not to surrender our autonomy to authority? (This, of course, is the question that the social-contract theorists, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and later, Proudhon, Spooner, and Tucker, in a more radical vein, sought to answer). In the projections of egoists such as James L. Walker and Enzo Martucci, it is the interaction of self-assertive individuals, as self-owners, that makes for the greatest amount of individual liberty - and leads to an equality of liberty that is the resultant of the approximately equal power of every person to maintain his or her liberty.

While Walker and Martucci never explored the form such a free society could take in any great detail (although had Walker lived longer we might have seen such an exploration), John Beverley Robinson, one of Tucker's comrades, does so in his "Rebuilding the World: An Outline of the Principles of Anarchism" (1917, long out of print). Robinson understands full well the source of authority: "The authority of the ruler is the reflection of the respect for him which exists in the mind of the ruled.... Respect for an abstract idea is more powerful than respect for an individual, strong as the latter may be.... that is why respect for the abstraction called 'government' persists, though the concrete government is known to be but a parcel of politicians. So again, the king may be a dissipated and foolish specimen, but 'The King', with a big K, remains in full authority."

Robinson goes beyond most egoists to analyze why authority exists. He finds that authority, embodied in the State, is the instrument of a privileged few to maintain the "Property" system, and exploit the many who surrender their autonomy in the belief that authority is well disposed towards them and is taking care of them (it sure is!). In a brilliant economic analysis Robinson outlines the dynamics of the Property system. (Property defined as "the privilege of getting more than is given"). This system, through the monopolization of money and land and special protections and franchises, does not allow labour to buy back its full product and hence must ultimately take recourse to economic expansion to find ways to sell its products to keep the system going. (Such modern-day outlets include planned obsolescence; the production of useless and destructive - but highly "consumable" - military hardware and the holy causes necessary to justify such spending in the eyes of the people; and the present U.S./Soviet/China detente which is just an expansion of the U.S. economy).

Robinson goes on to examine how a stateless society could peacefully solve difficulties:

"But, you will urge, we must have rules of some kind, and as

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soon as we have rules, we have government. Not at all. You may have any number of rules, but no government. The difference is this: The rules of a free society need no enforcement; they appeal to the commonsense of all. If anybody fails to observe them, he suffers inconvenience - that is all. Thus, at present, there is no 'law' requiring people to keep to the right when walking in the street, and there is no penalty for anyone who keeps to the left; only he is jostled by the crowd going in the opposite direction. *

"In the same way the whole 'law' of contracts can be abolished, while the validity of contracts is still fully recognized. Only there will be no way of 'enforcing' them. No sheriff will be able to seize the goods of a defaulter in order to enforce a contract: the only penalty will be that people will be very shy of making any more contracts with him, and, if he defaults often, he will find it impossible to do business."

Perhaps there would be more crimes of violence than Robinson would admit to. That these might necessitate a violent response in no way makes necessary a recourse to authority, which is necessary to defend abstract, sacred ideas of society and right, but not the individual whose own sense of self-ownership is the best defence. The authority-violence alternative of the social contract theorists is largely a fiction utilized by governments to justify themselves. The violence quelled by governments - war and civil strife - is violence created by government in the first place, as Robinson (and all schools of anarchists) pointed out. The economic exploitation and usurpation of individual and local autonomy made possible by national-state monopolization of economic and cultural life leads to poverty and the sense of powerlessness that pushes individuals to common crime to obtain income, or violent rebellion to obtain freedom and a sense of control over one's life. The refusal of persons to surrender their autonomy to government would sweep away impoverishing conditions that make violence seem necessary. With the end of government, Robinson maintains, a new spirit of brotherhood based on liberty would raise the conditions of the poor, and free people from oppressive cultural norms.

The issue that faces the realistic anarchist today is whether the optimism of Robinson can be justified given the course of world events since he wrote "Rebuilding the World". Actually, to name the issue is to settle it: Robinson's optimism, if not then in the early 1900's, is today dangerously delusory. Very few persons since his time have thrown off the yoke of authority; rather, more and more we have seen a downward plunge into the oblivion of mass society following two-faced leaders with double-meaning slogans.

What is the cause of the surrender of individual autonomy? Why is it that very few ever discover, to begin with, their autonomy, their own-ness? The answer to these questions, I submit, lies in the nature of the parent-child relationship. The prolonged state of dependency of the child upon the parent (a personal parent or, as in "primitive" societies, a communal one) allows the parent to

** But common sense does not prevent enough people from dumping garbage on the roads. J.Z.*

exploit this dependency by making respect for authority the price of physical and emotional care: "life and love", in other words. The child, learning very quickly that the only way to obtain what he or she needs is to suppress natural self-expression ("children should be seen and not heard"), quickly succumbs to the intolerable, shuts down his/her budding ego-consciousness, and places the desires, value-judgements, and eventually (for the sake of consistency and sanity) the very perceptions of the authorities (parents and later parent-figures, e.g. schoolteachers) in place of autonomous, biologically-rooted desires, and subjectively unique experiences of the authentic self. As the years go by, the person extends this authority-submission to all parent-figures (bosses, politicians, gurus, etc.) in hopes of gaining denied parental love, and a lost sense of truth and meaning to life (having surrendered his capacity to perceive the truth and create personal meaning out of existence). Perhaps, more simply, once having been socialized into accepting authority, the person knows of no other way of operating in the world except via the directives of not-to-be-questioned hierarchies.

From this point of view it is pleasantly surprising that anyone has been able to go through the long dependency stage and not succumb to authority. Some, like Christ, reject the authority of biological parents and family ties only to replace them with an abstract or deified parent ("....he who does the will of my Father in Heaven is my mother, brother, and sister...."). God is the ultimate symbol for the "sacred" demands of society to keep one's ego suppressed. Most rebellions against some particular authority make this appeal to a higher, transcendental authority, and in this sense are false rebellions.

The child is born into society and does not voluntarily join it, nor does the child have the choice of parents. No society allows the child to run away from cruel parents; the state ultimately decides who is to be the owner of the child; or in communal non-statist societies, the commune itself is the parent and owner. This is in the nature of things, and nothing - neither genetics nor behaviourism - can alter the natural dependency of the child upon society. Parents are merely the first representatives of society the child knows, and tools of the larger society in the perpetuation and indoctrination of new members of the society.

While not denying the desirability of a society without special privileges, or the determining role of the economic structure upon the political, ideological superstructure, it will not do to hope with Marx and other social revolutionaries for a humanization of authority or a society without class hierarchies. The strongest (but still weak) hope for a non-authoritarian society lies in parents being aware enough not to invoke authority, backed by need-deprivation or cruelty, as a means to cripple the naturally egoistic impulses of their children. Perhaps parents have too much of an unconscious need to get revenge for their own repressed egos to expect them not to "take it out on the kids". The child, if left to discover the natural consequences of his/her various experimental, and often

destructive, actions upon the environment will mature very quickly with a sense of self-control and self-ownership - yet not losing the child-like eagerness to discover the whole of life, to push back all boundaries to knowledge and creative action. The "perfect personality", then, as defined by Oscar Wilde, is "one who develops under perfect conditions, who is not wounded, maimed, or in danger". The only role of the parent is to see that the child is protected from irreparable harm; and to offer sustenance and love with no strings attached, i.e. without enslaving the child's personality to a dependency upon parental authority. *And other children & the parents & other adults!* J.Z.

It is in this area, then, that much work needs to be done by the lovers of human individuality and personality - the true individualists who do not seek to fit all persons into molds of their ideas of what persons or individualists should be. Children brought up to be wounded and maimed psychically by their parents and teachers (also psychic cripples) can only produce a society of mutual fear, political repression, and authority-worship. If a "free society" is at all possible, it will only be because of the development and influence of truly free individuals. The current vogue of "consciousness-raising" among the various liberation movements, particularly the women's and gay movements, might prove somewhat effective in checking the ego-denying demands society places upon the individual. The repression of natural sexual desires (sanctions against homosexuality, for instance) and the imposition of sexually priented roles (such as the subservient housewife) are two sides of the same coin. Alteration of sexual patterns in a more liberating direction will be one foundation upon which the liberation of the dependent child will be built. *As usual, the psychological approach denies the effect of the wrong ideas & institutions (compulsory schooling, prohibition of child labour).* J.Z.

The only way parents will not lord it over their children is by having respect for their children not as property, but as persons in their own right. Parents will have to refrain from categorizing their children according to how they must fulfill the expectations of society, especially in the fields of sexual expression and proper "vocation". Here we have before us a basic difference between an anarchist-individualist such as Stirner or Thoreau, and the authoritarian-individualist such as Ayn Rand or Murray Rothbard. The typical Randian fetish for a categorized world - or, rather, fear of an uncategorized, "unobjective", world - expresses itself in the excessive value given by Objectivism to ranking order as a means of classifying persons. Not only is the ego defined as a fragment of the whole person (the "rational faculty"); the ego, the person, is also categorized, by means of competition, in a hierarchy with all other egos in reference to their relative (although Randians would assert "absolute") value to society, i.e. consumers (in practice, the powers-that-be, or a mass society). What Rand and Rothbard (author of several defences of "natural" aristocracies) fail to see is that the market only rewards those who satisfy the needs and whims of others, those who become willing slaves or commodities on the market - so much for the individualism of laissez-faire capitalism. *When they ACT like personalities of rather than newly invading barbarians.* J.Z.

The truly free person, on the other hand, seeks to satisfy

As if aggressive, destructive & careless actions needed no restraints. J.Z.

his or her own needs, as Stirner would say, "get value" out of one's self; extending this need-satisfaction to others, not slavishly on the market, but personally - i.e. with the persons one truly holds valuable, in full freedom, retaining self-ownership.

The person's unique identity is beyond definition or comparison (objective or otherwise). The self is self-experienced and self-defined. You cannot define the self of another because you cannot experience that self. The self is that factor of life who experiences actions, thoughts, emotions - but is not these actions, thoughts and emotions; the self is purely subjective, not objective. When I experience another person I experience his or her actions; I can never experience that unquantifiable factor of the personality called the experiencer because it is the pure subject, non-object, or "Creative Nothing" of Stirner. Hence the self, ego, or subject is beyond all definition and classification.

On the other hand, the ego expresses its existence in the world by giving rise to desires, emotions, thoughts and actions. Not actually the self, these factors and the biological machinery needed to express them, are the property of the self. To the degree that the self is experienced as self, one's self becomes an object of experience, becomes one's property - and the self becomes then a self-owner, autonomous in consciousness. Further, the objective self experienced as "property", becomes "consumed" by, and thus transformed into, the subjective self once again (Stirner).

Most persons, however, do not experience life this way. They cannot distinguish self as subjective experience from self as objective actor (or, rather, reactor). They live lives, for reasons recounted earlier, automatically programmed to fulfill superficial, socially imposed needs - so as to keep any self-consciousness from ever surfacing. As I have pointed out, the grip of authority, the stifling of autonomy, begins at the earliest age, and explains why there are not more autonomous individuals in the world.

It does not appear likely that we will ever see a general emancipation of individuals from authority because the process of repression is nearly foolproof and tends to perpetuate itself (authority-fixed parents cannot but help to pass their mental-categories on to their children). That some have achieved emancipation in the absence of "perfect conditions" as Wilde points out as necessary, does not mean that all or even many more will arrive at a non-conditioned consciousness. One must question if such a thing is at all possible!

Many have claimed to be free, and some appear actually to have been (from the passive Buddha and Tolstoi to the violent Stirner and Nietzsche). Well known figures who have defied society's conventions are exceptions to the rule, accidents in the social scheme of things. Yet I wonder at the many times "accidents" have changed the course of biological evolution and human history. As the geneticists have reason to believe, it is the accidental mutation, in combination

with conditions favourable for the survival of the mutation, that has led to the development of more self-conscious forms of life. Perhaps social conditions are now, given the opportunity for creative leisure and freedom from toil, supportive for the success of consciousness-raising and liberating.(1) It is this opposition to the rules and belief in the exception to the rule, that makes anarchist-individualism relevant to the present human condition.

(1) But if free individuals do not find themselves and aid themselves now the conditions of economic collapse and the political repression of subsequent rebellion are also ripe and will destroy the only optimism we have for personal liberty.

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BOOK REVIEW

by Stephen Marletta

("Zuluito: The Mini-Missionary" by Errico Arrigoni. Pp. 296. Edizioni Gruppo Anarchico L'Iconoclasta. Price Lire 2,000. Order and Payments to Franco Leggio, Via S. Francesco, 238, 97100, Ragusa, Italy.)

I can think of many iconoclastic works, but few as enjoyable as Arrigoni's "Zuluito". His creation takes place in the Congo in the year 1884, and is about a black youth who is found as an infant in a bush and reared by nuns of a Catholic Mission who believe him to be the miraculous presence of a black cherub. After a series of events - some of which would make good cinema comedy - he seeks to enlighten and christianize his closest and dearest friends, the animals of the jungle (personified but not humanized), by daily readings from the book of Genesis.

The banal considerations of the animals reduce the message to a concatenation of grotesque incongruities. Piece by piece the edifice crumbles, but steadfast remains the faith and innocence of the Mini-Missionary who carries on undaunted to their purification by collective corporeal immersion in water - which is accepted without conviction and ends in farce.

Zuluito appeals to Malmostosa, the cat (p. 293) to be an example for others to follow. Malmostosa is made to say:

"Dear Zuluito, my brother! I love you very much for your sincerity and for the goodness of your heart in trying to save me from the flames of hell. But I would be lying if I said that I believe. Maybe my character is not all sweetness and at times it is degraded enough, I admit, but I can't be a hypocrite pretending to believe that which I don't believe, not even for fear of Lucifer and his hell-fire! If God existed as related in that book, then I would say that he is a monster or a fool, who in creating the world did not know what he was doing, or did not have the power to make it different. That book speaks of the misdeeds of man, but what of the misdeeds of God?

"First, to create a stupid world that does not make sense. Second, having the power of perfection, his work was that of a novice producing all the imperfections imaginable. Third, creating an animal world of cruelty whilst having the power to create harmony. Fourth, the ultimate insult of creating suffering when he should have solely created joy! And even if it were not his intention to create suffering, the fact remains that he permitted it, and having the power to prevent it renders him culpable. This demonstrates that the God of that book, if omnipotent, is not is not all-loving. That is why, to be sincere with myself, I cannot play in the comedy of being a Christian. Simply because I do not believe that book is sacred. It is either a collection of fables or of falsehoods."

Topolino, the mouse, says: "Although we are hereditary enemies, Malmostosa, at this moment I have a liking for you for I admire sincerity. Malmostosa reasons well. Why should we get wet if that book was written solely for a laugh?"

Others are heard to say: "I don't feel like a dip in the river." "When the sun shines the water will get warm."

Holding his head, Zuluito in desolation cries: "Lucifer has won!"

"Not true, not true, dear Zuluito," consoles Orecchione the ass, "If the others do not wish to be baptised, I want to become a Christian. With me you have triumphed over the Devil!". And he courageously jumps into the river, shivers when he makes contact with the water, and defends himself against the cold by jumping up and down and braying tremendously

In the words of Carmelo R. Viola in his preface to the book, Arrigoni has written a work of "undoubted artistic and didactic value."

November 1974.

(Note - Arrigoni's book is in the Italian language. Ed.)

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BOOK REVIEW

by S.E.Parker

(THE WILL TO BONDAGE - Discours de la Servitude volontaire - by Etienne de la Boetie. Edited, with Annotations and an Introduction, by Wm. Flygare. Preface by James J. Martin. 134pp. Published by Ralph Myles, Inc., Box 1533, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80901, U.S.A. 3 dollars and 25 cents)

Etienne de la Boetie was born at Sarlat, France, on November 1, 1530. His father was an assistant to the governor of the Perigord District. He died at an early age, leaving his son in the charge of his uncle, the cure of Bouillonas, who had him educated at the College of Guyenne and then at the University of Orleans where he took a Law Degree in 1553. A year later de la Boetie became a counsellor at the Bordeaux Parliament, and from there went on to be the Mayor of Bordeaux and an army aide-de-campe. He died on August 18, 1563.

De la Boetie is mainly remembered for two things: his great friendship with the famous French philosopher-essayist Michel de Montaigne, and his authorship, at the age of 18 years, of the Discours de la Servitude volontaire, a pioneering analysis of the relationship between the tyrant and the tyrannised.

Under the title of The Will to Bondage, this analysis has now

been re-issued in its original and unabridged first English translation of 1735. It constitutes No. 6 in the Libertarian Broadside Series, whose previous titles include works by Max Stirner, John Badcock, Jr., James L. Walker, Benj. Tucker and Lyman Spooner.

Taking as his standpoint the words of Shakespeare that

"The fault, dear Brutus,
Is not in our stars,
But in ourselves
That we are underlings."

de la Boetie lays the blame for the existence of tyranny squarely upon the tyrannised:

"It is the People who enslave themselves, who cut their own throats; Who having the choice of being Vassals or Freeman, reject their Liberty, and submit to the Yoke; who consent to their own Evil, or rather procure it."

The results of this "will to bondage" are clear:

"Poor and miserable Creatures, People infatuated, Nations obstinate in your own Evil, and blind to your own Good, You permit the finest and clearest of your Revenues to be carried off before your eyes, your fields to be pillaged, your Houses to be robbed and despoiled of your antient and paternal Furniture."

Here de la Boetie anticipated the argument later developed by such diverse thinkers as Godwin, Stirner and Tolstoy, that which makes the ruler is the submission of the ruled. Like them he concludes that as the ruled gave the rulers their power they can render them powerless by refusing obedience:

"You might deliver yourselves from so many Indignities, which the Beasts themselves, if they felt them, would not endure, if you had but the Will to attempt it. Resolve not to obey and you are free. I do not advise to shake or overturn him (the tyrant), forbear only to support him, and you will see him like a great Colossus, from which the Basis is taken away, fall with his own Weight, and be broken in pieces."

As to how the ruled can be persuaded to abandon their "will to bondage", however, de la Boetie has no cogent answer. He claims that "The natural Disposition of Men is to be free, and to desire to be so." If this were the case then one could wonder why treatises like this needed to be written. De la Boetie's argument rings rather hollow when one looks without illusions at the overwhelming historical evidence of the persistence of "most people" in seeking the seductive warmth of one or another governed herd. It would be truer to say that every generation contains some individuals who

want to live their own, self-determined lives and thus come into inevitable conflict with both the rulers and the ruled. But there is no reason to suppose that these individuals will be ever more than a small, if fluctuating, minority. Perhaps one cannot blame an eighteen year old romantic for not seeing this. Had he done so we might have been deprived of what is, despite its flaws, a penetrating and perspicacious polemic.

Wm. Flygare has done a painstaking and meticulous job of editing, enlivened with some inimitable comments. By paralleling the English translation with the original French text he has enabled the most finickity-minded to check the former against the latter, and his annotations and introduction are such that enough clues are provided for even the most curious to follow references to their various and multitudinous sources. His version should be the standard one for years to come and should place de la Boetie on the political-philosophical map once and for all.

James J. Martin's preface brilliantly places de la Boetie's essay in the context of the problems facing present day individualists. Utopia-mongers and professional libertarian optimists will find it extremely distasteful, even if they can bring themselves to read it. But for those of us who prefer to look at the world with an "undazzled gaze", it will serve to confirm the validity of that struggle described by Benjamin de Casseres:

"The perpetual and unrelenting warfare of Horatius Cocles, the eternal Individualist, against the Etruscans and their Lars Porsennas - always the advancing Slavery!"

I rather hold that most people find themselves caught in a labyrinth or network of popular myths, errors & prejudices - as long as XXX XXX XXX no systematical effort is made to collect all of them & to confront them with their best refutations so far found - & as long as SOME EPIGRAMS OF NORMAN DOUGLAS as such, a refutation encyclopaedia is not made portable & cheap enough for all interested in it.

The idealistic male with his cult of principles is the curse of Europe. He will die for his principles; no harm in that. He will persecute others for his principles, and this is what makes him such a nuisance. *J.2. 19.8.97.*

Christians are only an anaemic variety of Jews.

We live but once; we owe nothing to posterity; and a man's own happiness counts before that of anyone else.

Morality is the property of the crowd. It bears an inscription that damns it for all purposes of art: Connu!

Distrust of authority should be the first civic duty.

I always feel as if I needed a bath after talking about religion.

Public opinion is a public nuisance.

Apart from the encyclopaedia on lacking: Ideas archive, comprehensive Slogans for Liberty comp. follow. Collections of the most persuasive writings, freedom bibliographies, abstracts, indexes, directories & calendars of local events & educational events. Not J.2. 19.8.97.

MINUS ONE is edited and published by S.E.Parker, 186 Gloucester Terrace, London, W.2. England. Due to increased costs - mainly postal - the subscription for six issues is now 80p (US\$2.75). Will overseas subscribers please send international money orders when possible. This saves paying bank rip-offs for collecting cheques. Please make out all money orders and cheques to S.E.Parker.

ENDPIECE ON SOME ANARCHIST POPEs

by Egoist

Albert Meltzer has an article on "Anarchism In West Scotland" in the April issue of The Black Flag. Referring to Glasgow during World War 2 he states:

"There were two very brilliant speakers Jimmy Raeside and Eddie Shaw. Their views on anarchism were original: they described themselves as Conscious Egoists and Stirnerites, but rejected the bourgeois individualism often associated with these ideas."

Just what the "bourgeois individualism" was that Raeside and Shaw rejected Meltzer does not specify. His use of the dreaded word "bourgeois" is no doubt sufficient to convince the faithful to think no further. I doubt if anarchist individualists will lose any sleep over their being so labelled, but the use of the term in such a way is typical of Black Flag argumentation which is by way of intimidation rather than reason.

Indeed, it seems that the egalitarian democrats who run Black Flag regard themselves as guardians of the one true revolutionary faith since they are forever anathematizing those they consider to have strayed from the path they lay down. Thus editors of rival papers have been denounced as "non-violent fascists" (Jack Robinson of Freedom) or fifth columnists "who can be used by the State in repressive court cases" (Fred Woodworth of The Match!) In fact, their quarrel with the latter has gone so far that they have demanded (March issue) that "outside contributors and subscribers to Match (sic) must consider their position urgently as they will need to justify their association with that journal"!

From time to time I contribute to The Match! Now I am supposed to justify my "association with that journal". What moralizing hogwash is this? I am under no obligation to "justify" my association with any journal to anyone. I hope that other contributors to The Match! will join me in telling such would-be popes of "anarchism" just where to stick their demands.....

It only remains to add that the April issue contains some words of praise for that prime example of totalitarian collectivism: Nechaev's "Revolutionary Catechism". Nechaev was an authoritarian par excellence. A rather odd person to receive an accolade from a professed "anarchist" journal! I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT