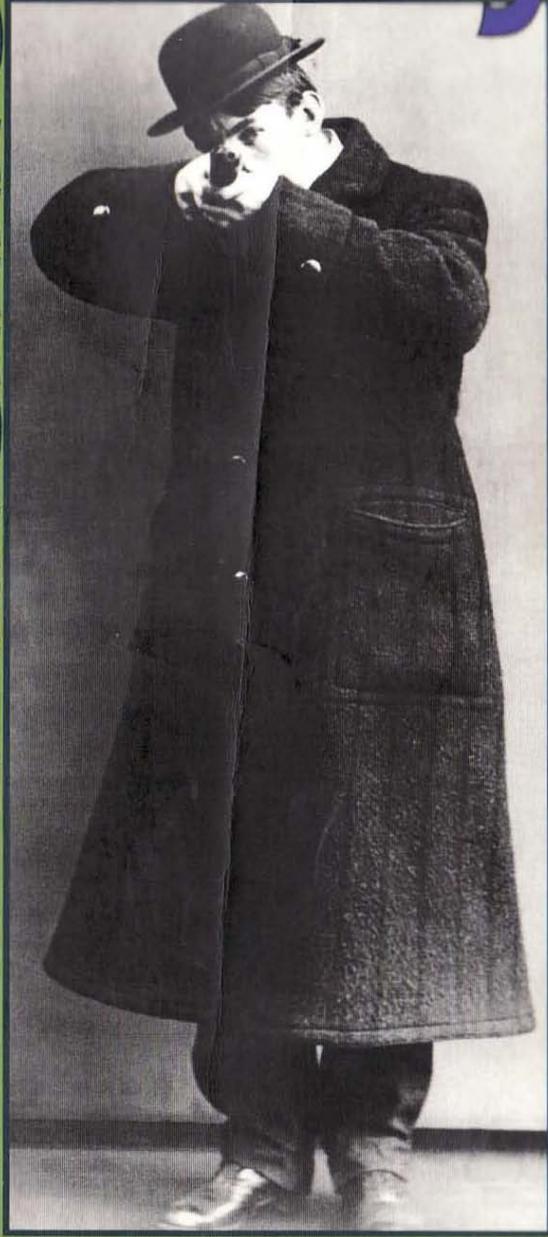


Enemies^{of} Society:



An Anthology of Individualist & Egoist Thought

Enemies of Society:
an anthology of
individualist &
egoist thought

Image on cover is of André Soudy, a member of the so-called Bonnot Gang, or Auto Bandits, notorious illegalists connected with the individualist anarchist magazine, *L'Anarchie*. He was one of three members who when caught, refused to ask for clemency and was guillotined.

Enemies of Society
Ardent Press, 2011

licensed under creative commons



Ardent Press is a group engaged in research,
publishing, and local projects.

For more information, please visit ardentpress.org/copyright

This book is set in Book Antiqua, Candara,
Concorde, Jaeger Daily News, Nofret, and Segoe UI

Printed in Canada

Table of Contents

Preamble: First Blood	v
1, Rejecting the Stamp of Group Approval: <i>first wave individualists in the US and Europe</i>	
James L. Walker: A Unique One	2
What is Justice? <i>by James L. Walker</i>	3
On Rights, <i>by James L. Walker</i>	6
Stirner on Justice, <i>by Tak Kak</i>	7
Selfhood Terminates Blind Man's Bluff, <i>by Tak Kak</i>	11
Egoism in Sexual Relations, <i>by Tak Kak</i>	14
Egoism, <i>by John Beverley Robinson</i>	15
Biographical note: John Beverley Robinson	18
The Land of the Altruists: a parable for the infant class, <i>by John Beverly Robinson</i>	19
Posterity: the New Superstition, <i>by Benjamin De Casseres</i>	21
Zo d'Axa's Heresy	25
Individualism, <i>by Pierre Chardon</i>	32
Biographical note: Pierre Chardon	34
What do the Individualists Want? <i>by The "Reveil De L'Esclave" Group of Paris</i>	35
Renzo Novatore—Outlaw Anarchist, <i>by Daniel Giraud</i>	37
Iconoclasts, Forward!	39
Cry of Rebellion, <i>by Renzo Novatore</i>	40
In the Kingdom of the Spooks, <i>by Renzo Novatore</i>	47
Biographical note: Renzo Novatore	49
The Bonnot Gang: A Reminiscence, <i>by E. Bertran</i>	51
Notes on Individualism, <i>by E. Bertran</i>	55
Three European Inividualists: some notes on Armand, Martucci, and Novatore, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	59
Individualist Perspectives, <i>by E. Armand</i>	65

Is the Anarchist Ideal Realizable? <i>by E. Armand</i>	69
Biographical note: E. Armand	68
An Introduction to E. Armand; what he was for, what he was against, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	73
E. Armand: sexual liberationist, <i>by Catherine Campousy</i>	78
Letter to E. Armand, <i>by América Scarfó</i>	86
On Sexual Equality: Edward Carpenter & Oscar Wilde, <i>by E. Armand</i>	90
Individual Differences: my polemic with E. Armand, <i>by Enzo da Villafore</i>	97
In Praise of Chaos, <i>by Enzo Martucci</i>	102
<i>Manifesto dei Fuorigregge</i>	107
Individualist-Anarchism, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	111

2. Rebels Building Dreams:

second wave individualists reflect on their predecessors

John Henry Mackay's Appreciation of Stirner	116
poem: Anarchy, <i>by John Henry Mackay</i>	121
poem: To Max Stirner, <i>by John Henry Mackay</i>	121
Biographical note: John Henry Mackay	124
John Henry Mackay, <i>by E. Armand</i>	128
The Anarchists, <i>by Jim Kernochan</i>	131
<i>Men against the State: the expositors of individualist anarchism in America, 1827—1908,</i> a review <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	136
Pioneering Egoist Texts, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	139
The Influence of Tucker's Ideas in France, <i>by E. Armand</i>	145
Stirner on Education, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	149
Voltairine de Cleyre, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	153

3. Smashing Fossils:

individualists & egoists critique leftism and its heritage

Anarchism vs Socialism, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	158
---	-----

Social Totalitarianism, <i>by Francis Ellingham</i>	162
Stirner, Marx, and Fascism, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	166
Enzo Martucci on Communism	171
4. Savage Summit: egoist perspectives on Nietzsche	
Nietzsche, <i>by Enzo Martucci</i>	176
Notes on Stirner & Nietzsche, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	181
Stirner on Nietzsche, <i>by J.N. Figgis</i>	185
Stourzh on Stirner and Nietzsche, <i>by Herbert Stourzh</i>	187
Nietzsche: Antichrist? <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	190
5. A Maze to Trap the Living: society & the unique one	
Anarchism and Individualism, <i>by Georges Palante</i>	199
Biographical note: Georges Palante	212
Anarchism, Society, and the Socialized Mind, <i>by Francis Ellingham</i>	213
A Note on Authority, <i>by Enzo Martucci</i>	226
A Letter to a Friend, <i>by Laurance Labadie</i>	227
Superstition and Ignorance vs Courage and Self-Reliance, <i>by Laurence Labadie</i>	233
Joseph Labadie: Archivist, Poet	235
poem: Imperialism, <i>by Joseph Labadie</i>	236
Some Notes on Anarchism and the Proletarian Myth, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	237
Enemies of Society: An Open Letter to the Editors of <i>Freedom</i> , <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	244
Anarchism, Individualism, and Society: Some Thoughts, <i>by Scepticus</i>	249
Anarchy and History: An Existentialist View, <i>by N.A.W.</i>	252
Freedom and Solitude, <i>by Marilisa Fiorina</i>	257
The Morality of Cooperation, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	259
In Defence of Stirner, <i>by Enzo Martucci</i>	262
Enzo Martucci: Italian Lightbearer	277

Brief Statements, <i>by Renzo Ferrari</i>	282
Malfew Seklew: The Jester Philosopher of Egoism, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	283
Brand: An Italian Anarchist and His Dream, <i>by Peter Lamborn Wilson</i>	287
Down with Civilization, <i>by Enrico Arrigoni (aka Frank Brand)</i>	325
My Anarchism, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	330
Appendix A:	
Archists, Anarchists and Egoists, <i>by S.E. Parker</i>	335
Flaming Resurrections of a Charred Alphabet (a glossary of basic terms)	340
To Sketch the Echo and To Paint the Link! (a reading list)	372

Preamble: Drawing First Blood

by Meme, Myself and I

*I have no ancestors! For me the creation of the world dates from the day of my birth; for me the end of the world will be accomplished on the day when I shall restore to the elementary mass the apparatus and the afflatus which constitute my individuality. I am the first man, I shall be the last. My history is the complete result of humanity; I know no other, I care to know no other. When I suffer, what good do I get from another's enjoyment? When I enjoy, in what do those who suffer detract from my pleasures? Of what consequence to me is that which happened before me? How am I concerned in what will happen after me? It is not for me to serve as a sacrifice to respect for extinct generations, or as an example to posterity. I confine myself within the circle of my existence, and the only problem that I have to solve is that of my welfare. I have but one doctrine, that doctrine has but one formula, that formula has but one word: ENJOY! Sincere is he who confesses it; an imposter is he who **denies it**.*

This is bare individualism, native egoism; I do not deny it, I confess it, I verify it, I boast of it. Show me, that I may question him, the man who would reproach and blame me. Does my egoism do you any harm? If you say no, you have no reason to object to it, for I am free in all that does not injure you. If you say yes, you are a thief, for, my egoism being only the simple appropriation of myself by myself, an appeal to my identity, an affirmation of my individuality, a protest against all supremacy, if you admit that you are damaged by my act in taking possession of myself, by my retention of my own person—that is, the least disputable of my properties—you will declare thereby that I belong to you, or, at least, that you have designs on me; you are an owner of men, either established as such or intending to be, a monopolist, a coveter of another's person, a thief.

There is no middle ground; either right lies with egoism, or it lies with theft; either I belong to myself, or I become the possession of someone else. It cannot be said that I should sacrifice myself for the good of all, since, all having to similarly sacrifice themselves, no one would gain more

by this stupid game than he had lost, and consequently each would remain destitute—that is, without profit, which clearly would make such sacrifice absurd. If, then, the abnegation of all cannot be profitable to all, it must of necessity be profitable to a few; these few, then, are the possessors of all, and are probably the very ones who will complain of my egoism.

Every man is an egoist; whoever ceases to be one becomes a thing. He who pretends it is not necessary to be one is a sly thief.

Oh, yes, I know, the word has an ugly sound; so far you have applied it to those who are not satisfied with what belongs to them, to those who take to themselves what belongs to others; but such people are in accord with human impulse; you are not. In complaining of their rapacity, do you know what you do? You establish your own imbecility. Hitherto you have believed there were tyrants. Well, you are mistaken: there are only slaves. Where nobody obeys nobody commands.

Anselme Bellegarigue, 1850

The history of civilization is the search for Utopia, the pursuit of a static, idealized social form where all individuality and variation is melted into the crucible of one unifying belief system. It has been a millennia-long military campaign to contain all within a single structure, where constant sameness is the ideal, to absorb and convert the outsiders who venture within the charmed circle, and to flatten and standardize life by entangling all of us in the spider web of an abstract social contract. The civilizing process itself—that is, domestication—is part and parcel of the utopian project, as it attempts to perfect and re-engineer the vital forces of the self-exalting individual, to turn humans—who are a self-centered mixture of hate and gentleness, violence and peace, greed and generosity—into masked animals who feel shame for all that is biological and natural, to render them internally fragmented, divided, and broken (and hence, more amenable to control). To accomplish this, society invents ideas and images to cover those instincts it considers in need of taming; it formulates various ideologies to convince its subjects that selfishness is wrong and should be suppressed, and that the healthy egoistic impulses of a free man or woman must be denied expression in the interests of group-stability. From the ideal republic of Plato to the ideal republic of Lenin, civilization has produced unquantifiable, competing visions of Utopia that each vie for mastery,

and that each bear identifiable similarities: They are routinely masked under philanthropic guises, and they all advocate the absorption of the individual into the social body—often (and almost satirically) in the name of “collective freedom”.

The sole utopian current that explicitly asserts the sovereignty of the individual is anarchism, certainly the most paradoxical of the “isms” because it insists on absolute individual and collective freedom. From these shared propositions have emerged the unavoidable dilemmas: how to synthesize complete individual freedom with social identification and a strong sense of social responsibility? Is self-determination compatible with any kind of social contract? And more pointedly, do most people even want the unconditional freedom that anarchism, in its more glorious and inspired moments, postulates? These are the questions that have always checkmated anarchists who engage in large-scale social planning. They start out talking about anarchy and end up advocating some particularly weak version of direct democracy.

But how could it be otherwise? Every attempt to free humanity en masse is bound to fail because collective self-determination is a contradiction in terms. There is no such thing as the common good, for there is no good that is common to all. Society, collective, and public are only convenient terms to designate individuals in the aggregate; they are not entities—they have no bodies, minds, interests, or real existence: A collective has no self, and is but a collection of selves who have waived their individual powers and will to self-determination, for what is claimed to be the interests of the majority. The price paid for collective unity is *always* the subordination of the member units, which is the antithesis of anarchy (as we understand it). The ideal Free Society of autonomous but federated collectives that Social Anarchists envision (The AK Press version of anarchy) differs very little from the state capitalist reality of autonomous but interlocking corporations: in both cases individual sovereignty is fettered and repressed so that collective mediocrity may flourish. Beyond the fact that this federation-model constitutes one of the most boring and narrow images of what liberation might mean that it’s possible for the human mind to conceive, the very desire for individual difference—or uniqueness—is destined to be held competitive and dangerous to the egalitarian (or inevitably, hierarchical) solidarity of these federations and communes, and the anarchist Mass utopia, if it were ever implemented (which it won’t be), would inescapably become a reign of stagnancy, servility, and conformity. It’s difficult to regard collectivist anarchists as anarchists at *all*, since they simply want to turn over what amounts to State power to their communes and federations and to promote party lines and group

think in the interest of a fraudulent solidarity—And woe betide anyone who dissents from the collective plan or decision!

That this concern is not mere boogey-man scaremongering is borne out by a critical examination of what many consider the pivotal moment in anarchist history, the Spanish Civil War (and specifically the practices of the falsely titled *anarcho-syndicalist* CNT, which has been outrageously glorified in innumerable studies, and which actually had a brief opportunity to try to implement their utopia). Regarding syndicalist federalism, in “What is the CNT?,” Jose Peirats ominously records that “Federation always implies freedom and self-government of the federated bodies, but this does not mean their independence.” And this is spelt out even more clearly in the *Rule Book of the CNT*, in which its constitution is described. Here we are told that in the CNT “We recognize the sovereignty of the individual, but we accept and agree to carry out the collective mandate taken by majority decision”. This clause is reinforced by others, which state that “anarcho-syndicalism and anarchism recognize the validity of majority decisions” and that “the militant... is obliged to comply with majority decisions even when they are against his own feelings”! This constitution was operative when the CNT was a minority organization in opposition. What its application would have meant when the CNT had taken “over the tasks of production and distribution after the revolution” is not hard to guess—at best, a theoretically democratic federalism; at worst, an economic totalitarianism. In either case it would not be anarchy.

It only remains to add that the Spanish syndicalist de Santillan saw one of the roles of the syndicalist federal economic council as the distribution of Labor from one region to another, which gives us a picture of the syndicalist new order that is rather different from an anarchist vision of a liberated world. Needless to say, we’re not told by these social saviors what would happen to Labor that refused to be distributed according to the orders of de Santillan’s “directed and planned socialized economy,” but it becomes pretty apparent that the syndicalists just wanted to replace the State with an industrial organization every bit as opposed to self sovereignty—and this observation applies equally to the utopian schemes of the so-called libertarian socialists and anarcho-communists, with their mechanized, efficient picture of social perfection (essentially just another form of the Leftist workers paradise).

If history and the record of every collectivist experiment large and small prove anything it is the staggering—in fact insurmountable—difficulties and complexities of such a proposed mass organization. What happens to those individuals who don’t wish to be planned,

who don't like the jobs assigned to them by their fellow workers, and who wish to exist outside the purview of the absolute power of these workers councils? Or how about those who don't wish to be citizens but to be free of citizen-hood, to escape from statehood (regardless of what it's called), those who desire to secede from this fancied, singular entity called society? What happens when an absolutely total unanimity doesn't reign in the federated pyramid of workers councils, when separations don't magically disappear, and some individuals find the plans and democratic decisions of others not to their liking? The common ownership ideal of these left-anarchists would make Society or Humanity the new proprietor, the new lord-god. And if Society is the owner, then everyone is owned by Society and must suffer its dictation.

Anarchy is freedom, and this most assuredly includes the freedom not to be a socialist or to live like one, and the freedom not to limit one's identity to any social role—especially that of worker. It's the freedom not to participate in communal activities or to share communal goals, or to pray before the idol of Solidarity. It's freedom not only from the rule of the State but also from that of the tribe, village, commune, or production syndicate. It's the freedom to choose one's own path to one's own goals, to map out one's own campaign against Authority, and, if desired, to go it alone.

Of course, anarcho-syndicalism is no longer a credible or even very active force, and only continues to linger around anarchist circles as a type of phantom belief, analogous to the syndrome of phantom limbs—a limb such as an arm or leg that someone no longer possesses, yet which still seems to be there, attached to the body, and continuing to cause pain or distraction. But the social forecasts of the anarcho-communists and anarcho-socialists (who, regrettably, are still with us) are actually not substantially different, in that they all envision something akin to this workers council model—an entirely leftist political structure, about which anarchists ought to be embarrassed. This extended intercourse with decayed leftist thinking is partly why anarchist theory has gone flabby, and helps clarify why so much important anarchist history has remained undocumented.

But anarchism, though a political or anti-political philosophy, is not a doctrine, and the anarchist theoretical spectrum, because it does (in the final analysis) stress freedom, has never become an ideology that is pure. Many anarchists have been doctrinaire, even dogmatic, but no single doctrine or school has ever encompassed more than a part of anarchist thought. Consequently, anarchism has also generated radically individualist currents that place the majesty of the free

individual first, foremost, and above all things—including society. Of course, it has to be admitted that these aren't the voices that generally appear in anarchist history books (which are in the main overshadowed by anarcho-communist perspectives), and when they *are* given space it's typically in the form of footnotes. Yet these remain some of the more wild, undomesticated, and disreputable voices in anarchist thought, the voices that embody the most radical qualities of the anarchist revolt—the “heart of the blast”, so to speak—and in them we catch gleams of the elemental and barbaric will to sovereignty that characterizes an unconquered individual. These are anarchists who don't confuse self-rule with social reform, the dethroning of authority with planning committee meetings, or insurgency with daydreaming. Their revolt springs from self-interest—a conscious egoism—but they're honest enough to admit it, without shame and without justifications.

From an individualist perspective, to speak of an anarchist politics is an absurdity. Politics is the science of how to organize a society, a collectivity (or town—*Polis*) and anarchism, taken to its furthest conclusions, is anti-collectivist. Anarchism is an individual way of engaging with the world, a rebellion against what is, a declaration of what should not be, not a prescription for what should be. The hypothesis of an organized collectivist tomorrow presages a ferocious struggle between the New Order and the individuals who are desirous of preserving their autonomy. Even in the most optimistic scenario—ie, an effort to forge a new culture based on anti-authoritarian principles—any post-revolutionary social grouping will inevitably tend to impose one ideological credo on its members and reignite the age-old struggle between the individual and society. Thus, individualist anarchists have no programme for anyone else—and quite often have no programme even for themselves!

Most individualist anarchists also accept that what is known as the State or government is not going to be abolished in some glorious collective revolution and that expecting this to happen is in the same class as expecting the oceans to turn into lemonade. They regard clinging to this eschatological fantasy as a wasteful fixation that renders anarchists not exceptionally different from the Christian who lives for heaven or the Muslim who lives for paradise: a mixing of religion (with its messianic tendencies) with social doctrine to make of anti-political aspirations and social revolt a prophetic affair—with promises of full-measured social salvation at hand, and a millennium around the left corner. Not only is the ideal of abolishing the State a theoretical whimsey under present circumstances, it's also impossible to pursue any ideal with single-minded determination without eventually becoming

enslaved to that ideal (and enslavement to ideals is slavery as much as is bondage to a physical master)—at which point the ideal becomes more of an enflamed hallucination than a critical engagement with the world as it is. If anything, in the dawn of the twenty first century, it seems reasonable to predict that Statism will continue to escalate on a dizzying scale and dimension, as environmental and population pressures intensify dependency on the infrastructure of mass society. It's one thing to see the State exactly for what it is, to at least avoid the disastrous error of mistaking it for a benefactor or mistaking its witless and oppressive orders for divine commands, to demystify and de-sanctify the State in one's own life and creatively outmanuever its attempts at control—but it's another matter entirely to attempt to confront the very real power of the State with vain, meaningless chest-thumping or to underestimate the support the State has among the presumably discontented masses. Ideological anarchists don't like to hear this, but the State continues to exist, not solely by violent conquest or deception, but because there is a demand for its services from the sheep habituated to governance.

Individualist anarchists/conscious egoists preach no holy war against the State because they're reflective enough to admit that they know of no way to get rid of the State—and that the problems of the State and organized society may, in fact, be intrinsically insoluble. If all political rule rests ultimately on the consent of the subject masses—and is cemented upon society by the laziness, cowardice, and stupidity of those same masses—then when the cataclysmic crises looming on the planetary horizon (such as environmental and economic meltdown) begin to occur, the masses will probably call for a new Caesar or Hitler (as they always do) to rescue them from the system-failure that traditional political forms are no longer capable of addressing. Fear, bolstered by the insidious throes of habit, is the mainspring of the Herd's every thought and action and even in the most opportune historical moments they have failed to establish anything approximating self-determination. This is just one of many flaws in the entire set of assumptions regarding authoritarian culture: Master-slave dynamics are a complex relationship between the governors and the governed, a mutually-reinforcing feedback loop between the legislators and the servile multitudes, inextricably bound together in an ancient and familiar holding pattern.

Taking this all into account, conscious egoists have no firm position on insurrection and retain tactical flexibility in the face of the realities of power, weighing the long and short run benefits of various forms of rebellion against the risks and costs, individually. If they lack the strength

in the moment to overthrow those forces that claim authority and/or demand compliance, they will evade them the best way they know how, put up with that part of it which is unavoidable, assert their sovereignty as often as they can, pursue liberation in realms other than the political, continually engage in cultural de-conditioning, and when all else fails take refuge in what James Joyce described as “silence, exile, and cunning”. Their egoistic victories come not in the form of revolutionary martyrdom, but in the successful creation of free lives, and at times, free culture.

All society-oriented versions of anarchism carry within them the ideological virus of utopianism, in that they posit individual liberation as conditional on the liberation of The Masses or The People. But to make my freedom conditional on the freedom of others is to turn me into their servant and to deny my self-ownership in favor of a masochistic, unattainable, altruistic ideal. By changing anarchism into a theoretical conception of an ideal free society—instead of an individualistic rejection of authority—the society-oriented anarchists then become obliged to convince others that Anarchy would work and begin drawing up diagrams for everything from anarchist trash collection to worker-owned sewage treatment plants. Moreover, in their zeal to prove that a stateless society—one without a government as we ordinarily recognize it—is practical, these socially preoccupied anarchists turn into incorrigible moralists obsessed with the desire to fix some objective standard for human behavior that will endure for all time. And, as with all other moralists, social anarchists delude themselves by thinking that what they wish to impose on others is “the will of the people” or “historically inevitable” or anything other than their own personal egoistic desires. This is not a criticism of selfishness at all, but of self-deception—and of self-defeating idealism, not self-serving realism. Moralists—whether religious, political or humanist—are unconscious egoists and they seek converts to their ideal conceptions, ie they seek willing slaves and fellow believers. Individualist anarchists, by contrast, are conscious egoists and seek allies and partners for mutually enjoyable adventures in subversion. They see it as indisputable that no government or ruling class could oppress anybody without the broad support of public opinion, and to imagine that most people are longing for the abolition of the hallowed institutions of authoritarian society is to live in a dream world. (Even the most disgruntled members of the populace are usually far from being anarchists.) History has shown that the sheep who accept the authority of their shepherds have always been the largest class, and so for individualist anarchists anarchy becomes not a future place, but a present state of mind, an individual denial of authority, not a future social practice. Their anarchism is not

■ matter of faith and rejects the sacrificial politics of social anarchism, which is predicated on pointless optimism, reward-less duty and the indefinite postponement of freedom: their anarchism is grounded in the clarity that sovereignty is only for those who want it and that one must comprehend and confront their own slavish conditioning before freedom timorously ventures within their reach. Individualist anarchists are more than willing to make use of a social revolution to further their own adventure, but always without any illusions regarding the Herd's atrocious track record and deep-seated fear of real freedom.

At this point it should be made clear that there's never been an anarchist individualist movement that has brought under one hat such unique personalities as Josiah Warren, Thoreau, Zo D'Axa, John Henry Mackay, James L. Walker and the countless other idiosyncratic thinkers who all developed wildly varied visions of anarchy. As its very name implies, individualist anarchism is a philosophy of a "plurality of possibilities" and if it's inconsistent at times, that very inconsistency allows endless space for growth, diversity, and mutation. Still, no intelligent discussion of individualist anarchism and/or conscious egoism can occur without first grappling with Max Stirner and his inflammatory, ground breaking work, *The Ego and His Own*, which is responsible for not only presenting the fundamentals, but also the implications of individualism. Highly controversial when first presented to the world in 1844, his book became the object of much shock and ridicule, most notably from Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, who revealed more about their own insecurities than anything else in their 300 pages of "repudiation"—a hysterical diatribe comprising more pages than Stirner's own work. The thick and thorough expressions of Stirner's writing starts early in the history of the machinations of society, and progresses with palpable passion into the most sublime workings of society over the individual, and by the end frees the individual from this morass. Like a grand dissociator of ideas, or a surgeon of illusions, Stirner makes a sacrilegious broth out of all the materials of human thought (particularly morality) and brews from them Nothing. Your dreams? Stirner skins them alive. Your God(s)? Stirner splits this phantasm into an infinite number of particles and hands you back a hatful of waste. Your cobweb-spinning idealisms? Stirner tears asunder the masks of self-deception and exposes all idealism as worship of the non-existent. To Stirner, belief of any kind is a species of hypnosis and he sloughs off dogma, codes, and ideology like snake-skin. The furious energy of Stirner's anti-metaphysical assault is both savage and interrogative in its impact: Unsentimental, heretical, and liberatory beyond what his contemporaries could dream of or stomach, Stirner

was seemingly forgotten before re-introduction to the Americas by the anarchist Benjamin Tucker in 1907. (Tucker received considerable help in this endeavor from anarchist poet John Henry Mackay, the egoist James L. Walker, and the translator Steven T. Byington.) Nothing more and nothing less is postulated within *The Ego and His Own* than the absolute sovereignty of the individual in the face of all attempts at his/her weakening and suppression: by the “spooks” and the loose screws in the human brain along with all external powers that want to subjugate the unique individual under the guise of law. To the first, negative section of his critique, the criticism of Man, Stirner counters the more positive second section, his “I”. Here he first clears up the falsely understood concept of freedom, which cannot be given, but must be taken and then describes the “unique one”: his power with regard to the State and society, this power that laughs at law as a phantasm; his intercourse with the world, which consists in his using it; and his self-enjoyment, which leads to uniqueness, to which the I as I develops. To utopians, one of the most threatening qualities of Stirner’s negation is that he has no interest in supplying a substitute structure for that which he seeks to terminate. (It’s difficult for the idealist mind to grasp the concept of negation for negation’s sake, or to appreciate Stirner’s radical negation as at once a splendid affirmation—of free life!) More alarmingly, Stirner divulges the selfish and hollow foundation of all humanitarian movements—the predatory, greedy, power-craving, egoistic motives that hide behind the ideological mask of social service.

Between the publishing of *The Ego and His Own* and Stirner’s rediscovery by John Henry Mackay and Benjamin R. Tucker, fatefully enough, the Russian Nihilist movement began and Nietzsche’s blasphemous proclamations made their earth-shaking appearance in Europe, initiating a new dawn for individualism and setting the stage for Stirner’s return. There is even debate as to Stirner’s possible influence on Nietzsche. Although no conclusion has come of this exploration, it speaks to the power and potency of Stirner’s Luciferian intellect that some consider him a precursor to one of the most pitiless iconoclasts of all time. While socialist and syndicalist movements such as the IWW and the Bolsheviks gained traction in the early twentieth century, the momentum and power of individualist anarchist thought found a home most notably within the Italian, French, and Spanish anarchist milieus. They, along with Stirner, are the progenitors of our legacy today and established the first fruitful era of Egoist practice. They are still heretical, since most proclaimed anarchists could not conceive of putting their individual life expression above that of their

chosen social causes. The concept of amorality scares average people like a thought virus, and most of those exposed to the more radical strains of Individualist thought react as if the devil himself had tabled a proposition for their own freedom. Yet those in the top echelons of society (finance capitalists, for instance) wield power driven fully by their amoral individual desires, and count on the masses constraining themselves with myriad social regulations and ethics—what Nietzsche referred to as “slave moralities”. These ruthlessly skilled exploiters are certainly conscious egoists and in a sense, more daring than most anarchists, since they effectively put themselves above government, not just verbally like a mass of whining, morally indignant slaves. As the State and the ruling class directly diminish the enjoyment of my existence, my own egoistic desire is to see them put effectively out of my way. But it isn't my attributes and limited power that are a danger to the State or Society, it's the multiplication of my attributes should they permeate those of like mind. The revolutionary value of Egoism is that it removes all taboos on selfishness and the acquisition of personal power, and smashes the mental chains of slave morality. The rules and laws of society were made to fetter conquered vassals and fools—but the conscious egoist knows that they are under no obligation to obey anything or anyone. Think of the implications of unbound individual expression and power countering the established authorities! If the masses were to manifest their conscious egoism, and become ungovernable individuals who seize and keep all that their power permits them to take, these established authorities could not handle or control people anymore: a union of bold, determined beings, animated by clear-sighted self interest, who won't succumb to any master, corporeal or so-called divine, is a force that any governing agency would have a hard time vanquishing. With illusory social obligations laid bare and broken behind us, the question would no longer be whether to embrace Egoism, but what personal fears must we jettison to begin the individualist journey post-haste? To slash the veils of illusion that countless generations of social conditioning have instilled in us, to strike down the spooks (within and without) that promise freedom but deliver yet more quandaries, is the exact antidote needed to the violently enforced Sisyphusian nightmare of culture and civilization that keeps us as in thrall to the delusion of social identification (not to mention the myth of social progress).

Social anarchists have typically decried this type of egoist social analysis as “bourgeois individualism,” confident that their use of the dreaded word “bourgeois” is sufficient to convince the faithful to think no further. Anarchist individualists are not likely to lose any sleep over

being labeled so, but the use of the term in such a way is indicative of social anarchist argumentation, which is almost always by way of morality and intimidation rather than independent analysis. Kropotkin, commenting on individualist anarchism in America in his oft-quoted contribution to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, wrote:

Those who profess it....they are chiefly “intellectuals”...soon realize that the individualism they so highly praise is not attainable by individual efforts, and either abandon the ranks of the Anarchists, and are driven into the liberal individualism of the classical economists, or they retire into a sort of Epicurean a-moralism, or super-man-theory, similar to that of Stirner or Nietzsche...

Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition,
Volume 1, pp 914-916

In this encyclopedia entry Kropotkin, as usual, defines anarchism as a secular variant of the Christian Heaven and indulges in his classic populist mystifications about the masses. Despite an attempt to be objective in his presentation, he singles out Stirner and even the tepid Benjamin Tucker as villains whose ideas encourage “amoralism” and “super-man-theory”. Somewhat incongruously, he then instances the works of Nietzsche as being among those “full of ideas which show how closely anarchism is interwoven with the work that is going on in modern thought”. But just how close is “closely” to this egalitarian true believer and chronic optimist? It’s not at all surprising that Kropotkin, the humanist, moralist, and communist par excellence, makes Stirner his arch-villain. After all, *The Ego and His Own* is not only the most outspoken exposition of amoralism in the history of philosophy, but also one of the most powerful vindications of individualism ever written—in some ways, the ultimate encouragement to self liberation and one without a suggested social replacement for what is to be overthrown—and none of these things would be to the stunted tastes of Kropotkin and his pious, collectivist followers.

Yet many of Kropotkin’s contemporaries from the “Heroic Age of Anarchism”, like Emma Goldman, never forgot the primacy of the individual and understood the supreme relevance of both Stirner and Nietzsche to anarchist thought, as evidenced by the following passage:

The most disheartening tendency common among readers is to tear out one sentence from a work, as a

criterion of the writer's ideas or personality. Friedrich Nietzsche, for instance, is decried as a hater of the weak because he believed in the *Übermensch*. It does not occur to the shallow interpreters of that giant mind that this vision of the *Übermensch* also called for a state of society which will not give birth to a race of weaklings and slaves.

It is the same narrow attitude which sees in Max Stirner naught but the apostle of the theory "each for himself, the devil take the hind one." That Stirner's individualism contains the greatest social possibilities is utterly ignored. Yet, it is nevertheless true that if society is ever to become free, it will be so through liberated individuals, whose free efforts make society.

(from her preface to *Anarchism and Other Essays*)

Since Emma Goldman wrote these words, it's been amply demonstrated that both the feeble namby-pambyism of the "save the world" anarchist and the collectivist revolutionary models of social change have failed to deliver the goods. This shows an observant, non-ideological person that this orientation does not work. In the search for the ultimate sacrifice, selflessness for the Common Good has denied the basic truth of human self-interest, and is both hopelessly naive about human nature and hermetically sealed against all realistic feedback regarding the psychology of masses. The Kropotkinist dream of full agreement and peaceful fraternity among people denies the irrefutable fact of differentiation, and is founded on the seductive but malignant politico-ethical principles of socialism (itself an offspring of Christianity). As long as anarchists remain preoccupied with saving The Masses (even in spite of themselves), then anarchists will curtail their own evolution and self-empowerment and be herded into an intellectual fog. (This morbid, pathological over-identification with large collectives probably helps explain Kropotkin's later appalling support for World War I.)

If all are bound to one another by some imaginary social contract and if the majority elect to jump into the lake (of fire), then I am doomed unless I can emancipate myself from the crazed lemming herd before it's too late to save my own astoundingly precious life. Using swimming as an analogy: the overburdened individual sinks, like the group that, tied to one another, drags each other down, dooming all! The self-owning individual is of the open spaces—intrepid, recalcitrant, nimble, spontaneous, and agile—and able to raise his or her self above the weight and sheer gravity

of the Masses and their self-defeating belief systems, precisely because s/he is unencumbered with delusional social theorems.

If anarchists (who claim no gods, no masters) were to look at any social movement and the assumed collectivist orientation with open eyes, we would easily find the inherent duplicity of motives that are veiled and hidden under the most grandiloquent and idealistic principles—and the bombs of egoistic purpose that are carefully hidden in all the fine silks of utopian promises. While many may agree intellectually with this assessment, understanding is not entirely an intellectual process and clearing the spooks of collectivist social responsibility requires a hard edge of criticism—it requires that we give total attention to the structure of our conditioning, to the inherited psychological patterns that encourage us to identify with something outside ourselves—whether it be the State, an ideology, or Society. As Stirner constantly does, we must get behind the nature of these philosophical institutions and assumptions; we must clear the phantom beliefs of what the social being is, and start at the most neglected and maligned truth: I am the only master.

Individualist anarchism in the United States was most notably expounded in the pages of Benjamin R. Tucker's journal *Liberty*, which was published from 1881 to 1908. Tucker and his associates—all capable writers and thinkers—attempted to forge individualist anarchism into a coherent system through an ill-conceived fusion of Proudhon's economic theories and Max Stirner's uncompromising egoism. In the end, Tucker's efforts to reconcile the utopianism of Proudhon and the individualist amorality of Stirner resulted in neither fish nor fowl, but mostly in confusion (for example, Tucker's support for private police and private courts to combat and punish theft) and in unconvincing visions of a future harmonious society held together by the principles of what Tucker called "equal liberty." Still, Tucker did two very important things to help the development of individualist thought: 1) As already stated, he published the first English translation of Stirner's incendiary masterpiece *The Ego and His Own* and 2) he allowed the pages of his widely-read journal *Liberty* to serve as an uncensored forum for the discussion of egoist perspectives on power, politics, and self-determination. Although we have no desire to dwell excessively on Tucker's overly idealistic theories in this anthology, it would be disingenuous to ignore either him or the vibrant milieu that formed around his ideas—a milieu that produced some formidable egoist thinkers like James L. Walker, John Beverley Robinson, and John Badcock, Jr.

The primary focus of this anthology, however, is to explore the

development of anarchist individualism in Europe and the multifarious constructions and applications of Stirner's ideas by anarchists in Italy, Spain, France, and England. This collection is by no means comprehensive, owing primarily to the fact that so many core texts have yet to be translated into English. (For example, Enzo Martucci's *The Banner of the Antichrist*; Miguel Giménez Igualada's extensive treatise on Stirner from 1956; the writings of Biófilo Panclasta—Columbian Stirnerite, adventurer and vagabond; the Russian anarchist Lev Chernyi's 1907 book *Associational Anarchism*, in which he advocated the "free association of independent individuals.")

Other important individuals unrepresented in this collection for similar reasons: Ixigrec, the French anarchist science-fiction writer, comrade of E. Armand, and radical interpreter of the Marquis de Sade; Rirette Maitrejean, who wrote extensively on anarcha-feminist and free love subjects for the French individualist anarchist magazine *L'Anarchie*, and who went on trial in the 1920s for alleged participation in the illegalist activities of the Bonnot Gang; Domenico Pastorello, the Italian polyglot and popularizer of Esperanto, who advocated an ascetic lifestyle of self-sufficiency as a solution to economic slavery; The Brazilian individualist anarchist Maria Lacerda de Moura who wrote for the Spanish individualist anarchist magazine *Al Margen* alongside Miguel Gimenez Igualada; Octave Mirbeau, "the Ravachol of modern literature", author of *The Torture Garden* and the timeless abstentionist pamphlet *Voters Strike!*; Federico Urales, an important Spanish individualist anarchist who edited the journal *La Revista Blanca* and was highly critical of the anarcho-syndicalism in his time (he viewed it as plagued by excessive bureaucracy that tended towards reformism), and Adolf Brand, German individualist anarchist writer, comrade of John Henry Mackay, editor of the periodical *Der Eigene* (1896-1931) and pioneering campaigner for the acceptance of male bisexuality and homosexuality. The list just goes on and on.

The individualist anarchist press has also had a fertile life (with points of abandonment followed by periods of resurgence) and a rich, innovative publishing history—one abounding with variety, local flavor and an emancipatory non-conformism towards ready-made anarchist dogma and programs. Some of the more noteworthy examples are Enrico Arrigoni's journal *Erisia*, which unleashed nine issues between 1928-1928 that anarchist historian Paul Avrich describes as "remarkable". Then there are the French individualist papers, which are almost too numerous to catalogue, but loosely start with *Autonomie individuelle* (1887 to 1888) giving birth to a genealogy that continues to proliferate in our day. The Spanish individualist milieu of the 1920s

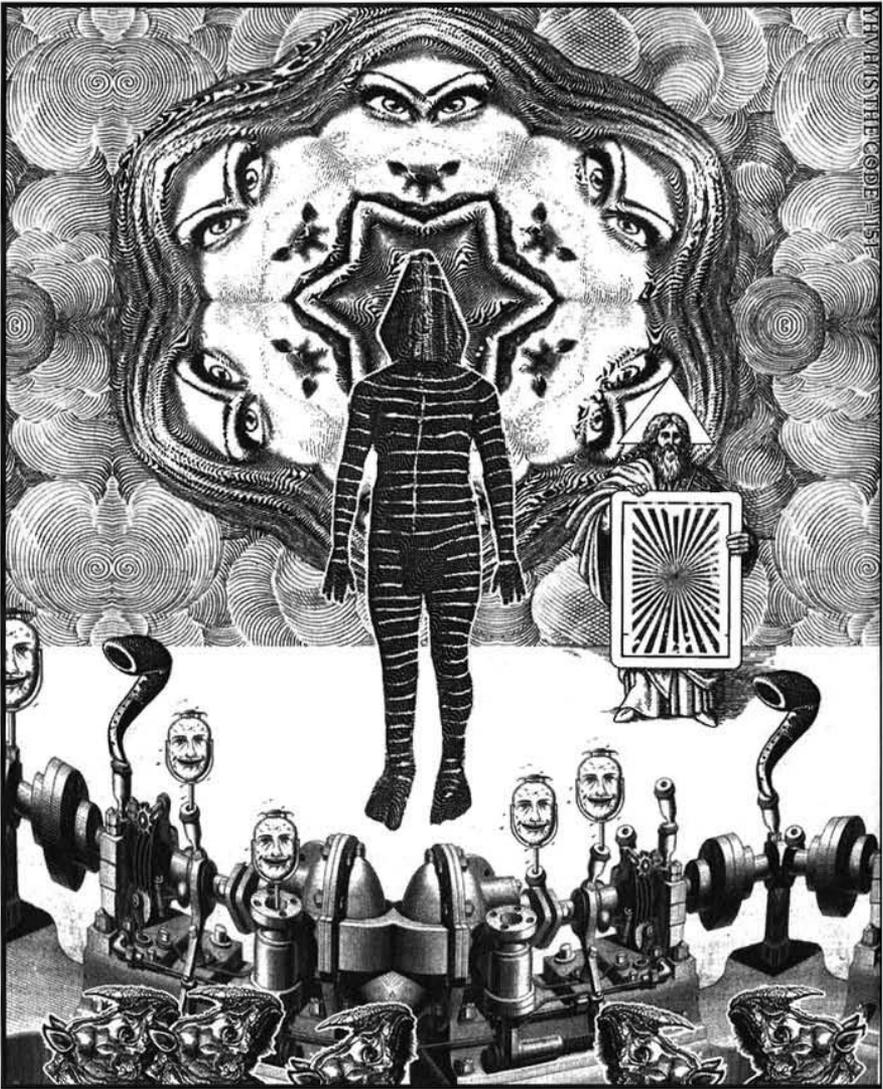
and 1930s is just as impressive, producing confident, multihued journals like *L'Individualista*, *La Idea Libre*, *La revista blanca*, *Etica*, *Iniciales*, *Al margen*, *Estudios*, *El Unico*, and *Nosotros*. Who knows what illuminating gems lie buried in the yellowing pages of these lively texts, waiting to be unearthed, translated, and discussed again! Catalan historian Xavier Diez, who recently completed a wide-ranging survey of the Spanish individualist anarchist press before and during the Civil War period, summarized the basic positions of this tendency as follows:

under its iconoclastic, anti-intellectual, antitheist run, which goes against all sacralized ideas or values it entailed, a philosophy of life took shape which could be considered a reaction against the sacred gods of capitalist society. Against the idea of the nation, it opposed its internationalism. Against the exaltation of authority embodied in the military institution, it opposed its antimilitarism. Against the concept of industrial civilization, it opposed its naturist vision.

Unfortunately, access to this valuable heritage of individualist ideas was not (yet) available to us as we were assembling this anthology, though we did have the lucky break of coming into a windfall of dynamic English-language Individualist and Egoist papers, publications containing a wide range of heretical views operating outside and against orthodox anarchism. The publications that we consumed most ardently were *The Storm! A Journal For Free Spirits*, *Minus One: An Individualist Review Egoist*, and *Ego*, supplemented by a smattering of translated texts that fortuitously materialized when needed most. All of these journals were driven by an utter disrespect for the alleged unity or sanctity of the anarchist movement. They all articulate an independence from, and refusal of, the altruistic idealisms and socialist ethics (which are really Christian ethics) that have infested anarchist thought. They all introduce new approaches and philosophic concerns and help to move anti-authoritarian consciousness in a dangerous direction again. S.E. Parker, whose writing features prominently in this compilation, was a British individualist anarchist who, from 1963 to 1993, edited three of the journals just cited—*Minus One*, *Egoist*, and *Ego*—all urgent, vehemently individualist periodicals that assail the complacency of anarchist group think and disrupt the placid reliance on morality as a means of justifying anarchy. Parker eventually drove a wedge between egoism proper and anarchism—at least in his own life—repudiating

anarchism as a self-renunciating, humanist church. In one of his last published articles, Parker found himself agreeing with Dora Marsden (an important early twentieth-century British egoist, whose writings Parker helped rescue from obscurity), who argued that moralistic anarchism is merely continuing the work of religion under a new guise. Parker describes his “loss of faith” in the article “Archists, Anarchists and Egoists” (which is Appendix A in this volume). He arrived at these conclusions after forty-plus years of wrestling with the implications of anarchism and egoism. Regardless of whether one agrees with Parker’s verdict or not, it shouldn’t be too frightening to look at, and if it is then you probably shouldn’t be reading this book! As a philosophical weapon, anarchist thought has become dull, has lost its once-lethal edge and become encrusted with leftist clichés. One of the purposes in compiling these outsider voices is to help relieve anti-authoritarians of the burden of carrying the impossible load of universal emancipation (this leftist ideal of herd-life that undermines our individual strength) and to help re-awaken the slumbering dragon of insurrectionary egoism. These are the voices of uncompromising individualists, to whom no topic is taboo or off-limits, voices that have stayed obscure until now, but for which the myriad complexities of our current era provide an excellent context for a re-appearance.

What ultimately emerges from these writings is a vision of anarchy that is non-utopian, non-idealist, and decidedly non-leftist, a vision of anarchy that could accurately be described as anti-social, or at least, *socially pessimistic*. Those readers who would turn to the writers in this collection for the exact details of a reconstructed society will search in vain, for their concern is the rebirth of the individual as a separate entity—unsmothered by the claims of any nation, State or society. Any sketches of an anarchistic future they offer are apparent only by inference. Their ideas will resonate most strongly with those defiant, unconquered individuals who are only interested in reconstructing themselves—the free spirits who are resolved to live outside the structures of control as far as they possibly can, relying on their own psychic resources and experiencing liberation on a personal level even as the whole world slides in horror down a bottomless pit. Stripped of all fantastic figures of speech and fruitless will-o-the-wisp schemes for social betterment, the assertion of individual sovereignty by word and deed is the only method and only message of these iconoclastic minds who choose to label their personal rejection of all authority as *individualist*.



1.

Rejecting the Stamp of Group Approval: *first wave individualists in the US & Europe*

This first section is comprised of the first generation of individuals influenced by Max Stirner. There were two groups of people who began the project that Stirner was perhaps not capable of himself. They expressed this influence and practice in the pages of papers like *Liberty*, *L'unique*, and *L'endhors*.

The American group used Stirner's idea about spooks—phantoms that the vast majority confuses with reality—and applied it to concepts that individualists were already grappling with: Justice, Rights, Posterity, and Altruism. These ideas were all placed on the chopping block and the project of freedom was the cleaver, which enlightened individuals would wield to cut through the morality and fantasies of the past.

At the same time the European egoists and individualists were grappling with methods of putting these ideas into practice. The Bonnot gang used the bank robbery as their laboratory; Armand used a practice of Free Love; Novatore the pen and the pistol, and Martucci the bomb.

Instead of an ideal society of perfectly behaved socialized automations, this first wave of egoist anarchists believed that anarchism would look like an oscillating equilibrium between strong willed individuals. On occasion this would look like cooperation, and as often it would look like hostility. The difference is that this resonance would happen between individuals rather than inhuman and faceless aggregates.

James L. Walker: A Unique One

James L. Walker was an individualist's individualist. It was largely through his brilliant contributions to Benjamin Tucker's distinguished anarchist journal, *Liberty*, that the kind of unflinching egoism expounded by Max Stirner in Germany became familiar to American dissidents (Walker also played a major part in influencing Tucker to have *The Ego and His Own* translated and published under his imprint). And Walker's treatise, *The Philosophy of Egoism*, first published in its entirety in Denver in 1905, after his death, was an invaluable contribution to the anarchist tradition in the United States.

Walker expressed the very soul of Egoism when he wrote: "Be sure that Egoism has nothing sacred". And he meant nothing. Justice was not sacred. Nor right. Nor truth. No idea of morality was sacred. In fact, at the end of his treatise, he declared "the real living Egoism is the fact of an untrammelled mind in this or that person and the actions resulting, the end of the tyranny of general ideas". To understand the meaning assumed in that statement is to understand the crux of Walker's brand of philosophical egoism.

Central to Walker's concept of egoism is an attack upon the idea of morality. The egoist, he maintains, makes no attempt to justify his ideas or actions in terms of morality. His egoism is not a claim for rights. It is simply the "exercise of the powers of individuals at their pleasure." Walker regards the idea of morality, which is based upon the supposition that the individual must keep his/her pursuit of pleasure within certain bounds, as a holdover from religion and theology. He points out that many atheists of his time, although violently rejecting religion, replaced religious morality with an equally oppressive humanist morality. To Walker it makes no difference where the moral code comes from. Whether it is derived from the idea of god, the idea of natural law, or any other idea, it is the enemy of the sovereign self. What it comes down to is whether there is any standard to which the individual is obliged to conform. The individual whom Walker would call an egoist must answer that there is none. To such a person, the words "good" and "evil" never express anything but degrees of appreciation. The terms are and must always be completely subjective because there is no objective fact for them to refer to. But of course

they have been used as objective norms for millennia. This is because the cornerstone of all moralism is the desire to effectively encourage obedience. The greatest practitioners of control over others have always been religions and governments, both of which are obliged to establish moral codes or laws as means of justifying their demands for submission.

Under the pseudonym Tak Kak, James L. Walker was a frequent contributor to Benjamin Tucker's *Liberty*, the pioneer organ of philosophical anarchism. Reprinted below is first an article from the March 6, 1886 issue of that publication. This is followed by a short excerpt from *The Philosophy of Egoism* and then a strong piece on Stirner from *Liberty* that Walker uses as an opportunity to further develop his critique of justice and rights.

What Is Justice?

by James L. Walker

It is an idea presupposing a power that lays down a rule or law to which the individual owes respect and obedience. God is represented as the supreme egoist. My wishes must yield to his. This is God's justice or law. Those who believe in God fear and obey—not I. Then comes society's justice. "Society", the egoist, orders what it wills. I must sacrifice my wishes to the family, to the State, to humanity. If the power exists and knows how to subject me, I must—not otherwise.

Shall I waste my life in setting up and obeying an idea that I must treat all men alike? They are not alike—not equally able or willing to sustain me in return. Society is the natural state of man, and holds each individual to "duties" so long as it can, or till he refuses to obey. When he comes to full consciousness, he sets up as his own master, and thereafter, if there be any use for the word justice, it must mean the rules for a union of egoists with benefits to at least balance duties; and these du-

ties are simply matter of contract. The egoist will act as they see fit or prudent towards natural society.

Can any infidel say why he directly enslaves horses and not men? Men are indirectly enslaved and their deference to ideas keeps them enslaved. It is useless to assert that slavery is unjust. The chameleon changes color, but remains a chameleon. One form of slavery is abolished to give place to another so long as men consent to be held subject. The idea that slavery is "unjust" is the idea that there is a rule or law against it. The facts of nature are there. The mere idea that, if rulers would cease to oppress, all would be better, is not effective of improvement to the subject man. When, however, it comes to his consciousness that he is naturally a subject till he refuses, and realizes that power and will are the essential matters, he makes himself free so far as he can. It is "just" to enslave those willing to be enslaved — that is, it is according to the principle, or shortest line of nature.

Those who believe that man has an immortal soul, and that a horse has not, may act from superstitious fear or reverence. The intelligent egoist will "respect" the "vicious" horse sooner than the tame, subservient man. Viciousness is the resistance to enslavement. There is more virtue in the criminal classes than in the tame slaves. Crime and virtue are the same under State tyranny, as sin and virtue are the same under theological tyranny.

"Justice", as a generality, with reference to natural society, is a snare, or a transposition of the horse and the cart. I recognize no duty to the powers that control me instead of bargaining with me. I am indifferent to the annihilation of the serfs whose consent enslaves me along with themselves. I am at war with natural society, and "all is fair" in war, although all is not expedient. So it is with the individual who comes to self-consciousness, not for the Lord's sake or humanity's sake, but for himself. The assertion of himself will be as general and various as his faculties.

To utterly dismiss the idea that there is any other justice in nature than force seeking the least line of resistance is to dismiss at the same time that there is any injustice. This may save

generations of complaining and begging. In short, we want to perceive the facts and processes of nature without colored glass before our eyes. No justice, no injustice, as between an individual and any other in nature? Why then no "wrong" in any method of becoming free! A startling thought to the halting slave. Nothing in crime, but fact? Nothing. See the complaining wife, not loving, but submitting and suffering. Nothing wrong with putting six inches of steel into the bosom of her liege lord? The egoist says, call it what you like, there is no hell. What the woman will do depends upon what are her thoughts.

Therefore, my reader, as the laws of society, and the State, one of its forms, are tyrannies or disagreeable impediments to me, and I see no difficulty in disregarding them but for your respect towards ideas such as "right", "wrong", "injustice", etc., I would have you consider that these are merely words with vague, chimerical meanings, as there is no moral government of the world, but merely an evolutionary process, and it depends upon perception of this fact, and self-direction of our powers united as we shall agree, how much we can succeed in obtaining and enjoying more or less of the things of this world.

Do you feel fully conscious of this? Then you and I can perhaps join our forces, and I begin to have an appreciable interest in you. Do you not begin to think that by suiting only myself I am really doing far better towards others than by throwing myself away to serve them? If so, it is a lucky coincidence, for I only serve and amuse myself. And I really do not care if you call that unjust. I shall begin to work for you when I see you are able to work for me. But if you are afraid to be free—stay in slavery. I will have the satisfaction of seeing that you do not wholly escape suffering, if you are so unfit to aid me when I would aid you. And if you are thus lacking in stamina or sense, it will be no harm if you do get overworked and your existence is shortened.

But I hope better things from you.

On Rights

by James L. Walker

(excerpted from his essay "The Philosophy of Egoism")

The word *right* has the same fundamental meaning as *straight*. When no obstacle stands or lies between an animal and the object of its desire, the shortest way, which is a straight line, is the way the animal takes to reach the object; but when approach by a right line is impractical the nearest known path is chosen, all considerations such as safety being weighed according to intelligence. This is then the line of least resistance—the one most approximating in convenience to a right line. The right hand is so named because it is usually the stronger and more serviceable. A man's right is his straight way to the satisfaction of his desires, and he takes no other way except under adverse circumstances or hallucination.

It will be objected by Moralists that such an exposition of right reduces it to nothing but might. In this inference they are correct, but their objection does not disturb Egoistic philosophy, which regards their alleged supernal, sacred Right as a superstition. I have a right to do what I can take and openly keep, and another has a right to take it from me if he can. Those, however, who believe that a superior authority has laid down a rule to which they must conform, will take up that rule or law as they understand it, and their idea of right will be that of conformity to the command of that authority. The Moralist is under the impression that instead of pursuing his own pleasure he has to fulfill a purpose that is at variance with his pleasure. His conception of Right is not an Egoistic conception. He has surrendered himself, and with himself his own right, and has begun to serve an abstraction. He is in the way to commit great folly and wrong to himself. To the Moralist Right and Wrong are two fixed ideas, forever in opposition in all senses. To the intelligent Egoist they are two words generally perverted from their meanings and used as scarecrows.

There is a frequent clash between the right of one and the right of another, and they fight it out. It is settled by the triumph of one and the defeat of the other. Max Stirner in his matchless book *The Ego and Its Own*, says: **if it suits me, it is right**. I assert my full power to do my own pleasure and nothing but my own pleasure. The Moralist consents to serve as his own jailer; not so the Egoist. Assert your right, your power, your pleasure. I claim none of that, I assert my own. I appeal to no moral law of the world. I recognize none. We shall find our interests coincide or we shall give each other battle or we shall steer clear of each other, according to circumstances.

Stirner on Justice

by Tak Kak

On page 79 of his book, entitled *Der Einzige und Sein Eigenthum*, Stirner speaks of the insidious revival of sacred ideas and their domination, as that men are taught to regard themselves as called to devote themselves, to renounce their own wishes in favor, for example, of family, country, science, etc., and to be faithful servants of the same.

Here, [he says] we strike the immemorial craze of the world, which has not yet learned to dismiss priestcraft. To live and to labor for an idea is proposed as the high calling of man, and according to the fidelity of its fulfillment his human worth is measured. This is the domination of the idea, or priestcraft. Robespierre, for example, and St. Just, etc., were thorough priests. Thus St. Just exclaims in a speech:

‘There is something terrible in the sacred love of country. It is so exclusive that it sacrifices everything to the public interest without pity, without, fear, without human regard. It hurls

Manlius over the precipice; it sacrifices private inclinations; it conducts Regulus to Carthage, casts a Roman into the chasm, and places Marat in the Pantheon as a sacrifice to his devotion.'

A world of countless 'personal' profane interests stands opposed to these advocates of ideal or sacred interests. No idea, no system, no sacred cause is so great that it should never be outweighed and modified by these personal interests. Even if in times of rage and fanaticism they are momentarily silent, yet they soon come uppermost again by the 'sound sense of the people.' Those ideas do not completely gain the victory till, and unless, they are no longer hostile to personal interests, i. e., till, and unless, they satisfy egoism.

The man who is crying chestnuts before my window has a personal interest in a brisk sale, and if his wife or anybody else wishes as much for him, this as well is a personal interest. If, on the other hand, a thief were to take away his basket, there would at once arise an interest of many, of the whole city, of the entire country, or, in one word, of all who abominate theft: an interest wherein the person of the chestnut-vender would be indifferent, and in its place the category of 'one who is robbed' would appear in the forefront. But here, too, it might still all be resolved into a personal interest, each participant reflecting that he must aid in the punishment of the thief because, otherwise, unpunished stealing would become general and he also would lose his possessions. There are many, however, from whom such a calculation is not to be presumed. Rather, the cry will be heard that the thief is a 'criminal.' Here we have a judgment before us, the act of the thief receiving its expression in the conception 'crime.' Now the matter

presents itself in this way: If a crime should work not the slightest damage either to me or to any of those for whom I take concern, yet nevertheless I should be zealous against it. Why? Because I am enthused for morality, filled with the idea of morality. I run down what is hostile to it. . . . Here personal interest comes to an end. This particular person who has stolen the basket is quite indifferent to my person. I take an interest only in the thief, this idea, of which that person presents an example. Thief and man are in my mind irreconcilable terms, for one who is a thief is not truly man. He dishonors man, or humanity, in himself when he steals. Departing from personal concern, we glide into philanthropy, which is usually misunderstood as if it were a love toward men, to each individual, whereas it is nothing but a love of man, of the unreal conception, of the spook. The philanthropist bears in his heart, not *tous anthropous*, men, but *ton anthropon*, man. Of course he cares for each individual, but merely for the reason that he would like to see his darling ideal realized everywhere.

Thus there is no idea here of care for me, for you, or for us. That would be personal interest and belong in the chapter of 'earthly love.' Philanthropy is a heavenly, a spiritual, a priestly love. Man must be established in us, though we poor devils be brought to destruction in the process. It is the same priestly principle as that famous *fiat justitia, pereat mundus*. Man and justice are ideas, phantoms, for love of which everything is sacrificed: therefore the priestly minds are the ones that do sacrifice. . . .

The most multiform things can belong and be accounted to man. Is his chief requisite deemed to be piety, religious priestcraft arises. Is it con-

ceived to lie in morality, the priestcraft of morals raises its head. Hence the priestly minds of our time want to make a religion of everything; a religion of freedom, religion of equality, etc., and they make of every idea a 'sacred cause,' for instance, even citizenship, politics, publicity, freedom of the press, the jury, etc.

In this sense what is the meaning of unselfishness? To have only an ideal interest, in face of which no consideration for the person counts anything!

The hard-headed worldly man resists this, but still, for thousands of years, he has always so far succumbed that he must bend his stiff neck and 'revere the higher power.' Priestcraft repressed him. When the worldly egoist had shaken off one higher power—for example, the Old Testament law, the Pope of Rome, etc—a seven-fold higher one was presently over him, for example, belief in place of the law; the transformation of all laymen into clergy, instead of a special clerical order, etc. It has been with him as with the man possessed of a devil from whom he no sooner thought himself free than seven devils entered into him.

In the foregoing extract it will be seen that the author puts himself in the place of the average man at the point where the generalization "crime" becomes a snare for the multitude. I offer this fragment as an egoistic contribution to that justice which remains to be constituted.

First published in *Liberty*. 4, 18
(No. 96; March 26, 1887)

Selfhood Terminates Blind Man's Bluff

by Tak Kak

G. B. Kelley, a regular participant in the discussions in *liberty*, appears to hit near the mark on egoism *versus* altruism. Both are facts, but the completely self-conscious egoist becomes such only at the end of a process, and after that he owns and enjoys his own powers so completely that he will not permit an idea to become his master. Such egoism produces acts which the altruist may mistake for altruistic acts, but the self-conscious egoist treats ideas as his property, takes them apart and examines them at his pleasure, and sees that they serve his purpose and do not make him their servant.

The child is physically dependent. The youth becomes subject to the power of ideas. Pre-Christian society, wrestling with physical powers, corresponds to childhood in the individual. Christianity, rationalism, humanitarianism, communism, moralism—idealism, in a word—correspond to the enthusiastic dreams of youth. In that stage egoism is scorned, though it persists without general acknowledgment except as alleged baseness. To the humanitarian Idealist it is the substitute for Devil, as Humanity is the substitute for God. The individual who finally becomes conscious of himself is, just as he is, a universe—humanity itself. He then knows that he has been dreaming about a something which is, after all, himself.

He is incomparable. The process of thought that brings him to recognize himself can nevermore be continued as a process in which himself would be only a factor, for he is a greater fact than his ideas. Henceforth ideas are simply his possession. True views are useful, but any alleged sacred Truth is romanticism, or rant. When he does an act which to others may look un-egoistic, it is nevertheless to be tested by this: Is it genuinely the will of the doer—his good pleasure? Then it is purely egoistic. The egoist who has become self-conscious knows what he wills, and does what he wills just as far as he

can. He interests himself in any pursuit or neglects any without a thought that he is fulfilling or alighting any calling or mission or duty, or doing right or wrong. All such words are impertinent. Nothing is sacred or above him. He recognizes forces, and does the best he can to make himself master of what he wants.

The mental processes of selfhood are not those of justifying any conduct, as with the idealist, or seeking what will conform to a standard or serve a cause; but thought becomes an instrument to determine what course will procure what is desired. Are the means the best adjustable to the ends? They are adopted. Justification is a piece of superstitious nonsense. Having found the pearl of great price—come to a recognition of self—we never throw it away. We give away what we like to give away, because we like. We may give life itself. But to the last we do our own will.

Right and wrong, crime and virtue, are simply people's ideas, of no consequence to the egoist except that such ideas make fanatics and dangerous people, or make serviceable subjects. No one is a self-conscious egoist, to whom "wrong" in natural society means more than imprudence. The egoist, as an irrepressible, conscienceless criminal, is the coming force, who will destroy all existing institutions. Mark what is called criminal. It is always some action which is the retort to the egoistic pretension of a man or institution. It will make a great difference when many egoists become fully self-conscious and not ashamed of being conscienceless egoists.

Language is now Christian; so the egoist has no very appropriate means of expression. His will and pleasure is not, however, a cause, or a matter to be pleaded and granted. Of course he will take unbridled liberty. A few self-conscious egoists, such as popes, kings, presidents, legislators, judges, and generals, rule the world because other people are in confusion, as unconscious egoists fearing their own nature and believing they ought to obey ideas.

This short, but Luciferian, essay on egoism as a theoretical

weapon originally appeared in *Liberty*, number 83, July 3, 1886.

Concluding this section on James L. Walker is another brief piece he wrote for *Liberty* on egoism and sexual relations, which is pertinent in relation to the importance succeeding individualists—like E. Armand—placed on sexual liberation.

Egoism in Sexual Relations

by Tak Kak

Egoism in Sexual Relations

A proverb says: "All is fair in love and war." This is a recognition of the superior force of egoism in sexual relations. What man seeks a woman from the sentiment of duty to unite? It would be absurd. In this matter liking, inclination, guides. As in eating and drinking, equally primary needs of the individual, personal appetite and taste cannot be subordinated to a foreign standard of "right." Information, which the individual can make his own and which may aid him to choose what is best for himself, is the only pertinent influence, unless one is superstitious. Is not the disparagement of natural inclinations in sex a really striking, and to the natural man or woman a disgusting, piece of superstition? It is avowedly a disparagement of egoism, or selfhood, in one of its most powerful, irrepressible manifestations. It is by observing the play of personal inclination in such matters of primary importance that we know egoism to be the undeniable law of life.

published in *Liberty*, 4, 6
(No. 84; July 17, 1886)

Egoism

by John Beverley Robinson

There is no word more generally misinterpreted than the word egoism, in its modern sense. In the first place, it is supposed to mean devotion to self interest, without regard to the interests of others. It is thus opposed to altruism —devotion to others and sacrifice of self. This interpretation is due to the use of the word thus antithetically by Herbert Spencer.

Again, it is identified with hedonism, or Epicureanism, philosophies that teach that the attainment of pleasure or happiness or advantage, whichever you may choose to phrase it, is the rule of life.

Modern egoism, as propounded by Stirner and Nietzsche, and expounded by Ibsen, Shaw and others, is all these; but it is more. It is realization by the individual that he is an individual; that, as far as he is concerned, he is the *only* individual.

For each one of us stands alone in the midst of a universe. He is surrounded by sights and sounds which he interprets as exterior to himself, although all he knows of them are the impressions on his retina and ear drums and other organs of sense. The universe for him is measured by these sensations; they are, for him, the universe. Some of them he interprets as denoting other individuals, whom he conceives as more or less like himself. But none of these is himself. He stands apart. His consciousness, and the desires and gratifications that enter into it, is a thing unique; no other can enter into it.

But egoism is more than this. It is the realization by the individual that he is above all institutions and all formulas; that they exist only so far as he chooses to make them his own by accepting them.

When you see clearly that *you* are the measure of the universe, that everything that exists, exists for *you* only so far as it is reflected in your own consciousness, you become a

new man; you see everything by a new light: you stand on a height and feel the fresh air blowing on your face; and find new strength and glory in it.

Whatever gods you worship, you realize that they are *your* gods, the product of your own mind, terrible or amiable, as you may choose to depict them. You hold them in your hand, and play with them, as a child with its paper dolls; for you have learned not to fear them, that they are but the "imagination of your heart".

All the ideals which men generally think are realities, you have learned to see through; you have learned that they are *your* ideals. Whether you have originated them, which is unlikely, or have accepted somebody else's ideals, makes no difference. They are *your* ideals just so far as you accept them. The priest is reverend only so far as *you* reverence him. If you cease to reverence him, he is no longer reverend for *you*. You have the power to make and unmake priests as easily as you can make and unmake gods. You are the one of whom the poet tells, who stands unmoved, though the universe fall in fragments about you.

And all the other ideals by which men are moved, to which men are enslaved, for which men afflict themselves, have no power over you; you are no longer afraid of them, for you know them to be your *own* ideals, made in your own mind, for your own pleasure, to be changed or ignored, just as you choose to change or ignore them. They are your own little pets, to be played with, not to be feared.

"The State" or "The Government" is idealized by many as a thing above them, to be revered and feared. They call it "My Country", and if you utter the magic words, they will rush to kill their friends, whom they would not injure by so much as a pin scratch, if they were not intoxicated and blinded by their ideal. Most men are deprived of their reason under the influence of their ideals. Moved by the ideal of "religion" or "patriotism" or "morality", they fly at each others' throats—they, who are otherwise often the gentlest of men! But their ideals are for them like the "fixed ideas" of lunatics. They become irrational and irresponsible under the

influence of their ideals. They will not only destroy others, but they will sink their own interests, and rush madly to destroy themselves as a sacrifice to an all-devouring ideal. Curious, is it not, to one who looks on with a philosophical mind?

But the egoist has no ideals, for the knowledge that his ideals are only *his* ideals, frees him from their domination. He acts for his own interest, not for the interest of ideals. He will neither hang a man nor whip a child in the interest of "morality", if it is disagreeable for him to do so.

He has no reverence for "The State". He knows that "The Government" is but a set of men, mostly as big fools as he is himself, many of them bigger. If the State does things that benefit him, he will benefit; if it attacks him and encroaches on his liberty, he will evade it by any means in his power, if he is not strong enough to withstand it. He is a man without a country.

"The Flag" that most men adore, as men always adore symbols, worshipping the symbol more than the principle it is supposed to set forth, is for the egoist but a rather inharmonious piece of patchwork; and anybody may walk on it or spit on it if they will, without exciting his emotion any more than if it were a tarpaulin that they walked upon or spat upon. The principles that it symbolizes, he will maintain so far as it seems to his advantage to maintain them; but if the principles require him to kill people or be killed himself, you will have to demonstrate to him just what benefit he will gain by killing or being killed, before you can persuade him to uphold them.

When the judge enters court in his toggery (judges and ministers and professors know the value of toggery in impressing the populace), the egoist is unterrified. He has not any respect for "The Law". If the law happens to be to his advantage, he will avail himself of it; if it invades his liberty he will transgress it as far as he thinks it wise to do so. But he has no regard for it as a thing supernal. It is to him the clumsy creation of them who still "sit in darkness".

And for all the other small, tenuous ideals, with which we have fettered our minds and to which we have shrunk our petty lives; they are for the egoist as though they were not.

In brief, egoism in its modern interpretation, is the antithesis, not of altruism, but of idealism. The ordinary man—the idealist—subordinates his interests to the interests of his ideals, and usually suffers for it. The egoist is fooled by no ideals: he discards them or uses them, as may suit his own interest.

Biographical Note: John Beverley Robinson was one of a small band who pioneered conscious egoism at the turn of the 19th century and an important figure in American individualist anarchism, one who continued in an active role in the United States after Benjamin Tucker ceased the publication of *Liberty* in 1908. John Beverley Robinson started out as an early associate of Louis F. Post, the noted single-taxer, and helped publish *The Free Soiler* in the early 1880s. He later evolved from this fairly liberal position to a Tolstoyan and eventually to an individualist anarchist. Along with Tucker, John Henry Mackay and others, he rejected natural rights as fictitious and embraced the egoism of Max Stirner and the mutualism of Proudhon, whose *General Idea of The Revolution in The 19th Century* he translated into English (Freedom Press 1923). Robinson was also the author of *Economics of Liberty*, inspired by Proudhon's ideas (published by Herman Kuehn in 1916 in Minneapolis) and *Rebuilding The World: An Outline of the Principles of Anarchism*.

The above essay was first published in the fall of 1915 by Herman Kuehn in his mimeographed individualist anarchist review *Instead of a Magazine*. We hope the republishing of this spirited essay on philosophical egoism serves as a means of introducing a wider readership to this pungent, provocative, and humorous advocate of anarchy.

"Self-sacrifice, self-sacrifice, ever self-sacrifice," is what has been eternally preached by religion, economists, moralists, and "revolutionaries" to the dispossessed slave strata of society. In contempt of what these advocates of self-repression mean when they speak of altruism, we're transcribing an egoist parable contributed to *Liberty* in the August 10th, 1895 issue by John Beverley Robinson. This parable is entitled:

The Land of the Altruists: A Parable for the Infant Class

by John Beverley Robinson

If you start from the South Pole and sail due north, you will come to a wonderful country inhabited by the people called Altruists. They are called so because they prefer other people's happiness to their own.

They are a very industrious, hard-working, uncomplaining people, forever toiling from daylight till dark, making all kinds of useful and luxurious things; yet so unwilling are they to enjoy the fruits of their labor, so anxious for somebody else to be happy at their expense, that they have made this very ingenious and complete arrangement to secure that result.

They have ordained that everybody who has produced a thousand dollars' worth of goods shall receive from the rest of the community sixty dollars a year; he who has made or obtained in any way ten thousand dollars' worth shall receive six hundred dollars a year; and so on in proportion.

Now, it is easily seen that, as the people to whom these stipends are paid are at liberty to go on working and making enough to live on, they are able to lay by the amounts paid to them by the community. After a while these amounts become so large that they need not work at all, for all the rest of the Altruist community are pledged to support them, their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, not only till death, but forever.

Such sweet and unselfish dispositions have these Altruists. There are getting to be a good many of these people who are supported by the Altruists.

Two or three million at a guess in every twenty or thirty mil-

tion families do not work, but are paid because they have so much already. They are getting very bossy, too, these stipendiaries of the workers, and begin to hold themselves very loftily, and despise the unselfish workers as dirty, ignorant, low creatures, unmindful of the fact that it is only because the workers are Altruists that they enjoy providing luxuries for others rather than for themselves.

It is getting to be rather hard scratching, too, for the workers, Altruists though they be, who enjoy hunger and suffering; for to the objects of their care, the supported class, they have given, not only all the houses and furniture, and all but a little of the butter and meat and bread, but the very land itself, so that now, when the Altruist workers want to work still harder and to cultivate more land to support the rapidly growing numbers of the Aristocrats, they find themselves forbidden by these very Aristocrats to use the land which they have given them.

Clearly a catastrophe must occur. Although the Altruists enjoy starving as long as they have the pleasure of seeing the Aristocrats, as they call those whom they support, have plenty, there is a physical limit to the process of starvation, and, when the Altruists begin to diminish in number, the Aristocrats must also dwindle.

What the outcome will be no man can prophesy — a relapse into slavery at least, which the Altruists would no doubt enjoy even more than their present arrangements; but there is a chance that their natures may change: they may become Egoists, and no longer take pleasure in giving to those who give nothing in return. Then there will be no Aristocrats, and everybody who is not an Altruist will have a much better time.

published in *Liberty*

Posterity: The New Superstition

By Benjamin De Casseres

The latest decoy set up by the indestructible god of illusions is Posterity. Man has been invited to live for various motives. Once it was for the glory of God. Comte proposed as a motive the glory of man. Now we are invited to live for the glory of Posterity. Nietzsche called Posterity the Overman; socialists call it "the rising generation".

No one has thought of the glory of living for the sake of living, of eating, fighting, reproducing merely because they give pleasure. Always there are devil-gods that call for sacrifices; always there is the bogey-word that demands obeisance and tribute of all our actions. Nothing must be allowed to exist for itself. Every thing must exist for the sake of some other thing. The perfume in a rose is only legitimate if there is a human nostril somewhere to be intoxicated; and the perfume of our acts and our thoughts is only a "moral" or a "right" perfume if it gives pleasure to the nostrils of God, Church, the Common Good, or Posterity.

Man has not yet become a good animal. He suffers from ideals, as he once suffered from superstitions. An ideal is a superstition in court clothes. It makes very little difference whether you believe that an east wind blowing down the chimney on a moonlit night will bring you good luck or that an act that gives you pleasure in the doing is "right" if it benefits Posterity and wrong if it doesn't.

The East worships its ancestors; the West worships posterity. The East lies prone on its belly offering tributes to ghosts; the West bows its head in adoration to the ghosts not yet born. When an oriental worships the soul of a bit of wood we call him superstitious. When the Westerner worships certain letters of his alphabet which spell "God" or "Church" or "Moral-

ity" or "Posterity" we call it the Ideal.

And a smile steals over the brow of Puck and Momus reels in glee.

Ancestor-worship is the old superstition; posterity-worship the new superstition. The old bottles are filled with the new wine, but the old labels have never been taken off. We still march under mottoes and tramp to Ultima Thule to the raging tom-toms beaten by priests and idealists. Still we signal a host of imaginary beings with the gaudily colored pocket-handkerchiefs of our latest trumpery abstraction.

All these words that man bows before one after another in his flight across the face of Time are born of the idea of Responsibility, that somewhere there is Something that is taking cognizance of all his acts and will bring him to account for them. Sometimes it is the bearded, concrete Jehovah of the Jews; now it happens to be a beardless, visageless, vaguely shadowed Posterity. The idea of responsibility is as universal as all other illusions: the imbecility of an idea or instinct merely proves its universality. From the feeling of responsibility sprang the most immoral and strength-destroying doctrine that we know of: the doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement.

Responsibility to God was the first great necessary lie, for if the race is to be preserved (no one has ever found a rational reason why it should be) lies are more necessary to its growth and sustenance than truths. Responsibility to God or gods was the first ideal, the birth-boards that clamped and twisted the brain and soul of healthy self-centered beings and changed their centers of gravity from the egoistic Self to an all-seeing, all-recording Nonentity that had a name but no local habitation.

Man is born in his own incalculable anterior images, but he came to believe in his all-ignorance that he had been created in the image of another, a giant jail-warden who allowed him to rove the earth at his pleasure under a heavy jail bond to keep the peace. The idea of an eternal responsibility to this abstraction germinated the first seeds of man's moral weakness, paralyzed his activities, sickened him with scrupulosities and filled him with the consciousness that healthy activ-

ity was sin. War began within him, a war between his superb irresponsible instincts and the idea of a vicarious responsibility, and out of that shambles issued the whining Christian, the lord of tatters called the Idealist, and that mincing prig, Conscience.

The idea of responsibility to God began to wane with the dawning suspicion that man was not a celestial but a sociological animal. Conceiving himself to be this new thing, he now invented a new kind of responsibility called "social responsibility". The old mask was being repainted. The phrase "social well-being" was hoisted into the Ark of the Covenant of Lies. An act was now good or bad as it affected the community. Man loved his neighbor for the responsibilities he could shoulder on him; the corner ballot-box was the Kabala; the community had power to bless or curse the individual. God had become a town-hall orator; the Recording-Angel had become a court-reporter. The era of the State-Lie had begun.

The transition is easy from the cant about living for the sake of "doing good in the community" and "benefitting the whole" to the ideal of living for the sake of Posterity. The old obscure doctrine of blood sacrifice reappears in this new posterity superstition, slightly attenuated and shorn of its immediate and more obvious savage characteristics; but the old trail of responsibility and life-guilt is there.

We are told to live for the sake of posterity, we must breed for posterity, eat for the sake of posterity, be moral for the sake of posterity, and even die when necessary for the sake of posterity. We legislate for posterity, rear a child with an eye to posterity, tinker with the social system for the sake of posterity, tamper with individual liberty for the sake of posterity, construct Utopias for the sake of Posterity, vote the socialist ticket for the sake of posterity.

It is the fetish, the Moloch, the Golden Calf of our civilization. We who are living, palpitating in the flesh and blood present have no rights; the ego is not sufficient unto itself; we are only straws to show which way the sociological and evolutionary winds are blowing; we are only the bricks and mortar that shall go to build the marvelous, fantastic, phan-

masimal edifice to house that coming Holy Family Posterity. Our deeds have no value unless they feed the bulging belly of incalculable non-existent tomorrows. We are only as scraps of bone and meat tossed to that fugitive glutton, the Future, by pasty-souled Idealists and the spineless altruists who poison life with their doctrines of responsibility; our instincts, our very marrow, are to be inoculated by the virus of altruism and our faces beatified with the forerunning rays of the great Posterity Light. How we are to glow with the shine of "Right Living" all because the altruistic quacks with their obsessions of Succubus and Incubus have dreamed a new dream which they call Posterity!

Weak, impotent, helpless before the immovable present, man salves his sore spot with hopes for the future. Not being able to regulate his life today, he promises himself a virtuous, vicarious tomorrow. Not daring to set up his Ego as God and its endless pleasure as sufficient motive for all his acts, he sets up an Alter Ego and calls it Posterity, as he once called it God, then the State or the Community.

With ecstatic eye and lolling, anticipatory tongue he awaits for his happiness in Posterity—something no one has ever seen, something no one can define, something that could not possibly exist.

First published in *Liberty*,
Number 402, October 1907

Zo d’Axa’s Heresy

According to the etymology of the word, a heretic is one “who chooses” —choice meant in the strongest of its accepted meanings, as active decision, certainly not in the bland dress of adjustment. A heretic is no one who limits himself to belonging, approving, following. Nor is he even one who is content to study, learn and repeat. A heretic is not one who knows the old answers by heart, but rather one who loves to formulate new questions. The heretic does not demand approval, but rather critique; he does not want to maintain, but to change. If the heretic usually doesn’t go very far, a reproach that is often made against him, it is because he spends his time opening new paths rather than going down all too well-trodden ones.

There’s no need to point out that heretics are not just found in religion. They are everywhere. So much so that one can confidently say that where the beacon of certainty shines in any field, there the shadow of doubt grows longer. Even social movements have often been shaken by the presence of heretics. A terror to the guardians of ideology, individuals of this kind are insulted, defamed and banished precisely like all other heretics. If they do not end up being burnt at the stake of the Inquisition, their names still get blacked out from most people’s memories. And their merits have been hard to recognize, except in a few particular instances, many years after their deaths. As everyone knows, there is always time to raise a statue to Giordano Bruno in the public square.

Very few heard Zo d’Axa speak even among anarchists in whose movement he fought for years. He was barely known in France, his country of origin, and was nearly unheard of in the rest of the world. Aside from fragmentary bits of news (like his family ties to famous personalities) or the translation of some brilliant phrase (perhaps in favor of abstentionism) nearly nothing has reached us up to now. Zo d’Axa, you see, was a heretic, a heretic of the anarchist movement that has not

always known how to practice that absolute freedom that it intended to realize, sometimes getting stuck in a thick web of dogmas, precepts and norms.

Zo d'Axa's name is linked to that of the weekly he founded and of which he was the managing editor. The journal was called *L'Endehors* (Outside). Its motto was: "The one whom no one governs and who is guided exclusively by an impulsive nature, this passionate whole, this outlaw, this alien to every school, this loner who seeks the elsewhere, isn't he indicated in the term: Outside?" It was published in Paris from May 1891 until February 1893—years when the name of anarchy came to be associated with the thunder of dynamite. *L'Endehors* had some bizarre characteristics for a subversive periodical. It wasn't limited to publishing writings of known anarchists or those who were destined to become so—like Sébastien Faure, Louise Michel, Errico Malatesta, Charles Malato or Emile Henry. Alongside them, there were also writers, poets and journalists, some already known, others just starting—people like Georges Darien, Octave Mirbeau, Félix Fénéon, Saint-Paul-Roux and many more. All "deserters of the bourgeoisie" as d'Axa loved to call them.

The editors of *L'Endehors* were, in short, ravished by the temptation to open the communicating vessels between dream and action in a challenge that would provoke great upheavals in the years to come. Not by chance, in defiance of one of Baudelaire's bitter reflections, a great voice shouted from the pages of this weekly, "action is the sister of the dream". More an aspiration than an observation, it's no use to deny it, but no less meaningful for that. What's the use of acting if you don't have a dream to realize? To fall into the sorriest militancy? And what's the use of dreaming if you don't consequently act? To fall into the most innocuous aestheticism?

The attempt was perhaps the first of its kind to be carried forward in such an organic manner. Unfortunately, it did not give the results hoped for. Several factors contributed to its demise, not least of which was the heavy intervention of the police, who were quick to apply the "black laws" that the French government had passed, which closely resemble the current post-

September 11, European [and American] anti-terrorism laws, in their fieriness in dispensing heavy-handed charges of “subversive association” to anyone who doesn’t become an accomplice of the state. (“The government decided to take advantage of the emotions caused by the explosions... to include all active revolutionaries in a huge trial against intentions. The minister and his docile prosecutor have ended up holding that certain ideas constitute complicity. The writer who explains how so many of the disinherited are inevitably drawn to theft has himself become a thief simply for expressing these thoughts. The thinker who analyzes the reasons for ‘propaganda by the deed’ has become the secret accomplice of the one who lit the tragic fuse. The philosopher no longer has the right to declare his indulgence and consider the events without astonishment”: is this the end of the 19th century or the beginning of the 21st?)

But perhaps Zo d’Axa’s generous effort would have still been destined to drown in the stormy sea of misunderstanding. The greatest obstacle seems to have been precisely an anarchist movement firmly anchored to ideological orthodoxy, which saw such experiments in subversive alchemy as only a waste of time, if not a tool of reaction for diverting the interests of workers from the Just Cause. This refined judgment must have been widespread in the anarchist movement of the time, since it is found again a dozen years later repeated word-for-word in some well-known writings of Luigi Fabbri where the baleful “bourgeois influences on anarchism” are stigmatized as the work of drawing room literati, guilty of exalting acts of violence committed by anarchists. Even though Zo d’Axa’s journal is never cited — Fabbri preferred to mention organs of anarchist literature such as, for example, *La Revue Blanche*, rather than those of “literary anarchy” as *L’Endehors* was considered — the reference to it was still obvious, since many of the collaborators in the journal end up under the critique of the Romagnolan anarchist. Of course, with the benefit of hindsight — Fabbri’s texts were published in 1906-1907 — it was easy to lay into those literati who had offered their pen to anarchy in their youth only to pass over to the other side of the barricades (as if this had not also happened to many “rugged militants”).

But what is most striking in Fabbri's interventions, aside from the hysterical tone with which he launches his cry of alarm, is the lack of a substantial foundation for his arguments as well as the inability to even sense the reasons for and potential development of such an experiment. Yes, because if, on the one hand, Fabbri doesn't seem to be aware that the literary panegyrics to the "beau geste" were a consequence of the anarchist attacks that happened in that historical period and certainly not one of their causes (a thing that shows at most "anarchist influences on literature"), on the other hand, he shows that he knows how, is able and wants to accept only "the anarchy conceived by philosophers, economists and anarchist sociologists". But once reduced to mere speculations, calculations and observations—however much with the militant warranty label—what is left of the passionate content of anarchy, of a world finally free of power? Nothing; since everything else it swiftly liquidates as "bourgeois influence". Once this political anarchism, full of good sense, is only made clear, it is no surprise that Fabbri comes to condemn without appeal "this fever for new things, this spirit of audacity, this mania for the extraordinary that has drawn the most extremely impressionable types into the anarchist ranks" since "these elements contribute the most to discrediting the idea."

Well then, it is enough to compare such words with those of Bakunin ("There has always been a basic defect in my nature: love of the fantastic, of extraordinary and unheard-of adventure, of undertakings with boundless horizons the outcome of which no one can predict") in order to fully grasp the chasm that had been created in the anarchist movement toward the end of the 19th century, between those who wanted a freedom governed by reason (the sacred church) and those who wanted a freedom without reasons (the heresy). It is into this chasm that Zo d'Axa slid.

Indeed, *L'Endehors*, with its ostentatious exaltation of the individual in revolt, could only leave all those revolutionaries who were only capable of understanding the mass march perplexed. Jean Maitron, well-known historian of the French anarchist movement, illustrated the embarrassment that

L'Endehors caused when he describes it as "so nihilistic that it even goes beyond anarchy, while defending its ideas and people." This also explains another description that accompanied Zo d'Axa to the end of his life, the one that wanted him to be an anarcho-aristocrat.

But of what did Zo d'Axa's nihilism and aristocratism consist? In a few words, his obstinate refusal to promise paradise to the exploited.

The problem is not as insignificant as it might seem. There has always been a great portion of the anarchist movement that strives to depict anarchy as a panacea for all the evils that afflict humanity, as a rich arcadia of love, happiness and equality. In the hope of being able to persuade the masses, all too often many anarchists have been compelled to represent the revolution as a redeeming light raised beyond the world in a blaze of blessedness. Zo d'Axa saw such promises as a sham and those who made them as crude hucksters. For him, it was not the desire to achieve a sublime ideal that was the point of departure for the will to affect the real and transform life, but rather the horror in what surrounded him. Any alternative project that aimed based on anti-authoritarian principles was therefore alien to him, because one cannot promise, much less support, what one does not know. It follows from this that his way of expressing himself did without the socio-economic analysis so dear to a certain type of revolutionary propaganda in need of objective confirmations, realistic proposals, efficient results.

Now, the absence of a prepackaged theory about descriptions of what the future might be certainly can't be defined as nihilism, since this term usually refers to a methodical devaluation of all values. And it is a crude error to think that giving up determining the future a priori means consigning it to the limbo of the void. In reality, Zo d'Axa did not believe that beyond this boorish life made of work, money, and obedience there would be nothing: he simply did not know what might be there. A world without domination in all its manifestations is impossible to predict. Any attempt to plan it is nothing more than a rite for exorcizing the fear of the unknown.

When the young child finds himself in the dark, he sings in a high voice to give himself courage. In the same way, many aspiring subversives are accustomed to building hyperbolic theoretical social edifices in order to overcome the panic that grips them when they think about an existence without the securities that the most dreadful habit is still able to furnish to them. But up to what point are these projects of social reconstruction only the echo of the frightened child's lullaby? Worse still, to what extent are these plausible, cautious, rational projects merely the bait with which to attract the consent of the people?

It is against the lie of propaganda that Zo d'Axa's brutal sincerity lashes out: there isn't any future for which to survive and in which to hope, only a present in which to live and take pleasure. Like the Argonauts, Zo d'Axa knew that the most intense joy consists in living the adventures of the journey — whatever they are — not in the attainment of the Golden Fleece. This is why Zo d'Axa sang of the pleasure of revolt and mercilessly mocked the priests of the happy gospel.

Obviously, those who aim to convert the greatest number of people to the Ideal (it doesn't matter which one) bear this ironic attitude towards the truthfulness of their advertising slogans poorly. Especially when it comes from their own ranks. In order to defend themselves, many anarchists could find nothing better to do than to brand Zo d'Axa with nihilism, or with being a supporter of nothing. One promises paradise to the exploited as the just recompense for those who have suffered so much, so criticizing paradise is equated with criticizing the exploited as its addressees. And whoever criticizes the exploited — i.e., whoever permits himself to demolish their illusions, whoever dares to mock their gullibility — can only be an aristocrat, a nihilist, in the final analysis, an enemy. There is no need to dwell on the nonsense of such syllogisms.

Unlike other anarchists who found themselves, in a certain sense, in the same situation (we are thinking of Renzo Novatore in Italy), Zo d'Axa effectively distanced himself from the anarchist movement while continuing to remain outside every herd. How much bitterness in the conclusion he reaches at

the end of his story: "Here I am forced to conclude: I am not an anarchist". Surrounded by religious anarchists who were convinced of the necessity of the earthly Eden, the iconoclast Zo d'Axa came to deny his own anarchism. As if to say, if these are anarchists, I could not be one. A conclusion to which the anarchist movement might like to push many of its heretics even today. Later drawn to recuperate them, of course, when a century's distance is considered enough to neutralize their original subversive charge. It then becomes possible to dedicate highly sympathetic articles to them, like that of Charles Jacquier, taken from an official historical review of anarchism. It even becomes possible to give these heretics some retrospective display. There is still time to raise a statue to Zo d'Axa in the public square.

Introductory essay to the Italian
translation of *De Mazas à Jérusalem*

Individualism

by Pierre Chardon

There are words rubbed as smooth as old coins, vague words, whose meaning, formerly precise, have become blurred by long usage. These words are receptacles into which are dumped both pearls and rubbish, so much so that people do not know their proper meaning. The word "individualism" is one of these. Certain people have spoiled it and changed it to suit themselves. But does not the same sort of thing happen to other words with which people quarrel less: socialism, free thought, etc.?

In spite of this, whole-hearted individualists are not discouraged or disgusted, nor do they easily weaken.

The individual is ruled by attraction and repulsion. In turn he retires within himself and goes out from himself, all mental concentration being normally followed by expansion. And this is life. "Our individualism" rests on the need for individualization and differentiation that men carry within themselves. It cannot consist of resignation, since the social set-up paralyzes all attempts at self-realization. The Ego and that which ancient philosophers called the City, and which is today called the State, are locked in an eternal struggle. Only he who despairingly resigns himself, feels disgust and discouragement, atrophies individualism, bows before Moloch, and asserts himself no more. Every affirmation of revolt is an affirmation of individualism—any individual who asserts himself differentiates himself. Social life, essential for satisfying men's material needs, has created in the ethical sphere concepts and traditions from which the individual must free himself if he wants to be himself.

Every society, no matter what kind, is gregarious, fanatical, sectarian. The man in the crowd is a nasty individual. To dive into the mass is to plunge into the mire and to come out soiled. Individualists, we have no faith in the mass. We

do not despise it, but we do know it. That is enough for us. Whenever a man becomes aware of himself he must fight against his surroundings. The deepest instinct of the people is that of hypocrisy, cowardice, servility, and brutality.

The instinct for liberty is an individual instinct. In order to become libertarian, men must shatter the confines of society. The struggle between liberty and authority is not a struggle between an allegedly popular libertarian current and the will of the masters—it is the struggle between the individual and the City, the *one* against *all*. No doubt the rebel will not always remain isolated and will form a libertarian elite, but the study of the past and the present shows us that the mass is incapable of achieving true liberty and is hostile towards those who strive for it.

Anyway history bears this out. It teaches us that the people in revolt either returned passively to their chains, or simply abandoned themselves to the rule of the bourgeois, the role of whom, as guardian and mediator, was certainly considerable in the movements of the past. They proved incapable of going further along the road of liberation than their new guides saw fit.

It may seem that by stating these historical facts, in recognizing the servility and cowardice of three quarters of the working class, one is defending authority. I have dealt elsewhere with that suggestion. Authority cannot point to the torpor of the masses to justify its exploitation because it adroitly maintains that torpor. The Father, spiritual or temporal, by exploiting his “children”, by profiting from their labor and servitude, gives the lie to his self-appointed role of tutor. The injustices heaped upon those who cannot, or do not know how to, repel them are odious to any sensitive person. But we know the people. The life of the factories, with its mutual suspicion and continual toadying, its cruel rivalry over wages and grades; the kowtowing to physical force and the contempt for women; the servility of those who want to “get on” and the high and mighty airs of the skilled workers who treat the unskilled as inferiors—we know these things.

Certainly, not all workers are brutes...but in getting to the heart of the matter one must recognize that small-mindedness

and brutishness are deeply rooted in their lives. Proudhon saw this well when he wrote: "People themselves have produced and organized the ideas of authority, property, government, and justice, without the help of initiators".

If the world submits to war, exploitation and, authority it is because the majority cannot imagine anything else. And then we are told to go to the masses for guidance!

Individualists, we expect nothing that we cannot get for ourselves. The Mass for a long time will be ranged against us—perhaps we will always be "lost in a desert of men". Our will, our faith. The will to live as men and faith in the struggle, *our* struggle. Not to reject anyone systematically, but not to join ourselves to the Herd. Only individualist awareness can dispel the great collective sentiments of religious or patriotic faith, which are the tools of murder and domination. Not to scorn the rest, but to confirm reality and defend ourselves against all who uphold the status quo.

We are not among those who seek to create "from the weakness of each, the strength of all." What a paltry strength would result from a crowd of weaknesses! Our main aim is to awaken the power of individuals, a power which is profound and real.

Never has the individual been so sacrificed; never has the world suffered so much from its contempt for individualism; never has the collective principle been so powerful. We only find the "libertarian" tradition in the individual, some individuals, and individualism as we see it is the tool with which to forge our own happiness, without presuming to forge the happiness of the masses.

Biographical Note: Pierre Chardon's real name was Maurice Charron. He was a close associate of the individualist anarchist E. Armand during World War I and took over the editing of Armand's paper in France when the latter was imprisoned on charges of "harboring a deserter". Charron died on May 2, 1919. He was 27 years old.

What Do Individualists Want? *A 1920 Manifesto*

by The “Reveil De L’Esclave” Group of Paris

Individualist! There is a misunderstood name..

One affects nearly always to believe that the individualist is a monster of egotism and wickedness; that he possesses all the faults; that he thinks of nothing but his personal satisfaction and that he is ready to wipe out the whole world in order to live better.

This is not only false, but it is stupid.

In effect, if the individualist would oppress and exploit his fellows he would not urge them to rebel. Is not the best means of ensuring servitude to use pompous and empty words?

When we say to the individual: **be yourself, think for yourself, live for yourself**, do not let yourself be duped, robbed and massacred by and for others, far from wanting to deceive those who listen to us, we show them, on the contrary, the only means by which they can never be deceived by no matter whom.

We do not want to be tyrannized, but we do not want to be tyrants either.

We are against all parties, because they all serve the privileges and interests of a handful of intriguers.

We are against all evangels and creeds, because they rape the intelligence and atrophy the will.

We are for free examination, independent criticism, and individual initiative.

At the same time we reject the patriotic lie, religious dupery, capitalist resignation, socialist regimentation, and the communist chimera.

Only the individual counts. He alone feels, vibrates,

suffers. All the rest is secondary to him.

Society is always the enemy of the individual. We rebel against moral and material servitude, against the customs, the "everybody does it" of imbecilic public opinion. We want to live, love, work in our own way as we please, without depending on anyone and we have the right because we do not inconvenience the tastes and aspirations of our neighbor.

The individualist does not want to live like a beast in the country of the bourgeois. France and Germany are nothing to him.

He does not want to spend his energies enriching a boss.

He does not want to disappear in the communist herd and be imprisoned by the vexations of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

All dictatorships revolt us!

We are for complete liberty of the individual, because there is no happiness in submission.

That is why we fight.

The bourgeois, insolent parasite and gross possessor, repels us.

But the worker disgusts us as well for he is the same as the bourgeois. And often, when he is successful, he exceeds him in greediness.

We do not look to the mockery of the vote, nor count on the great revolution of the ignorant mass.

It is by education and individual action that we would transform the social milieu and free our lives as much as possible.

If you would be a man and live consciously, leave all the parties, all the sects, and liberate yourself, free yourself, educate yourself, react with all your force against stupidity, without awaiting the orders of anyone. Put your acts in accord with your ideas: it is by this that one recognizes the libertarian individualist and rebel.

Renzo Novatore: Outlaw Anarchist

by Daniel Giraud

There are various types of men, but one can make a straightforward distinction between those who "are" and those who want to "be" ...The first live from day to day and only bother about "understanding" themselves after "being". The latter spare no effort to affirm in a peremptory manner the grounds of their doctrines. Only in the most favorable circumstances are they bent on putting their theories into practice. They do not perform the act in a natural way before reflecting on it, but rather define it before carrying it out.

Renzo Novatore (Renzo Ferrari) favored the spontaneity and violence characteristic of Martucci (Enzo da Villafiore). He did not worry about "putting anarchism into practice", but was in harmony with himself (therefore in disharmony with the world) and had no ethical or philosophical scruples about it.

With realities suspended and truths hard to find, goals are illusory and Novatore did not believe in a hypothetical change in man and society. Only the roads which lead to an illusory goal – which loses its function as a goal because it appears to be something inapprehensible – can sometimes seem to be true, and in fact the *approach* can be an inexhaustible source of truth.

In November 1922 the "illegalist" Renzo Novatore succumbed to the bullets of the carabinieri near Arcola after a life full of – or rather, fertile in – adventures of all kinds. Death is sweet when one has lived intensely. Some achieve an intense life by means of change, travel, madness, creativity, or even by means of dreams and imitation. Others, more impulsive, seek bloody adventures; murder is on their road...but what does it matter? If the choice is voluntary and the criminal is alone, "there are no innocents", only puppets to eliminate if they block your way (isn't that so, Larcaire? Bonnot?) to the top of the mountain where Zarathustra-Dionysus roars at life...

Novatore did not have the morality of a slave and would be amazed by today's outraged exclamations from pacifist-humanist weaklings. The blue helmets of UN soldiers and the grey hats of the Salvation Army proliferate beneath the promises of disarmament and the anaesthetic negotiations of the Sovereign Pontiffs. The apparent peace is a sign of the times. Today in France we do not die from bombing, we burst with suffocation – it's less showy and more magnanimous..

For Novatore, freedom was spontaneity. Decadence precipitates catastrophes and destruction. The world declines with more and more bombs, disasters, and explosions because progress = the end of the road. Our civilization is no longer tottering on the edge of disaster, it collapsed long ago and only the corpse staggers on, its exterior concealing the emptiness within. The dangers of the environment are undermining it at its very roots and the first nuclear war will bring it down once and for all.

All this is quite normal and in the order of things. The world is occupied by corpses who do not know themselves and who pretend to live by playing with lighted matches just like little kids. While you wait, listen to Renzo:

"Listen, o listen! It is my laughter which rises and echoes furiously in the heights...."

But the zombies cannot hear and the bullets of the carabinieri are my end....

Historical Note: Daniel Giraud is a libertarian poet, translator of Chinese texts (in particular, the writings of Li Po) and the author of several provocative books, including *The Alchemy of Words* and *Friedrich Nietzsche: Dythyrambe a Dionysus le Crucifie*. This homage to Renzo Novatore was written in France in 1967.

Iconoclasts, Forward!

by Renzo Novatore

History, materialism, monism, positivism, and all the "isms" of this world are old and rusty tools which I don't need or mind anymore. My principle is life, my end is death. I wish to live my life intensely for to embrace my death tragically. You are waiting for the revolution? Let it be; My own began a long time ago! When you will be ready (God, what an endless wait!) I won't mind going along with you for awhile, but when you'll stop, I shall continue on my insane and triumphal way toward the great and sublime conquest of the nothing!

Any society that you build will have its limits, and outside the limits of any society the unruly & heroic tramps will wander, with their wild & virgin thoughts—they who cannot live without planning every new and dreadful outbursts of rebellion! I shall be among them! And after me, as before me, there will ever be those saying to their fellows:

"So, turn to yourselves rather than to your gods or to your idols. Find what hides in yourselves: bring it to the light; show yourselves!"

Because every person; who, searching his own inwardness, extracts what was mysteriously hidden therein; is a shadow eclipsing any form of society which can exist under the sun! All societies tremble when the scornful aristocracy of the tramps, the inaccessible, the unique, the rulers over the ideal, and the conquerors of the nothing resolutely advances. So come on iconoclasts, forward!

"Already the foreboding sky grows dark and silent!"

Arcola, January 1920

Cry of Rebellion

by Renzo Novatore

Dedicated to the rabble

The fall of peoples and of humanity
will be the signal of my elevation.

Max Stirner

The restless, questioning spirit of the new human beings can no longer nurture themselves on Socrates' historical hemlock and Christ's legendary cross.

These two sacrifices, which have now fortunately fallen into the deep chasms of a shadowy past, were—undoubtedly—consummated completely at the expense of vigorous individualities, straining and throbbing manifestations of free life.

And I profess that, in contrast to Socrates and Christ, Diogenes himself seems to me to be a truly great innovator, since his wine cask has a different and much deeper meaning than Socrates' hemlock or Christ's cross.

But if Socrates and Christ, with their useless deaths, struck genuine individual potentialities until they bled horribly, wouldn't all revolutions following their path do the same?

Didn't Christianity triumph over the nearly enviable pagan society through a revolutionary dynamic?

And all the liberal, constitutional, absolutist... democratic republics, empires or monarchies, weren't they all born from torrents of blood, undulating over the scorched lands of war and revolution?

But why did the violent and feverish pulse of every revolution ever shatter, always freely, allowing new phantoms to arise again as sovereign rulers?

The answer is certainly not long in coming since no one will find it hard to understand that all revolutions were

domesticated in various ways, and revolutionaries— with the exception of the smallest minority, the “madmen” — were always automatons guided by chimerical and fabulous phantoms.

But what value could those phantoms have for me? What use is any of this to me? To me, the Iconoclast, the killer of phantoms, the demolisher of old and new idols?

What use, for example, could the triumph of christianity be to me? To me, the ultimate anti-christian?

And republics and monarchies, and all the other forms of society that rise as “sacred” sovereigns and can only recognize the “christian”, the “subject”, the “citizen”, the “member”, etc., etc., in me? Since I don’t consider it hard to understand that in every form of society there must be a “system”, indeed, this system, the best of the best: Equality!

But every “sacred” system and all that is Sacred, whether divinely or humanly, demand renunciation and humiliation from me, the Individual. But that’s not all.

Because every form of society, born from the fragments of the old one that fell resoundingly into the void, has the conviction that it is the only perfect one. And it is precisely this dogma of perfection that drives to be so utterly reactionary toward the restless Rebel who does not at all intend to bow before the new God: today, for example, if the revolt against the despot of all Russia finds approval and justification in the foul local papers, they wouldn’t approve or justify a damned thing if such a revolt were to break in... the snow-white bosom of... liberal and democratic Italy. Quite the opposite.

But let’s take another step forward. Let’s suppose, for example, that tomorrow a Republic is proclaimed in Italy. In such a case, wouldn’t a very large portion of those who pretend to be furiously revolutionary today, themselves be the fiercest reactionary conservatives of tomorrow?

And if some “hothead”, some “madman”, some “enthusiast” would want to undermine their new edifice, their brand new God once again? But here I think that I might hear certain good—perhaps too good—people exclaim: But then, isn’t he an enemy of the Revolution?! — No, no. Oh, good people, listen

to me again since I am so revolutionary that I barely even recognize myself! And do you know why I am a revolutionary who can barely be recognized? For a reason so simple that it is great in its simplicity. Here it is: because I am a revolutionary guided only by the vast and uncontrollable impulse of **MY** expansion of will and potential.

There is no phantom guiding me, but rather there I am, walking. There is no chimerical dream of a perfect society of universal human redemption, but rather there is the absolute need for my potential affirmation before other potentialities.

God, the State, Society, Humanity, etc., etc. have their own cause for themselves. If I don't want to subjugate myself to God's cause, I am a "sinner". If I don't want to submit to the State, Society, Humanity, I am a "wicked man", a "criminal", a "delinquent".

But what is "sin"? What is "crime"?

Here again, I don't think there is any need for a long and complicated digression to analyze all this, since even children must know by now that the most serious sin that you can commit against divinity is to mock it, not obey it, desecrate it, and deny it. In short, desecrating what is divinely and humanly "sacred" is the greatest "sin", the greatest "crime".

"Sacred"! This is the most monstrous and terrible phantom before which all have trembled up to now.

Here is the old, harsh tablet that the new human beings must shatter!

The **FREE SPIRITS**, the **ICONOCLASTS**, all those who have finally discovered in "sin" and "crime" the new spring from which the highest synthesis of life gushes.

And even the rabble, when it learns to quench its thirst at this new, unknown spring, will very quickly realize that it too is a granite potentiality.

But to do this, the rabble will have to stop letting itself be ruled by fear.

Oh, rabble, listen to me! I am not the new Christ come to sacrifice myself on the altar of your redemption. If I did this, I would be a madman and you would be a beggar.

I put my lips to your profane ear and launch a cry. Λ

frightening cry that will make you grow pale. The cry that I launch is that of the great German rebel, Max Stirner. So listen to it, since only by virtue of this magic cry will you vanish as rabble in order to rise up again in the flowering potential of all of your individualized members. Here is the magic cry: "The egoist has always affirmed himself with crime and, with sacrilegious hand, has pulled the sacred idols down from their pedestals. It is necessary to put an end to the sacred; or better still: the need to violate the sacred must become general. It is not a new revolution that approaches; but a mighty, impetuous, superb, shameless, conscienceless crime sounds in the thunder on the horizon. Don't you see how already the foreboding sky grows dark and silent?"

But here again, oh rabble, I see you back away and shout at me with horror: "What ever is this crime? What does he mean by all this?"

Ah, rabble, rabble! Do you still not understand his speech?

Well, then, listen again. He's the one who's speaking: "Put your hand on whatever you need. Take it; it is yours. This is the declaration of the war of all against all. I alone am the judge of what I want to have." Now do you understand, oh rabble, what the crime that **SOUNDS IN THE THUNDER ON THE HORIZON** is? But you, oh rabble, may not yet know how to adapt yourself to the idea of eternal war, you who have cradled yourself like a poor baby in the sweet dreams of eternal peace. And who even knows how many idols you still have to worship and on whose altars you still have to sacrifice yourself!

Poor rabble!

And to think that even the blind would have to notice by now that anyone who isn't able to accept eternal war as his affirmation and triumph must accept eternal slavery for the triumph of fabulous phantoms, declared enemies of the I.

Yes, oh rabble, I have decided, yet again, to be completely sincere with you. And this is what my sincerity tells you – Today, you sacrifice yourself in blood-soaked trenches for a cause that is not your own. Tomorrow you may sacrifice yourself in lands made bloody by Revolution in order to later

allow a new parasitic and corroding worm to rise on the seas of blood that streamed out in hot steaming spurts from your bronze veins so that a new idol could be raised up to sit over you just like the old God.

The consecrated chorus of Love, Pity, and social Right will return, making itself heard, skillfully played on new harps, components of the most ancient symphony.

Rabble, listen to me! I still have something more to tell you. What I still have to tell you may well be the thing that weighs on me the most.

So here I am. I am UNIQUE and as long as you remain rabble, I will not be able to associate with you. When I do so, it will be in order to draw you out against my enemy who is your master. But as rabble, you will not allow yourself to be drawn out since you still adore your Lord too much.

You still want to go on living on your knees. But I have understood life.

And anyone who understands life cannot live on his knees.

I have even understood all the traps that the owners of all this have set for me.

When they saw me march boldly to the conquest of my life, armed with all my uninhibited potentiality, they placed before my eager eyes all of their ridiculous and insane phantoms.

They tried to terrorize me with the hobgoblins of the "sacred", but since I, the Iconoclast, the Impious one, scorn and mock all that is "sacred" and "consecrated", and since, like Armida, I destroy the palace in which once I had to suffer enchantment, they threw off their sacred mask and launched themselves against me, imposing the most extreme against me.

That was the day, oh rabble, that I had the true revelation of what life is and what place my Uniqueness would have in this.

Now I live on my feet. My eye no longer knows sleep.

I recognize no one's rights against me. Only force can defeat me now, not phantoms.

I said, only force can defeat me. But I also use it. I no longer ask anyone for anything.

I am no beggar.

I only appropriate everything that I have empowered myself to appropriate through the capacity of my potentiality.

My revolution already started a long time ago.

From the moment I knew life, I took up MY weapons and declared MY war.

I struggle for a cause that is my own. No other cause can interest me anymore.

My enemies also struggle for a cause that is their own and against me.

But I don't hate them for this.

The REAL interests that they have in fighting against me exempts them from my hatred since I have taken up my weapons against them only due to my REAL interests.

I may very well kill them for my triumph, but without hating them, without despising them; I am not struggling for phantoms!

Rather I despise beggars, misers, all those who don't dare to fight, but who only know how to beg and weep.

They are the ones who beg for fallen crumbs from the sumptuous table of my enemy.

And with these misers of body and spirit my enemy creates a blind and formidable power to launch against me in the battle that has started between we Egoists.

But what could these misers ever gain from the victory over me brought back by my enemy, ie, by their master? Nothing more than the usual crumbs and eternal slavery!

But what are you then, oh rabble, if not the blind, unconscious, begging mass that launches yourself against me in defense of your Lord? Listen to me, oh rabble, you must vanish as such, you must have no place in the theater of new life.

Do you sneer? Are you maybe lashing out at me?

Could it be that with the blows of my lash I have succeeded in awakening an inner residue of pride in you that slept hidden in the remote corners of your mind that has been servile for centuries?

Already in the distance you can hear the war trumpet sound announcing the invincible attacks of the Unique ones against the phantoms: the State, Society, God, Humanity..

You turn pale and flee, dragging all your satellites into the abyss of the eternal void; and the rebellious phalange of Free Spirits and Iconoclasts advances into the stormy sky of the future!

from *Cronaca Libertaria*, volume I #2,
August 10, 1917

In the Kingdom of the Spooks

by Renzo Novatore

*There exist only Beauty and Force, but to
hold themselves in equilibrium
the brutal and the weak invented justice*

Raffaele Valente

Once I thought it to be only a fearful dream, but it was in fact a bloody reality.

I am surrounded and caught between a double circle of fanatics, rabble, and fools.

The world is a foul, pestiferous church where all are expected to worship an idol as if it were a fetish, and where rises an altar on which they must sacrifice themselves. Even those who light the iconoclastic pyre on which to burn the cross with its god-man, even these have yet to understand the call of life or the cry of freedom.

After the legendary Christ had spat at the face of man the most bloody of insults by urging him to deny himself so as to be nearer God, along came the French Revolution which, in savage irony, made the same appeal by proclaiming the "rights of man."

According to Christ and the French Revolution, man is imperfect. The cross of Christ symbolizes the possibility of becoming man; the rights of man symbolize exactly the same thing. To attain true perfection it is necessary, according to the first, to become divine, according to the second, to become human.

But Christ and the French Revolution are at one in proclaiming the imperfection of the individual man, the real ego, by affirming that it is only by attaining the ideal that man can reach the magic peaks of perfection.

Christ tells you: "If you patiently climb up desolate Calvary and have yourself nailed upon the cross, becoming my image, the image of the man-god, you will become perfect, being fit to sit at the right hand of my father who is in heaven." And the French Revolution tells you: "If you enter into the symbolic cloister of human justice, in order to be sublimated and humanized by the grace of the moral rule of social life, you will become a citizen, and I will grant you your rights and proclaim you man." But he who dares to throw the cross and its man-god, or the clumsy tablets of the Rights of Man, into the fire and proclaim the free individual—such a man is an upstart, an evil-doer who is threatened by two sinister spooks, the Divine and the Human.

On the right the sulphurous and eternal flames of Hell, which punish sin; and on the left the dull grinding of the guillotine, which punishes crime.

The cold and spineless cowardice of human fear, produced by subjugation to mystical and morbid sentiments, has succeeded in conquering the healthy and primitive injustice which was force and beauty, youth and audacity. So-called progress, so-called civilization, so-called religion, so-called idealism have entombed life in a deadly circle where the most repugnant spooks have established their rule.

The hour for the end has come. We must break out of the

deadly circle and escape. If the chimeras of divine legends have terribly influenced human history; if human history has involved the mutilation of the real individual man—then we rebel! It is not our fault if the symbolic wounds of Christ have given birth to the social infection that proclaimed the rights of man. If men want to stagnate in systematized dens of social putrefaction, then they must put up with them. We others love the sun, and we want to give ourselves freely to the violent ardor of its kiss.

When I look around me I want to vomit. On the one hand, there is the scholar in whom I must believe if I am not to be ignorant. On the other, the moralist and philosopher whose commandments I must accept in order not to be a brute. Then there is the genius I must glorify and the hero before whom I must bow.

Then come the comrade and the friend, the idealist and the materialist, the atheist and the believer, and a host of definite and indefinite apes who bear down on me with their advice and want to put me on the right path. Because, it must be understood, the way that I am is bad, as are my thoughts, my ideas— all of me.

"I am a man who has deceived himself." These poor madmen are obsessed by the idea that life has intended them to be pontiffs officiating at the largest mission because humanity has been called to great destinies.

These poor and pitiful animals, deceived by false ideals and transformed by lunacy, have never been able to understand the tragic and joyous miracle of life, any more than they have been able to see that humanity is not called to any great destiny.

If they would learn from what has gone before, they would at least know that their would-be fellows do not share their desire to break their backs jumping the abyss that separates one from the other.

But I am what I am, and the rest is of little importance.

And the croaking of these multi-colored chatterers only serves to deepen my noble and personal wisdom.

○ apostolic apes of humanity and social progress, do you

not hear that which sounds above your spooks?

Listen, O' listen! It is my laughter which rises and echoes
furiously in the heights!

English version by J.R. and S.E.P., from a
French translation by E. Armand. First
published in *L'Unique*, Nov-Dec 1954)

Biographical Note: Renzo Novatore was an Italian individualist
and illegalist who was killed in a battle with the Carabinieri in
1922. He was the editor of several reviews and left behind him
two large pamphlets: "Al disopra de Arco" (Above Anarchism)
and "Verso Il Nullo Creatore" (Towards the Creative Nothing).

The Bonnot Gang: A Reminiscence

by E. Bertran

Round about 1910 the people of France were greatly startled by the appearance of a form of "banditisme" apparently inspired by theories proposed and defended by the anarchist movement. A few young anarchist militants seemed to have gathered around a certain Jules Bonnot, himself an anarchist wanted by the police and depicted as particularly dangerous.

Bonnot had declared war on Society, his own war, and was causing enough trouble to call attention on himself. He had been compelled to go on the run in order to avoid arrest for offenses which he considered as being caused by unjust social conditions.

Seeking contact and shelter with friends and comrades he knew, shifting from one to the other, he unwillingly compromised a lot of people who had nothing to do with his private activities and law-breaking. As a result, the police were easily able to arrest many of these and eventually to implicate a large number in an alleged criminal conspiracy. In particular, they framed a certain Dieudonne and obtained a death sentence for him.

I might mention that at this time the anarchist movement was in a state of fermentation. The First World War was in preparation and the anarchists were evolving, seeking a kind of maturity, adopting new positions and notions, especially after the translation of Stirner's book *The Ego and His Own*.

Although the arrested anarchists were treated as an organized gang, in reality there was no gang at all, no instituted organization, only individuals who had analogous opinions. They had no chief, no animators — the only point of contact was through their anarchist views. Bonnot and Garnier, with some of their friends, were united and agreed on certain points as to their attitude and became suspect to the police,

but to accuse the anarchist philosophy of being responsible for the crimes committed by them is both absurd and silly. All political parties that have ever existed have practiced violence and organized "extremism"; most Christian sects have and royalists, republicans, socialists, communists, etc, have followed the same tradition.

The particular "doctrine" of 'illegalism" that Bonnot and his friends followed was nothing new. Before 1900, there had appeared quite a number of "illegalists" pretending to snatch from the bourgeoisie some of their superfluous property. But, of course, these "illegalists" had professed pure motives and limited themselves to preying on the enemies of the "people" I might mention some quite picturesque ones like Pink, Duval, Ravachol, and especially Jacob, who was caught after a number of typically romantic operations. (Although a death had resulted from a shot at a policeman, he did not receive a death sentence but was sent to a French Guyana for life. He was released after being there 25 years.)

I would like to write a bit about Stirner, the real apostle of individualism as I conceive it, but I can't possibly do it here, now. Stirner supplied the Bonnot Gang with some strong arguments. Nothing is prohibited to his individual, his "I". I quote: "The world on one side and me on the other...I'll show it what I can do." And so on. "I am not an "I" by the side of another 'I", I am the only one, the unique...I can do what I please, it is "I" who live, who develops myself, forms myself, etc.," Thus, the ideas of illegalism took root and the boys found new grounds for discussion.

Well, they discussed and decided they would try. Why should we be surprised? That is human and they proved it by remaining men all the time.

The Bonnot affair began on November 11th, 1911, when two men got out of a motor car, assaulted a bank collector on the open street in Paris, snatched his money-bag and shot him when he resisted them. The man was badly wounded and his assailants got away.

By means of denunciations and photographs, the man who shot the collector was identified as Garnier, a mate of Bonnot.

The police knew the bank robbers were anarchists. They remembered the Jacob Gang of 12 years before. It therefore became easy for them to round up and arrest all persons who had dealings with the Bonnot Gang.

At this point there appears the case of Dieudonne, an innocent man who had nothing to do with the business, but who was sent to prison for life after having been sentenced to the guillotine. In his case, all the police had to do was frame him and induce the victims to recognize him. Very simple, but not so clever since they did not have the cheek to carry out the sentence. Dieudonne was finally released from French Guyana 12 years later.

All who took part in the Bonnot Gang were clearly anarchists and hundreds of those who were not actually arrested were persecuted. Some of them had helped Bonnot and when the trial was held on February 3, 1913, 23 people appeared at the Assizes in Paris.

It was quite true that a few of these had helped Bonnot and Garnier to commit certain robberies. They took the field with them. It was "direct action" and seemed to be justified. Besides, as one of them claimed, they wanted to "live their lives", to get some "pep", some sensation out of it. And they wanted money, too. Well, you see, many excuses, God bless their souls!

Anyway 23 alleged accomplices, 3 women among them, struggled with the judges for 3 weeks, from February 3-27. Four of these were acquitted, the writer and the three women. The writer was then remanded to another court on another count and spent eight years in penal servitude. He then escaped from French Guiana and is still living, healthy, satisfied, and happily free.

As for the rest, four were sentenced to death, three of whom were guillotined and one reprieved to a life sentence. Of the rest, four received a life sentence and the remainder sentences of various lengths.

Amongst those not arrested, a few disappeared and were never heard of again. Bonnot, Garnier and two others, Valet and Dubois, were killed in battle, dying with guns in their hands. After a year of being hunted, Bonnot and Dubois

were besieged in a house and were killed there. Garnier and Valet did not surrender either. Like Bonnot they courageously withstood a siege, wounding a number of the police and soldiers who surrounded them before they died.

I have no room left to detail all these men did. I cannot decide whether they were right or wrong and I don't want to. The Bonnot Gang may have been a failure. That does not matter to me. These men lived their lives; they stood their ground and defied death. They died valiantly, shooting it out with the police and the army, or walking to the guillotine with a smile.

From a talk given to the *Foyer Individualist d'Etodos Socialos*, Paris
by a Stirner-influenced anarchist and
direct associate of the Bonnot Gang

What follows is a short essay by E. Bertran outlining his individualist anarchist views, along with a more detailed biography.

Notes on Individualism

by E. Bertran

For me, being interested in oneself is the most important and legitimate question in life, the greatest problem a human individual may study and defend, the first point and principle he ought never to lose sight of, no matter what may, or ought, to be the interest of the community he is living in. I believe that the interest of the individual prevails over those of the community. The individual first, the community afterwards—the community simply being the whole of the individuals forming it.

A philosopher knows that Right, Good, Evil, the beautiful, the ugly, etc. do not exist in any fixed and definable way. They are relative conditions whose meaning remains doubtful and undecided. There is no question of "right", no question of "morality", in a real and absolute manner. An individual has no more rights than obligations, duties, priveleges, licences, immunities. He simply has to move in one way or another, in the most favorable direction he chooses and is able to, even in a noxious or hurtful way if he happens to select such a course. He may be a fool or a smart fellow, gain or lose after he has decided what is true and what is his own interest. The conscious individualist knows his true interest, or ought to. He is not obliged to anything, but he may even give his life if he so decides. He is the most responsible human being in existence.

From our premises it may already appear that an anarchist individualist supplied with such a view can reach full freedom in thinking, elaborating, judging and concluding an argument. I don't mean to say that he is bound to be right all

the time, but that his method of reasoning may be accepted as the freest, the safest, and the best reasoning an intelligent man of our epoch and time may employ to establish a piece of the truths we are propounding here.

Let us consider the fact that such a reasoning human being is practically and integrally free from spiritual or religious notions, that he does not follow any idealist sect, party, or political organization; that he has no-one above him who compels him to believe something they claim to be The Truth; that this unbeliever even admits that he does not know anything for sure and has become a complete skeptic, placing himself outside the believing world. This man, then, who knows that Truth does not exist, has accepted individualism.

Anarchism means freedom (absolute, integral), refusing authority. An anarchist aspires after self-government. The word has nothing to do with disorder or confusion, meaning specifically the absence of rulers. As a kind of political party the present, so-called anarchist movement actually tries to struggle against the political forces constituting the national state. Not believing in politics, it has no future and is reduced or driven to preach a revolution that is evidently bound to fail. Nowadays it represents a mere waste of time and does not bother the State in the least. The people in charge treat it with contempt, and they are right—it is not *dangerous*.

Being a born anarchist I was naturally led to choose the individualist shade of anarchism. I did this as soon as I got hold of Stirner's lucubrations in 1898 and found it the only tool that allowed me to reason logically and safely. As soon as I had interpreted Stirner's thinking I felt at ease. I became free from belief, credo, romanticism, poetry, idolatry, and so forth. I could think on my own natural ground and born disposition—just what Stirner had expected to produce. Twenty years old, enough elementary information in my mind, and a desire to do and be something and somebody...

The anarchist movement I have in mind is naturally based on individualism. My anarchism is not a spiritualist system. It contemplates a gradual and total intellectual emancipation in all fields.

The aim—if an aim were wanted—is to help the individual attain real and practical emancipation. My purpose here is not to offer a plan for a new and imaginative human society absurdly conceived for people who don't, nor ever will, exist. Anarchy and anarchism are eternal, have no end in view, no final revolution in perspective, only research. Action may result incidentally, but no perfect revolution is contemplated. Of course, if or when a revolution appears individualists may or may not decide to take part, and an individualistic inspiration may contribute to certain decisions, but as a political movement individualism does not exist. There is no question of mass individualism. Logically one must understand that an anarchist could not possibly belong to any party nor to any authoritarian political formation.

From my point of view an individualist anarchist may consent to associate with some group, circle, or so-called intellectual assembly, but never to serve or obey them passively. It has even happened that some such individualist anarchist groups appeared to follow a certain rigorous ideological tendency that appeared sectarian, even authoritarian, but in such a case it may be considered as a mere system of action rendered tactically necessary in a temporary or simple struggle against a possible reaction. Very often such a disciplined attitude has been caused by a need to observe a relative purity with the view of obviating a threatened deviation from a plan of action arising from the group.

I consider that anarchism occupies a unique stand in the philosophical field and that an impartial examination of its basic principles would suffice to establish its position in the whole of social agitation. To me you can't very well claim to be an anarchist *a votre facon*, that is to say **after your own way**. For me you are an anarchist or not. You could not, for instance, claim to be a patriotic anarchist, a Christian anarchist, or a fascist anarchist...this would be nonsensical.

Individualism started at the very beginning of human thought, even before Epicurus or Democritus. It arrived at Herbert Spencer, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Stirner, and in our own time Palante, and many others I could quote if

needed. Certainly the Greeks already had properly established the principles needed to work out a standing philosophy, which has been completed now and is ready to be proposed to, examined, and considered by everybody.

Historical Note: E. Bertran (not to be confused with E. Armand, whose writings appear later in this anthology) was the pen-name of the anarchist Leon Rodriguez (born in Paris in 1878). The very first interaction that Rodriguez had with police after he became an anarchist resulted in his going to jail for three months, in 1895. In Brussels, in 1897, he served eighteen months in prison for contempt of laws and inciting revolt. In London, in 1900, he did nine months hard labor for counterfeiting, and then in Bristol (England), in 1905, seven years of penal servitude, also for counterfeiting.

In 1912, in Paris he did another eight years of forced labor for—yet again—counterfeiting and also for his association with the legendary Bonnot Gang. For this he was finally deported for life to French Guyana. He escaped from there in 1920, and (by using assumed names and false documents) he lived for twenty years in various English, Spanish and Italian speaking countries. Over the span of that time he was deported from Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, and Venezuela. What an epic story!

Throughout his years of anarchist activity Rodriguez often referred to Max Stirner as “the liberator” and once wrote: “The greatness of Stirner is that the revolution takes place in the head. The day I overturned and chucked out the ghost was one of joyous liberation”. Leon Rodriguez died in September of 1969 at the age of 92.

Three European Individualists: Some Notes on Armand, Martucci, and Novatore

by S. E. Parker

Little is known about European individualism in the U.S.A. This brief account of some of the ideas of three of its most prominent exponents will, I hope, both awaken interest and make clear its differences with the doctrines of such Americans as Benjamin Tucker and his associates.

E. Armand (Ernest Lucien Juin 1872-1962) was the only one of the three to be directly influenced by Tucker. He was, however, never an orthodox "Tuckerian". He disagreed with Tucker on several points, including the value of "illegalism" and what he considered to be Tucker's Puritanism. Nor did he attribute as much importance to the economic question as did Tucker. Armand believed that a future anarchist society was possible. Of it he wrote:

The individualist can affirm with certainty that authoritarianism will in no case continue in the future society. To imagine a 'world to come' where there would still be a trace of domination, coercion and duty is nonsense. The individualist is sure that there will no longer be room for the intervention of the State—of a governmental, social, legislative, penal, disciplinary institution or administration—in the thought, conduct and activities of human beings.

The individualist knows that relations and

agreements among men will be arrived at voluntarily; understandings and contracts will be for a specific purpose and time, and not obligatory; there will not be a clause or an article of agreement or contract that will not be weighed and discussed before being agreed to; a unilateral contract, obliging someone to fill an engagement he has not personally and knowingly accepted, will be impossible. The individualist knows that no economic, political, or religious majority – no social group whatever – will be able to compel a minority, or even a single man, to conform against his will to its decisions or decrees.

Despite this utopian description of a “future society”, Armand was aware that other individualists did not see things in such a rosy light. In the same essay from which the above passage was quoted he remarked that “The individualist does not put his hope in the future society. He wants to live in the present moment, and wants to draw from it the maximum results.” Armand also gave an excellent summary of the views of the “good number of anarchist individualists” who “have no interest in the ‘future humanity’”.

Indeed, five years before his death, Armand appears to have joined this “good number”. Outlining “Individualist Perspectives” he wrote:

I want to live in a society from which the last vestiges of authority have disappeared, but, to speak frankly, I am not certain that the “mass”, to call it what it is, is capable of dispensing with authority.

Enzo Martucci (Enzo da Villafiore 1904-1975), like Armand, believed that an anarchist world was possible. He differed from Armand, however, on the nature of this world. Armand thought that an anarchist world would be characterized by

harmony and reciprocity. For him, the primary interest of the individualist was the maintenance of the "state of comradeship" and the ending of violent conflict.

In a controversy with Armand in 1925 Martucci disagreed. For his anarchy was a "future form of free life in which the individual will affirm himself in the measure of his powers." Such a life "presupposes the co-existence of solidarity and war, and I consider both of these as means to be used by the individual according to whether one or the other is more useful to satisfy his needs."

When diverse egoisms are at loggerheads, he argued, it is not always possible "to manage a solution of these conflicts by means of mutual concessions. There exist, in effect, antithetical interests, irreconcilable antipathies, sentiments of hatred, desires of vengeance, all things which prevent a peaceful understanding—if in a given situation violence gives me more advantage than mutual aid, for what motive should I not make it serve me?"

Forty years later Martucci still saw his ideal anarchy in the same way:

Struggle is inevitable, and it is impossible to eliminate it from any kind of society or co-existence. Anarchy 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 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—associations 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 times preferable to the asphalt jungle.

This preference for the “natural jungle” reflected Martucci’s fervent belief in “Nature” which he regarded as a sort of purposive agency “creating” “man” to be an individualist. Here he showed the influence exerted upon him by such writers as de Sade—whose own view of “Nature”, however, was much more ambivalent and also deviated from a coherent individualist approach. To believe that “Nature” has created us to be individualists is equivalent to believing that “God”, “History” or “Reason” have destined men to live like this. If, as Martucci argues elsewhere, the individual is the only authentic reality we can know, then individualism is the expression of an individual preference, an egoistic lifestyle—not something determined by some supra-individual force.

Martucci was not completely convinced that an anarchist world would come. He admits that “If history is not an infinite process, as I firmly believe, then when it exhausts its cycle it will disappear opening the way to anarchy. If, on the other hand, history endures, then anarchism will remain—that is, the eternal revolt of the individual against a stifling society.”

Renzo Novatore (Abile Rizerio Ferrari 1889-1922) was the mentor of Martucci. Unlike Martucci, however, he had no belief in the possibility of a generalized anarchy. His decisive rejection of the utopian and solidaritist myths expressed itself in a conception of anarchism as an immediate individualism excluding any hopes of realization in social form. The anarchist individualist has nothing to expect from a social revolution or any type of society, “he is already an anarchist and as such he feels and lives his life.”

Certainly he rebels against existing society, certainly he will assist in its disintegration, but he does not imagine he will be any “freer” in the future societies promised by the variegated merchants of social salvation. For Novatore the war between the individual and society, any society, was eternal. In society

the individual can only be viewed as a member, not a unique ego, and therefore will perpetually humiliate in the name of the "good of society". He wrote:

Anarchy is not a social form, but a method of individuation. No society will concede to me more than a limited freedom and a well-being that it grants to each of its members. But I am not content with this and want more. I want all that I have the power to conquer. Every society seeks to confine me to the august limits of the permitted and the prohibited. But I do not acknowledge these limits, for nothing is forbidden and all is permitted to those who have the force and valor.

Novatore saw life as war and conflict between differing individual needs as unresolvable. To think that strong individuals could affirm themselves without at the same time hurting weak individuals, was to indulge in a pipe-dream. He saw no chance for the majority of the human race ever freeing themselves from the chains of authority. Therefore only a strictly individualist perspective of anarchism was valid.

Anarchy, [he wrote] which is the natural liberty of the individual freed from the odious yoke of spiritual and material governors, is not the construction of a new and suffocating society. It is a decisive fight against all societies—christian, democratic, communist, etc., etc. Anarchism is the eternal struggle of a small minority of aristocratic outsiders against all societies which follow one another on the stage of history.

"European" Individualism tends, therefore, to be pessimistic as to whether an anarchist society is possible, and, in some cases, skeptical as to whether it is desirable. The antinomy between the individual and society is seen as a permanent

feature of any conceivable individualist way of going on.

"American" individualism tends to see a harmonious future society based on "anarchist" principles—i.e. "natural law" or the intelligent application of self-interest—as both possible and desirable. In holding such a perspective its adherents have in some cases ended in a position more accurately described as "mutualist" than individualist. For myself, I consider the "European" individualist view as both historically and psychologically more realistic than the American view. Armand, Martucci and Novatore are not, of course, the only European anarchist individualists, but I have chosen them as making progressively clearer the differences between the two views.

Much as I have learned from such people as Tucker, John Beverly Robinson, Josiah Warren, Stephen Pearl Andrews, and their friends, after thirty years of "anarchist" activity of various kinds, I now find myself more in accord with the view point of Renzo Novatore—even if his own short and tragic life lacked the prudence that, so far, has characterized my own—than that of those who sought to transform their own individual rebellion into a heaven on earth for everyone.

First published in *The Storm*:
a journal for freespirts, Summer, 1978

Individualist Perspectives

by E. Armand

The anarchist individualists do not present themselves as proletarians, absorbed only in the search for material amelioration, tied to a class determined to transform the world and to substitute a new society for the actual one. They place themselves in the present; they disdain to orient the coming generations towards a form of society allegedly destined to assure their happiness, for the simple reason that from the individualist point of view happiness is a conquest, an individual's internal realization.

Even if I believed in the efficacy of a universal social transformation, according to a well-defined system without direction, sanction or obligation, I do not see by what right I could persuade others that it is the best. For example, I want to live in a society from which the last vestige of authority has disappeared, but to speak frankly, I am not certain that the "mass", to call it what it is, is capable of dispensing with authority. I want to live in a society in which the members think by and for themselves, but the attraction which is exercised on the mass by publicity, the press, frivolous reading, and State-subsidized distractions is such that I ask myself whether men will ever be able to reflect and judge with an independent mind.

I may be told in reply that the solution of the social question will transform every man into a sage. This is a gratuitous affirmation; the more so as there have been sages under all regimes. Since I do not know the social form which is most likely to create internal harmony and equilibrium in social unity, I refrain from theorizing.

When "voluntary association" is spoken of, voluntary adhesion to a plan, a project, a given action, this implies the possibility of refusing the association, adhesion, or action. Let us

imagine the planet submitted to a single social or economic life; how would I exist if this system did not please me? There remains to me only one expedient: to integrate or to perish. It is held that, "the social question" having been solved, there is no longer a place for non-conformism, recalcitrance, etc... but it is precisely when a question has been resolved that it is important to pose new ones or to return to an old solution, if only to avoid stagnation.

If there is a "Freedom" standing over and above all individuals, it is surely nothing more than the expression of their thoughts, the manifestation and diffusion of their opinions. The existence of a social organization founded on a single ideological unity interdicts all exercise of freedom of speech and of ideologically contrary thought. How would I be able to oppose the dominant system, proposing another, supporting a return to an older system, if the means of making my viewpoint known or of publicizing my critiques were in the possession of the agents of the regime in power? This regime must either accept reproach when compared to other social solutions superior to its own, or, despite its termination in "ist", it is no better than any other regime. Either it will admit opposition, secession, schism, fractionalism, competition, or nothing will distinguish it significantly from a dictatorship. This "ist" regime would undoubtedly claim that it has been invested with its power by the masses, that it does not exercise its power or control except by the delegation of assemblies or congresses; but as long as it did not allow the intransigents and refractories to express the reasons for their attitude and for their corresponding behavior, it would be only a totalitarian system. The material benefits on which a dictatorship prides itself are of no importance. Regardless of whether there is scarcity or abundance, a dictatorship is always a dictatorship.

It is asked of me why I call my individualism "anarchist individualism"? Simply because the State concretizes the best organized form of resistance to individual affirmation. What is the State? An organism which bills itself as representative of the social body, to which power is allegedly delegated, this power expressing the will of an autocrat or of popular sovereignty.

This power has no reason for existing other than the maintenance of the extant social structure. But individual aspirations are unable to come to terms with the existence of the State, perpetuation of Society, for, as Palante says: "All society is and will be exploitative, userpacious, dominating, and tyrannical. Thus it is not by accident but by essence." Yet the individualist would be neither exploited, usurped, dominated, tyrannized nor dispossessed of his sovereignty. On the other hand, Society is able to exercise its constraint on the individual only thanks to the support of the State, administrator and director of the affairs of Society. No matter which way he turns the individual encounters the State or its agents of execution, who do not care in the least whether the regulations which they enforce concur or not with the diversity of temperaments of the subjects upon whom they are administered. From their aspirations as from their demands, the individualists of our school have eliminated the State. That is why they call themselves "anarchists".

But we deceive ourselves if we imagine that the individualists of our school are anarchists (AN-ARCHY, etymologically, means only negation of the state, and does not pertain to other matters) only in relation to the State—such as the western democracies or the totalitarian systems. This point cannot be overemphasized. Against all that which is power, that is, economic as well as political domination, individualists rebel and form such fronts as they are able, alone or in voluntary association. In effect, a group or federation can exercise power as absolute as any State if it accepts in a given field all the possibilities of activity and realization.

The only social body in which it is possible for an individualist to evolve and develop is that which admits a concurrent plurality of experiences and realization, to which is opposed all groupings founded on ideological exclusiveness, which, well-meant though they may be, threaten the integrity of the individual from the moment that this exclusiveness aims to extend itself to the non-adherents of the grouping. To call this anti-statist would be doing no more than providing a mask for an appetite for driving a herd of human sheep.

I have said above that it is necessary to insist on this point.

For example, anarchist communism denies, rejects, and expels the State from its ideology; but it resuscitates it the moment that it substitutes social organization for personal judgment. If anarchist individualism thus has in common with anarchist communism the political negation of the State, of the “Arche”, it only marks a point of divergence. Anarchist communism places itself on the economic plane, on the terrain of the class struggle, united with syndicalism, etc (this is its right), but anarchist individualism situates itself on the psychological plane, and on that of resistance to social totalitarianism, which is something entirely different. (Naturally, anarchist individualism follows the many paths of activity and education: philosophy, literature, ethics, etc, but I have wanted to make precise here only some points of our attitude towards the social environment.)

I do not deny that this is not very new, but it is taking a position to which it is good to return from time to time.

Biographical Note: E. Armand was the pseudonym of Ernest-Lucien Juin (1872-1962), a prominent, eloquent and prolific individualist thinker in France, who edited the journal *L’Oudors (Outside)*. Armand’s view that life was to be lived to the full led him to be more than a mere theorist of anarchy—life without authority—and he served time in prison on several occasions for his resistance to militarism and State control.

Armand was a dissident among dissidents, and even fellow anarchists were sometimes offended by his open advocacy of sexual liberation—for persons of both sexes and all tendencies. Ahead of his time, Armand and a hearty few attacked State-enforced religious morality and the sexual prudishness of other so-called anti-authoritarians. In place of coercive Society, he sought to practice, whenever possible, relationships and associations based on comradeship, reciprocity, equal liberty, and free speech—and to help liberate others from the social prejudices and fixed ideas that prompt them to resent and persecute the anomalous, the different, the unique, the outsider, the *en-dehors*.

Very little of Armand’s immense output has been translated into English. It’s our hope that the reprinting of this essay will stimulate interest in his ideas, so that more of his work may be

made known. Later in this anthology is a much more comprehensive overview of Armand's life and philosophical trajectory by S.E. Parker, which originally appeared in the 1979 issue of *The Storm: A Journal for Free Spirits*.

Is the Anarchist Ideal Realizable?

by E. Armand

In December of 1929 the French Journal La Revue Anarchiste carried on an investigation of the following question:

Is the anarchist ideal realizable? Can man live without authority, in the present or in the future? Will the suppression of all constraints ever be anything but the prerogative of tiny minorities?

Numerous individuals and anarchists of all stripes responded to the journal's call for submissions on the subject, and in their January issue they published the essays and letters they had received. Reprinted below is E. Armand's contribution to the discussion.

I am embarrassed concerning how to properly respond to the investigation of *La Revue Anarchiste*. Is there an anarchist ideal? Is anarchism an ideal? If there is an anarchist ideal which is it, since there are several tendencies or currents within anarchism?

It is true that the follow-up to the question posed by *La Revue Anarchiste* seems to delimit or define the anarchist ideal: "without authority," "suppression of all constraints."

We should doubtless read “of all political authority,” of “all constraints of a statist or governmental order or anything having to do with them,” for we know that man isn’t free, biologically speaking: he is subject to the indications of his determinism.

Being an anarchist means denying, rejecting, the *arche*, political and legal domination, the apparatus of power. But it’s even more: it means denying, rejecting, the utility of the state in ordering relations between men. Better, it means doing without the intervention and the protection of *archist* institutions in reaching agreement with others.

How can I know if in the future “man” will be able to do without political authority, or any imposed authority? How can I know if the “suppression of all constraints” will ever be anything but the prerogative of tiny minorities? Judging by appearances, I see no man who does without authority; I see no minority escaping from *all* constraints.

In fact, I don’t really care.

I feel that I am an anarchist, and that’s enough. I feel myself to be hindered, blocked, tied down, limited, restrained by the multiple ties forged by state institutions. I rebel against these constraints; I escape from them as soon as I find the occasion to do so. Whenever I have to deal with an ordinary human being (?) I find him to be imbued with conventional ideas, prejudices, beliefs, commitments, points of view inculcated in him by the agents of *archism*. I attempt to liberate those I encounter from these foreign suggestions.

Alas, I don’t live “without authority.” At every corner, at every crossroad I must suffer from its visible representation. And if only this were all there was. Nevertheless, in my daily relations with anti-statists like myself I do my best to get along with others by ignoring the play of governmental institutions. I more or less succeed in doing this, but I persevere. And I pay little attention to whether or not the relations I maintain with “my people” square with the education, the economic or sexual morality, of state or church (the stand in for the state) teachings.

And now let us come to individualist anarchism.

Anarchist individualism is not an ideal, but an activity. A state of open or hidden—but continuous—struggle against any concept of life that subordinates the individual to governmental authority, which considers him a function of the state, which judges him by social constraints and legal sanctions whose legitimacy in relation to his personal development he never could and cannot weigh.

I don't know if those who constitute it form an "elite," but I maintain that throughout the world there exists an individualist anarchist milieu, a milieu of comrades which, by all the means in its power, works at ignoring the social, moral, intellectual conditions upon which *archist* society rests, using ruse if open escape isn't possible.

We don't live on hypotheses or conjectures. If there is an anarchist ideal, I propose to realize all that I can of it immediately, without waiting, without asking if I am a member or not of an elite, doing so by associating myself with atheist, materialist, pleasure-seeking comrades, in a hurry to go full steam ahead just as I am. Everything else is a distraction or metaphysics.

We thank *La Revue Anarchiste* for having given us the occasion to enjoy ourselves among comrades.

An Introduction To E. Armand: What He Was For, What He Was Against

by S. E. Parker

I first met E. Armand one August afternoon in the summer of 1953 outside the Café au Tambouf, Place de la Bastille, Paris. I was 24 years of age and full of the revolutionary anti-statist communism I then called "anarchism". Even in those days, however, I was attracted by certain aspects of anarchist individualism; and this, together with my reading of a few of Armand's writings in English translation, was probably the reason I was so eager to meet him. What was said at that first meeting I can no longer recall. All I can remember was a little old man in a black beret shaking me by the hand, and then briskly handing me a heavy case containing literature to carry up to the first floor of the café where a gathering of "Les Amis d'Armand" was to take place.

The following day I returned to the café where a second gathering was being held; this time I had two companions from London with me. During the course of a conversation with Armand one of them asked why he, who considered himself a conscious egoist, had spent so much time in prison—some ten years in all. Armand replied that it was "a risk of the trade". He illustrated what he meant by pointing out that, just as a steeplejack daily risked his life on the job, so the anarchist propagandist risked imprisonment in his. This unaffected reply made a deep impression on me and undoubtedly helped to eventually deflate the grandiloquent notions of "living for the Cause" that I had at that time. Now I live for myself.

In retrospect I am sorry that I did not make more of my opportunity to get to know Armand. My head was stuffed with the fanciful dreams of Kropotkin and William Morris so my appreciation of his value had to wait until some eight years later.

WHO WASE. ARMAND? His real name was Ernest-Lucien Juin. He was born in Paris, March 26, 1872. His father had

taken part in the Paris Commune of 1871 and had given his son a strict, studious, and severely anti-clerical upbringing. Not surprisingly, Armand's first rebellion was against all this. He became a "religieuse".

In 1888, Armand was in London and bought for one penny a copy of the *New Testament*, the reading of which converted him to Christianity. In December of that year he joined the Salvation Army and later rose to quite a high rank. He remained a member until December, 1897. About a year before, however, he had begun to read various French libertarian communist journals and soon contributed articles under a pen-name to one of the most famous, *Le Libertaire*.

After he left the Salvation Army he came under the influence of Tolstoy and considered himself a "Christian anarchist". In 1901, together with Marie Kugel, he founded his first periodical, *L'Ere Nouvelle* (The New Era), which he published for ten years, interrupted by a spell in prison on a charge of issuing counterfeit money. Other periodicals followed: *Hors Du Troupeau* (Outside the Herd) in 1911, *Les Refractaires* (The Insubordinates) 1912-1913, *Pendant La Melee* (During the Conflict) 1915-16; and *Par Dela La Melee* (Beyond the Conflict) 1916-18.

By the time *L'Ere Nouvelle* had ceased publication, Armand had abandoned Christianity and the libertarian communism he had previously championed and had become an anarchist individualist. From then on he devoted his life to publicizing by means of periodicals, books, pamphlets, and lectures, his individualist ideas. In addition, he published works by Gerald de Lacaze-Futhiers, Max Stirner, Albert Libertad, John Henry Mackay, Benjamin R. Tucker, Ixigrec, Benjamin de Casares and other individualist or near-individualist writers. His own main theoretical contribution, first published in 1923, was *L'Initiation Individualists Anarchiste*.

In 1918 Armand was condemned to five years imprisonment on a charge of aiding war deserters. Released in 1922, after a big campaign for his liberation, he began to publish *L'Endetors* (The Outsider), which attained a circulation of six thousand. The outbreak of World War Two in 1939 forced him to suspend publication and brought him two more periods

in prison between 1940 and 1942. The first, for three months, was for possessing an anti-war tract published by *L'Adunata Dei Refrattari* of New York. The second consisted of two years spent in various internment camps, no doubt for being "an undesirable person".

Armand was seventy three years old in 1945, at an age many men would have called it a day and retired to watch life from the sidelines. Instead, he carried on and started a new periodical, *L'Unique*, named after Stirner's famous book. This was issued as a separate publication until 1956, when it became a supplement to Louis Dorlet's monthly *Defense De L'Homme*. It remained such until Armand's death on February 19, 1962, one month short of his ninetieth year.

In his "*What Individualists Want*", Armand wrote:

Individualists want a milieu that is conceived for the individual, that is relative to the individual, that will neither exist nor function except by and for the individual.

[Consequently] The individualist refuses to occupy the place of a cog in the social machine and struggles with all his forces to reduce its constraint, if not to nothing, then at least to a minimum. His great, his supreme concern, is to defend himself against its attacks. He succeeds or he fails; but, conqueror or conquered, his state of mind, his way of acting, remain the same.

Making this his touchstone, Armand launched a sustained critique of authority in all its forms: political, economic, philosophical, sexual, moral, and so on. His great wish was to see the growth of so many self-owning individuals that his ideal of "a society without government" would be achieved. This he defines as:

A state of social life founded on a multiplicity of "families of election", of unions or associations or federations, conceived and realized

without external interference or constraint, with no contracts imposed from without, all guarantees being given to the solidarity to evolve apart if he so prefers.

Armand called his form of individualism "contractual and mutualist". But his way of interpreting his "contractualism" sometimes led to vehement dissent by his readers. This was illustrated by the controversy caused by his "parable" *Alors Que La Bete Regnait* in which sentence of death is passed and executed upon a woman who is held responsible for the suicide of a man to whom she had refused sexual intercourse. The reason for this extraordinary decision was because her refusal was contrary to the contract made by the group of which she and he were members. It was quite clear that Armand in this "parable" regarded the "contract" as superior to the individuals who made it. It is no wonder that his friend Ixigrec asked in a study of Armand: "Was this not a most authoritarian intervention by the "judges" who condemned her and the executioner who killed her?" At the time of the controversy, Armand had denied this interpretation; but it did raise the question as to how far Armand had rid himself of the "moralic acid" he had imbibed during his Christian period. Indeed, his comrade of pre-1914 days, Mauricius, in a memorial essay on Armand, remarked that the latter's early Christian anarchism "impregnated all his life".

It was probably this "impregnation" that accounted for Armand's ambivalent attitude towards morality. He often proclaimed himself an amoralist, and urged the "de-christianization" of anarchism in order to eliminate all traces of moralism. But he would also argue against the amorality of the Italian individualist, Enzo Martucci, in favor of "an individualist morality". Perhaps it is inevitable that a certain creeping-in of morality cannot be avoided if one seeks to create "non-governmental societies", since all organized collectives need normative sanctions. And this brings us to the question of whether anarchist individualism is really compatible with any form of "society" —even one that is "contractual and mutualist" in character.

In opposition to Armand, I consider that a thoroughgoing individualism has no solutions to the "social problem". An individualist may be able to solve certain personal problems, but that is all. To the extent that Armand sought social solutions to the problems he confronted, his individualism was weakened and he fell under the spell of utopianism and the social totalitarianism that, on other occasions, he so effectively criticized. Fortunately, he was, in part, aware of this danger; and in some of his writings, he was skeptical of the possibility of a universalized anarchy. And even when in a utopian mood, as in his essay *The Future Society*, he called attention to the perspective of those individualists who rightly regarded all talk of a "free society" as a pipedream.

In 1961, as the result of reading Stirner's *The Ego And His Own*, my own individualism erupted after some years of intermittent development. I immediately got in touch with Armand again and corresponded with him until his death. Despite his failing powers, he encouraged me to "re-animate individualism in the English language countries" I then took the responsibility of publishing several of his writings for the first time in English translation. I have now, it is clear, gone far beyond certain of the positions he held; but I am pleased and proud to have been asked to select and introduce some of his essays on individualism. In this time of galloping collectivism, when in all manner of insidious ways the prevalence of the "social" over the individual is preached and practiced, Armand's defense of the individual, and his analysis of individualism, has a value which increases day by day.

S. E. Parker
London, September, 1979

E. Armand: Sexual Liberationist

(from an essay by Catherine Campousy)

In the field of radical activities, in France, where one meets with so many tendencies and where there is room for various forms of expression, E. Armand has chosen his own path. An Individualist Anarchist, he moves outside of other anarchist groups. He advances upon a trail which he has blazed for himself, in company of a nucleus of comrades who share his views, and who, in all freedom of choice, act accordingly.

He, therefore, independently of other existing groupings or organizations, carries on his work, not depending on the assistance of any party or person, in fine, he acts in conformity with his own ideas and free will.

He exerts his activity as a propagandist, first of all in the publishing of *L'en dehors*, an organ he founded in 1922, and in behalf of various organizations which he subsequently formed.

E. Armand does not content himself with the written word. With the help of comrades, he organizes propaganda tours in many provincial towns, which permit him to defend and propagate his theories in a more direct manner.

But it is Paris that his initiative and efforts have given the most fruitful and interesting results. Although visiting there but two or three times a month, he has established a "milieu" of comrades and friends who gather eagerly in a café in the Montparnasse quarter of the Temple, to assist and participate if they so desire, in educational talks covering numerous and various subjects.

It is in this group of sympathizers, where discussions do not lack in vivacity, that the personality of E. Armand stands out in a characteristic manner. At first encounter, he gives the impression of a man of simple manners, devoid of any vulgarity, who does not place himself upon any pedestal.

In his private conversations, E. Armand can put himself on a level with his questioner and answer him accordingly, whether the questioner presents a problem in philosophy or confesses to some event in his domestic life, whether he belongs to the "genteel set" that ventures among the anarchists or whether he is a bohemian or a vagabond.

E. Armand is not an orator. Nevertheless, when he delivers a lecture, he interests his audience by the clarity of his exposition, and also by a certain charm of voice. It is in repartee that he excels. The manner in which he questions the speaker on the topic that he has just developed gives rise to lively debates, stirs interest and discussion.

E. Armand unquestionably possesses the gift of bringing animation into a lecture hall, of creating an intense atmosphere, and, on occasion, of making effective use of sharp and biting irony.

For the last ten years, E. Armand has devoted all his energy to the work of *L'en dehors*. In this paper, which has since become a magazine with a circulation of six thousand, representing a minimum of fifteen thousand readers, he carries on a constant and often harsh and arduous struggle, for the propagation of ideas that are dear to him and which he considers useful. He fights against all prejudices of morality, of the family, of the Fatherland, of the State.

Aiming at an educational goal, he seeks to undermine ready-made ideas, to encourage mental reflection, and, as far as can be done, to create new mentalities. To liberate the individual, such is his object: to liberate him in all domains, from the yoke of the State and of the Church; to make him understand that the full strength of the individual lies within himself.

Above all, he works to pave the way for sexual liberation. By numerous articles and pamphlets of his own and of his collaborators, such as Gerard de Lacaze-Duthiers and Dr. A.R. Proschowsky, he strives to overthrow one of the strongest prejudices prevailing today, as well as the hypocrisy which is one of its fundamental causes.

Going beyond the point of view of Free Union, which is a faithful replica of Legal Union, he demands for each the free

disposal of his or her body, the right for the woman as well as for the man to choose her or his partner, to practice plurality in love and sex, if urged by their temperament.

Again, he claims for the sexual amoralists and varietists, the right to satisfy their desires without being hindered by material obstacles, without incurring the moral or legal disrepute which overwhelm them today. He advocates a hedonistic conception of life, claiming for the individual the right to all enjoyments.

The most original part of his work is perhaps the theory of "Amorous Comradeship" (*Camaraderie Amoureuse*), the essential idea of which consists in bringing within the scope of the realm of comradeship the amorous and sentimental affinities. To attain this goal, he has conceived the formation of groups, circles, or clubs, where this form of comradeship would be practiced, which would banish the prejudices concerning age, appearance, and class; where jealousy and exclusiveness in love would be unknown.

To give a more exact idea of the policy which E. Armand has caused *L'en dehors* to follow at the present time, we insert this extract, which appeared in the October 15 issue and which is better than all possible interpretations:

In all places, the Anarchist Individualists of our tendencies, want to establish forthwith and for all time a society based on individual achievement, and in which, without any control or interference whatever from the State, all individuals may be able to regulate their affairs between themselves by means of FREE CONTRACT, cancellable after due notice. Their free associations to be the unions of comrades, based on the exercise of "reciprocity" or EQUAL LIBERTY. The Anarchist Individualists consider as their enemies all those institutions and individuals who, directly or by proxy, wish to subject them to their authority and use force, if necessary—

in other words, all partisans of IMPOSED CONTRACT. They reserve the right to defend themselves, by all means at their disposal, even by ruse, if need be.

Individualists whose tendencies are in accord with those expressed in "L'en dehors", oppose jealousy in sexual relationships and exclusiveness in love, which they hold to be authoritarian manifestations. They propagate the theory of "Amorous Comradeship". They demand ALL SEXUAL LIBERTIES (provided they are not tainted with violence, deceit, fraud, or venality), including the right of education, free expression, variety, and association.

E. Armand appears as a bold theoretician and a precursor in sexualism to those who think and are not biased; he is, on the other hand, actively opposed by many, even among anarchists.

If the attacks against him were honest, there would be nothing to say, but it is too often that his friends have had the occasion to hear his public as well as his private life disparaged by men who, undoubtedly at heart, only desired to harm a personality such as his.

Nevertheless, he goes on, sometimes bitter or incensed, but never discouraged.

Indeed, it is quite possible to feel an antipathy for the person of E. Armand, to condemn his ideas as pernicious (I try to judge this from the point of view of his enemies), but, could his opponents recognize in him the propagandist who gives himself without stint to his work, with complete disinterestedness, and persevering in spite of all disappointments encountered on the way, then they would do him justice.

Translated from the French by J. Rudome.
Reprinted from Abba Gordin's journal
The Clarion, February 1933

Some Historical Background: E. Armand's brand of individualist anarchism placed great emphasis on the politics of free sexuality and non-possessive relationships, as well as nudism and polyamory. In 1907 Armand wrote his first pamphlet on sexuality: *De la liberté sexuelle*, where he advocated not only a vague free love but also multiple partners, which he called "plural love." Although the publication's tone was considerably more outspoken than most others like it, Armand's theses did not differ significantly from the ones familiar to free love supporters in the anarchist milieu of the time. Only after founding *L'en dehors* (1922) did Armand elaborate an increasingly original conception of libertarian sexuality.

L'en dehors didn't champion revolutionary sexuality from the outset. During its first twenty months, few articles referred explicitly to issues concerning sexual ethics. In issues 6 and 7, however, he began to criticize the practice of the free union (which he called *unicity* in love) that prevailed in the anarchist colony "L'Intégrale." He contrasted this experience—deemed "imperfect in educational respects"—with the superiority of "free plural unions." Only in 1924, however, did the debate about issues concerning "sexual ethics" become permanently ensconced in *L'en dehors*. The theme continued to be addressed there until the periodical ceased publication in October 1939.

In the letters from readers that he published and in his responses to them, Armand shared increasingly radical theses on sexuality, and the debate on what Armand called *camaraderie amoureuse* had begun. During the following months, Armand progressively elaborated and stated his ideas more specifically, while trying to make them appear more systematic. His reflections culminated in the *L'en dehors* issue of 10 July 1924, which featured a preliminary study entitled "Comment nous concevons la liberté de l'amour" (Our perception of free love), which was published as a pamphlet as well. In 1926 he published *Le Combat contre la jalousie et le sexualisme révolutionnaire*, followed over the years by *Ce que nous entendons par liberté de l'amour* (1928), *La Camaraderie amoureuse ou "chiennerie sexuelle"* (1930), and, finally, *La Révolution sexuelle et la camaraderie amoureuse* (1934), a book of nearly 350 pages comprising most of his writings on sexual issues.

In Armand's view:

Sexual amoralism destroys in human unity values of servitude, such as vice, virtue, purity, chastity, reserve, caution, fidelity, and many other attributes that necessitate the State or the church as guardians or teachers of morals. Wherever amorality figures in sexual relations, people who uphold moral traditions and good values are no longer required. That is what makes the sexualism we propagate revolutionary. As individualists, we should explore a conception of inter-sexual relations that makes us more anarchist, more “neither gods nor masters,” more ex-morality, more ex-legality, more ex-sociability—but also more sociable when we form associations.”

Based on these convictions, Armand elaborated multiple views in favor of adopting a new sexual ethic in *L'en dehors* from 1925 onward. He combined the defense of his theses on *camaraderie amoureuse* with increasingly direct attacks on the family and on countless sexual prejudices shared by most of the libertarians of 1920s France. The importance of promoting a new sexual ethic also led him to broaden his field of concern over the course of several issues. In 1931 he published the pamphlet *L'homosexualité, l'onanisme et les individualistes* on homosexuality, which had received little consideration in the early volumes of *L'en dehors*. As an advocate of greater tolerance in this field (as in any other), Armand still at this time viewed homosexuality (whether masculine or feminine) as a sexual anomaly. In a text from 1937 however, he mentioned among the individualist objectives the practice of forming voluntary associations for purely sexual purposes that might be comprised of heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual temperaments or of a combination thereof.

He also supported the right of individuals to change sex and stated his willingness to rehabilitate forbidden pleasures, non-conformist caresses (he was personally inclined toward voyeurism), as well as sodomy. On incest, however, he was even more outspoken, controversially writing: “Any view of freedom of sexual relations that condemns incest is freedom in name only [...]. [...] Nothing is more moral than engaging in incest with a view toward deriving mutual pleasure and nothing

more immoral than acts intended to prohibit this pleasure, of which the consummation harms nobody.” It’s not quite clear where or why “morality” figures into these ideas, but all credit to Armand for pushing the envelope!

Finally, Armand’s conception of sexual freedom lent itself to immediate so-called experimentation between individuals sharing the same beliefs without needing to be deferred until “the day after the revolution.” From October 1924, Armand proposed forming several associations, including one that would address “issues concerning sexual education and ethics.” Although the formulation was vague, the same issue contained a most opportune reprint of a certain Club Atlantis outside Europe, where the members engaged in “partner swapping”, claiming that Armand’s theses were their source of inspiration.

In June 1925, the articles of association of the *Compagnons de L’en dehors* (CED) appeared in *L’en dehors*. This association was defined as a setting of practical camaraderie. It served individuals who shared Armand’s views. Article 7 stipulated that in sexual matters the group condoned plural love, as well as the struggle against jealousy. The number of female members was expected to equal the number of male members. The only membership requirement was having a subscription to *L’en dehors*, and membership requests could be rejected. The association charged an annual fee and issued cards that served as passports for companions travelling in France or abroad to visit each other. Lists of the names of male and female companions were available on request. Hosts were to be notified a week before the visit. Those invited were not “allowed” to back out, except for health problems or publicity needs. The visits were restricted to twelve hours in the city and twenty four hours in the countryside. Although no grounds for exclusion existed, membership could be revoked in the event of physical violence or prostitution. These articles of association abounded with nitty-gritty details for preserving the autonomy, personal freedom, and even the anonymity of each of the parties to the contract in an effort to avoid last-minute cold feet with respect to the actual practice of camaraderie, including the amorous variety. The provisions served to reinforce inter-individual relations in, ironically, a very rigid and even distinctly bureaucratic framework, engulfed in legalities, which contrasted with the intentions of those involved to foster the freest and most complete forms of

camaraderie (it is here, in the reliance on bureaucracy, that the influence of Charles Fourier on Armand's theories becomes more obvious).

The internal operations of the CED were rather obscure in other respects. All information requests and membership applications were to be directed to Armand, who was solely responsible for the project and was both the instigator and the driving force according to the criteria that he had defined and had no intention of abandoning. Nor did the members seem upset, as dictatorial and non-anarchist as this behavior sounds! In April 1926, *L'endehors* reported that thirty three people had joined the CED, people from throughout France, Germany, the United States, Brazil, Switzerland, the Republic of Argentina, and Morocco. By mid-July of 1926, membership had climbed to forty five and reached fifty three in mid-February of 1927.

Armand retained a militant enthusiasm for the concept of *camaraderie amoureuse* throughout his life (becoming one of the first people to translate texts by Wilhelm Reich into French) and in fact, became so closely identified with the ideas of revolutionary sexuality, that anarchists from around the world followed and discussed the philosophies developing in the pages of *L'en dehors*, as evidenced by the following letter.

Below is a recent translation of an important document in the history of Argentinian anarchism and of anarchist thinking on amorous ethics. América Scarfó was 16 years old when she wrote this letter; the lover she is referring to is none other than Severino di Giovanni, the legendary Italian insurrectionary anarchist and illegalist who waged an uncompromising campaign of revolutionary violence against the Argentinean State from 1929-1931.

Letter to Emile Armand

by América Scarfó

Buenos Aires, 3 December 1928.

To comrade E. Armand.

Dear Comrade,

The purpose of this letter is, first of all, to ask your advice. We have to act, in all moments of our lives, in accord with our own manner of seeing and thinking, in such a way that the reproaches and criticisms of other people find our individuality protected by the healthiest concepts of responsibility and liberty, which form a solid wall weakening their attacks. For this reason we should act consistently with our ideas.

My case, comrade, is of the amorous order. I am a young student who believes in the new life. I believe that, thanks to our free actions, individual or collective, we can arrive at a future of love, fraternity, and equality. I desire for all just what I desire for myself: the freedom to act, to love, to think. That is, I desire anarchy for all humanity. I believe that in order to achieve this we should make a social revolution. But I am also of the opinion that in order to arrive at this revolution it is necessary to free ourselves from all kinds of prejudices, conventionalisms, false moralities, and absurd codes. And, while we wait for this great revolution to break out, we have to carry out this work in all the actions of our existence. And indeed in order to make this revolution come about, we can't just content ourselves with waiting but need to take action in our daily lives. Wherever possible, we should act from the point of view of an anarchist, that is, of a human being.

In love, for example, we will not wait for the revolution; we will unite ourselves freely, paying no regard to the prejudices, barriers, and innumerable lies that oppose us as obstacles. I have come to know a man, a comrade of ideas. According to the laws of the bourgeoisie he is married. He united himself with a woman as a consequence of a childish circumstance, without love. At that time he didn't know our ideas. However,

he lived with this woman for a number of years, and they had children. He didn't experience the satisfaction that he should have felt with a loved one. Life became tedious, the only thing that united these two beings were the children. Still an adolescent, this man came to know our ideas, and a new consciousness was born in him. He turned into a brave militant. He devoted himself to propaganda with ardor and intelligence. All the love that he hadn't directed to a person he offered instead to an ideal. In the home, meanwhile, life continued with its monotony relieved only by the happiness of their small children. It happened that circumstances brought us together, at first as companions of ideas. We talked, we sympathised with each other, and we learned to know each other. Thus our love was born. We believed, in the beginning, that it would be impossible. He, who had loved only in dreams, and I, making my entrance into life. Each one of us continued living between doubt and love. Destiny—or, better, love—did the rest. We opened our hearts and our love and our happiness began to intone its song, even in the middle of the struggle, the ideal, which in fact gave us an even greater impulse. And our eyes, our lips, our hearts expressed themselves in the magic conjuring of a first kiss. We idealised love, but we were carrying it into reality. Free love, that knows no barriers, nor obstacles. The creative force that transports two beings through a flowery field, carpeted with roses—and sometimes thorns—but where we find always happiness.

Is it not the case that the whole universe is converted into an Eden when two beings love each other?

His wife also—despite her relative knowledge—sympathizes with our ideas. When it came to it she gave proofs of her contempt for the hired killers of the bourgeois order as the police began to pursue my friend. That was how the wife of my comrade and I have become friends. She is fully aware of what the man who lived at her side represents to me. The feeling of fraternal affection that existed between them permitted him to confide in her. And he gave her freedom to act as she desired, in the manner of any conscientious anarchist. Until this moment, to tell the truth, we have lived really like in a novel. Our love

became every day more intense. We cannot live altogether in common, given the political situation of my friend, and the fact that I have still not finished my studies. We meet, when we can, in different places. Isn't that perhaps the best way to sublimate love, distancing it from the preoccupations of domestic life? Although I am sure that when it is true love, the most beautiful thing is to live together.

This is what I wanted to explain. Some people here have turned into judges. And these are not to be found so much amongst common people but in fact amongst comrades of ideas who see themselves as free of prejudices but who, at bottom, are intolerant. One of these says that our love is a madness; another indicates that the wife of my friend is playing the role of "martyr", despite the fact that she is aware of everything that concerns us, is the ruler of her own person, and enjoys her freedom. A third raises the ridiculous economic obstacle. I am independent, just as is my friend. In all probability I will create a personal economic situation for myself that will free me from all worries in this sense.

Also, the question of the children. What do the children have to do with the feelings of our hearts? Why can't a man who has children love? It is as if to say that the father of a family cannot work for the idea, do propaganda, etc? What makes them believe that those little beings will be forgotten because their father loves me? If the father were to forget his children he would deserve my contempt and there would exist no more love between us.

Here, in Buenos Aires, certain comrades have a truly meager idea of free love. They imagine that it consists only in cohabiting without being legally married and, meanwhile, in their own homes they carry on practicing all the stupidities and prejudices of ignorant people. This type of union that ignores the civil registrar and the priest also exists in bourgeois society. Is that free love?

Finally, they criticize our difference in age. Just because I am 16 and my friend is 26. Some accuse me of running a commercial operation; others qualify me as unwitting. Ah these pontiffs of anarchism! Making the question of age interfere with love!

As if it the fact a brain reasons is not enough for a person to be responsible for their actions! On the other hand, it is my own problem, and if the difference in age means nothing to me, why should it matter to anyone else? That which I cherish and love is youth of the spirit, which is eternal.

There are also those who treat us as degenerates or sick people and other labels of this kind. To all these I say: why? Because we live life in its true sense, because we recognise a free cult of love? Because, just like the birds that bring joy to walkways and gardens, we love without paying any attention to codes or false morals? Because we are faithful to our ideas? I disdain all those who cannot understand what it is to know how to love.

True love is pure. It is the sun whose rays stretch to those who cannot climb to the heights. Life is something we have to live freely. We accord to beauty, to the pleasures of the spirit, to love, the cult that they deserve.

This is all comrade. I would like to have your opinion on my case. I know very well what I am doing and I don't need to be approved or applauded. Just that, having read many of your articles and agreeing with various points of view, it would make me content to know your opinion.

This letter was published in *L'en dehors* on 20 January 1929 under the title "An Experience", together with this reply from E. Armand:

Comrade: My opinion matters little in this matter you send me about what you are doing. Are you or are you not intimately in accord with your personal conception of the anarchist life? If you are, then ignore the comments and insults of others and carry on following your own path. No one has the right to judge your way of conducting yourself, even if it were the case that your friend's wife be hostile to these relations. Every woman united to an anarchist (or vice versa), knows very well that she should not exercise on him, or accept from him, domination of any kind.

Translated by Dariush Sokolov

What follows next is a rare English translation of an article by Armand. This isn't a particularly groundbreaking essay, even for 1955 (when it was first published in France), but it provides a good example of Armand's Epicurean approach to anarchist-individualism, with its insistence that individuals derive as much pleasure as possible out their short span of life by embracing the psycho-biological instincts against which Judeo-Christian morality has been unsuccessfully campaigning for the last 3,000 years. Armand saw the unrepressed ego as essentially sensual and regarded the struggle to free sensuality from moral and legal constraints as an important field of struggle. In light of the activities of Burroughs and Ginsberg, which were occurring simultaneously on the other side of the Atlantic, Armand's defense of homosexuality seems a little tame and antiquated, but helps to round out this examination of his theories on sexual liberation.

On Sexual Equality: Edward Carpenter and Oscar Wilde

by E. Armand

For some time the sexual "heterodoxes" have resolved to no longer let themselves be placed under a ban by Society. They have recently formed an "International Committee for Sexual Equality" to claim for homosexuals (or homophiles) the same

status as heterosexuals, that is, those who are considered as practicing normal sexuality. This protesting minority is not raising a revolutionary banner, it is simply referring to the Declaration of the Rights of Man formulated by the U.N., which declares that in theory, "all beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". We do not wish to comment on this affirmation, but we applaud this reaction by men and women who no longer wish to be sacrificed by barbarous laws, the victims of a social "boycott" and dupes of continual blackmail.

There are heterosexuals, homosexuals, and bisexuals just as there are tall and short people. That is the fact, against which there should be no prejudging by a prefabricated morality resting on religious traditions, irrational prohibitions, politico-social considerations. It's not a question of approving or blaming but, I repeat, of fact—just as there exist chastity, monogamy, polygamy, polyandry, promiscuity. While these expressions of sexual activity have, in the course of history, obtained the protection of customs, laws, and the approval of certain societies, "l'homophilie" and bisexuality are considered bad, deserving of rebuke, and even looked on as delinquencies. We must, speaking "*grosso modo*", refer to ancient Greece or go to the Orient to find an understanding attitude toward *l'homophilie*, to speak of it only as an "anomaly". We should not believe that pederasty was foreign to the Romans. I cite Suetonius and his *History of the Twelve Caesars*.

I am quite surprised not to see Edward Carpenter mentioned among the names cited in French periodicals¹ which try to raise homosexuals from the inferiority complex in which moral leaders try to maintain them. I knew Edward Carpenter well, who died at age eighty two in 1929; I often corresponded with him: for a long time he spoke for the underdog. All who have struggled, in one way or another, for the recognition of the right to sexual equality regard him as one of the greatest leaders in vindicating this right.

Naturally, when in *l'Unique* we support the thesis of free

¹ *Arcadie* and *Futur*. Armand notes an exception to this observation in the April 1955 issue of *Arcadie*. (M.A.S.)

sexuality, it is in connection with "self mastery". There is no question of claiming the right to impose one's inclinations on another who does not share it. We are for any association of the "I" with the "non-I" in any domain or for whatever purpose which is based on a carefully worked-out contract and subject to modifications agreed on in advance. Voluntary associations can only be entered into between individuals who are morally balanced, of sound mind, knowing what they want. Whether it's a matter of sexual liberty or any other kind, it is no longer liberty when there is an implication of violence, force, fraud, venality. We do not confuse psychopathic manifestations with the affirmation of the individual who seeks to respect himself; but not to be aggressive toward one who is not interested, to throw trouble in the development on his personality, to interfere in his affairs. It is only a matter of accepting himself.

Edward Carpenter, in *Love's Coming of Age*, is concerned with the relations of the sexes. In the chapter entitled "The Intermediary Sex," following the Austrian author K.H. Ulrichs, he expounds the thesis that there are men whose nature is basically feminine, and women whose nature is basically masculine. These are the Uranians" [homophiles].²

It is understood, then, that these men and women are attracted by and toward those of their own sex, with respect to sentiments of love and friendship. It's a matter of a particular temperament (every population has a certain percentage of this type of person), not of sickness, of a morbid state, of physical or moral degeneration. There is thus no reason to consider them inferior to other types of persons out of the ordinary, writers, artists, and others.³ Edward Carpenter thought that

² From "Uranos", heaven. K.H. Ulrichs through that the love of the Uranians was superior to ordinary love. (E.A.)

³ In a volume in the series *Studies of Sexual Psychology* ("Sexual Inversion"), Havelock Ellis notes that Hand Anderson and Kierkegaard were suspected of inversion. They were in high and noble company. In the eighteenth century one class of society (the clergy) were among the "sectarians of the philosophic sin" (Voltaire style). According to Dubois-Dessaule... there were a number of churchmen in Bavaria and Swabia, where "non-conformism in love" was found. We wonder what became of Adolf Brand, the anarchist editor of *Der Eigene*—

the “intermediaries” can fulfill a mission of reconciliation and interpretation between men and women whom we designate as normal and who so often battle with one another.

The author of *Civilization, Its Cause and Cure, of Non-Governmental Society*, whom T.H. Bell qualified as an English Tolstoy, he published *Iolaus, Anthology of Friendship* that contains a selection of readings on celebrated masculine friendships (Edward Carpenter has always insisted on the platonic aspect of homosexuality without making it a dogma, of course). We find Achilles and Patroclus, Agesilas and Lysander, Alexander and Hephestion, Damon and Pythias, Ludwig of Bavaria and R. Wagner, Montaigne and La Boetie, Solomon the Magnificent and Ibrahim, Tennyson and Hallam...⁴ Naturally, I only mention some of the names, but in the readings given to us—and legends—it turns out that exclusively masculine friendships have been productive of acts of devotion and deeds of remarkable fidelity. Edward Carpenter is less prolix concerning exclusively feminine friendships. Of course there is Sappho whom one may consider as the first feminist of history—what Alcibiades and Charmides and Phaedrus were to Socrates, Pyrinna and Athis and Anactoria were to her, “a la Lesbienne”...

If, to my knowledge, in the publications to which I have referred, one does not mention or hardly mentions Edward Carpenter, a recent work “*Oscar Wilde, or the destiny of the homosexual*” ... by Robert Merle, gives a new revival to the case of Oscar Wilde.

The Life of Oscar Wilde by Hesketh Pearson contains all the biographical elements needed to satisfy the curiosity of those interested in the author of *Salome*. She follows him step by step, from his birth to his death. She shows him to us under his different aspects, studying at Oxford, engaged in the artistic movement of his epoch, critic, poet, author of plays for the theatre, lecturer, brilliant conversationalist, knowing success up to the age of forty. Entire chapters are devoted to his trial, his imprisonment, and his voluntary exile, up to his

an individualist title if ever there was one. Did the Nazis assassinate him? (E.A.)

4 This is a selection from Armand’s original longer list of names. (M.A.S.)

deplorable end. Numerous photographic reproductions... let us see him under different aspects and at different periods of his life... This biography, put together impartially, written without emotion, has a classical allure, and its four hundred pages should be consulted by any who wants to form an opinion of the man who wrote *A Woman of No Importance*.

When one speaks of Oscar Wilde, people who have perhaps never read any of his works silence you by grumbling "Bah! A poser, an esthete! Not worth much!" Certainly he was a poser, he lied to be admired, he sought applause, he spoke of things in which those who heard him could not be intellectually superior. Certainly he was an insulter; he had many other faults, he was what he was, not wicked in spite of everything. All that is known. But I want those who think of his work as empty to consider whether they could have written *The Picture of Dorian Gray* or *Lord Saville's Crime* or *The Importance of Being Earnest*, one of the best plays of the English theatre—"The Soul of Man Under Socialism"—or any of his stories, some of which are delightful. They belittle this romantic—for that is what Wilde was—an easy task, but their hands are empty while their mouths are full of insults. I am not a psychoanalyst, but I defy anyone with the least bit of poetry in him to read *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* without being moved. Now that's poetry! It doesn't matter to me that Wilde throughout his days developed the image of a bluffer, vain and difficult. Who doesn't do some of that in the theatre of life—and can anyone exist without it? Oscar Wilde said, "He who asks questions is never the one who answers them"—a saying which goes far.

Unfortunately, Wilde declined after his imprisonment. This imprisonment was not of a long duration. We have known men who have endured years and years of prison, and when they got out resumed the struggle. But not him: those two years had used him up, emptied him out, left him without resort. And why? He felt himself "punished by his own conscience, condemned by his deepest self".

I think that true homosexuality is congenital and not subject to any therapy. Not being homosexual myself, nor ever having been one, I have met homophiles who do not disguise

themselves, persons who are loyal, disinterested, and reliable; well, I think the repenters, the conversions to religious faith, in cases of innate homosexuality, are simulations, concessions to outside pressure. Even when platonic, the true homosexual remains a homosexual. Such is my opinion.

The downfall of Wilde, his feeling of guilt (?) does not mean that he regretted or deplored his homosexual temperament, but that his homophilia was so linked to the social role he wanted to play in the world, that he felt, once out of prison, that it would be impossible henceforth to parade before his contemporaries. For a man like him it was inadmissible, inconceivable. A convinced revolutionary, an inveterate gangster—pardon the comparison—can be imprisoned a long time and when let out, start all over again, the former his heroic propaganda, the latter his perilous exploits, and it is certain that among these revolutionaries and gangsters, temporarily removed from circulation, there are some homophiles, but their homophilie is not part of their other role; what dominates them is the kind of life they are leading, in which homosexuality is secondary. Thus Oscar Wilde was not the victim of his homosexuality, but of the hypocrisy of Society which rejects the anomalous (I do not write the “abnormal”), and which is tolerant only so far as the anomalous does not give rise to public scandal. He could not surmount the scandal.

We must praise M. Robert Merle for his courageous protest against the repression of homosexuality, heritage of the prejudices of another age, sequel of a medieval mentality. In France up to 1945, homosexuality was not codified as a felony (*delit*). It fell under the common law which punished public offenses against decency, or lewd acts committed on minors less than thirteen years of age (less than twenty-one years if it was a question of influencing them). The ordinance of February 8, 1945 aggravates the sanctions provided with respect to homosexuality. It decides that “without prejudice” the maximum punishment... will be six months to three years, and a fine of four thousand francs to one million⁵ for whoever

⁵ Old francs were 100 to one new franc, or 500 to one dollar. (R.C.)

has committed an act that is obscene or against nature with an individual of the same sex less than twenty one years old.. This law has for its object the protection of minors, whom M. Robert Merle believes to be sufficiently protected by the laws in force before 1945. Besides, what was a felony at age twenty one less one day ceases to be one at twenty one years plus one day. Stupefying! What is serious in the system of the repression of homosexuality—and not only homosexuality—is that it encourages informing and blackmail, and enables professional swindlers to get rich almost without risk. An excess of morality breeds an excess of immorality.

Translated by Robert Clancy in Jan.1981.
From *L'Unique*, May-June 1955.

Note: During the long years of his advocacy of anarchist individualism Enzo Martucci quite frequently clashed with the French individualist E. Armand. The following is a translation of one of his first exchanges with Armand. It appeared in Armand's journal 'l'endehors' in 1925. Martucci was then twenty one and used his real name of da Villafore. We're reprinting this piece because it's a fabulous assault on the oxymoronic nature of an anarchist morality.

Individual Differences: My Polemic with E. Armand

by Enzo da Villafore

Disorder, chaos, confusion—unbridled freedom of instinct—individual arbitrariness—absolute triumph of force and audacity—dynamic life—polymorphism—the overturn of all values—negation of law, authority, morality—the apogee of variability and impulse: here are the elements of my anarchy.

This anarchy, that is to say this future form of free life in which the individual will affirm himself in the measure of his

powers, presupposes the co-existence of solidarity and of war, and I consider both of these as means to be used by the individual according to whether one or the other is more useful to satisfy his requirements. E. Armand, on the contrary, believes that violent conflicts will disappear in an anarchist world because:

There is always an interest for anarchist individualists in understanding for themselves and in resolving their conflicts by mutual concessions—the application of the principle of reciprocity. There is no desire for exclusive possession of any given thing which surpasses the interest that the individualists have in maintaining between themselves the state of comradeship.

Agreement, I repeat, is preferable to the extermination of the friend who no longer wishes to give way. It is preferable, from the purest egoist point of view, to the process of extermination, first of all because that would deprive me of a comrade and is there any object in the world that could compensate me for the loss of a comrade?....

As for me, I regard Armand's considerations as excessively optimistic, not to say almost Christian. First of all, it is not always possible to conciliate diverse egoisms, which are in conflict, and to manage a solution of these conflicts by means of mutual concessions. There exist, in effect, antithetical interests, invincible antipathies, sentiments of hatred, desires for vengeance, all things which prevent a peaceful understanding. It is not always possible to possess successively or alternatively the thing desired by each of us because there are instances in life where a man is guided, not only by his reason, but also by his passions and his instincts. He wants, at any price, to enjoy, exclusively and jealously, the object that he loves and which he wants to possess, or which he desires to an extreme degree. If, then, in a given situation violence gives me more advan-

tages than mutual aid, for what motive should I not make it serve me? Because the method of extermination deprives me of a companion? But he who is an obstacle to my desires, who bars my route, is not my comrade, but an enemy. Against him I will use any means: ruse, violence, force..

Violence is not only the effect of causes determined by special situations, it is also the expression of particular temperaments in which the heritage of Cain is congenital and indestructible. It is an illusion to believe that warring individualities will abandon their struggle and sacrifice their belligerent spirits which are endowed with the love of great risks and an ardor for living experience. It is as if one believed that a voluptuary, used to the delights of the most erotic embraces, could satisfy his lasciviousness by the practice of masturbation.

Like the struggle of the brute, the intellectual struggle will never disappear. Hobbes' "man is a wolf unto man" is the supreme truth in many a case. It is a commandment of nature and to speak today of social harmony when a most ferocious war has developed in man's savage and brutal instincts is to attract the same kind of ridicule that attaches to that pacifism which periodically consecrates its impotence in international congresses where at the altar of incomprehension, verbosity allies itself to poltroonery.

Armand **thinks** that in an anarchist world the individual, in order to enjoy his proper life in complete liberty, will be guaranteed that no-one will impose upon his being and his having. It seems to me that the individualist who, to realize himself, has need of **guarantees**, displays the same impotence that characterizes the right-thinking citizen who needs legal and governmental protection because, alone, he cannot defend himself against the attacks of others. **My** anarchist individualist disdainfully rejects guarantees as much as protections, because he knows that Society will not offer him these things except in exchange for part of his independence. **My** anarchist individualist is convinced that his freedom is a function of his personal power, seeing that in life he will have no more than he can conquer and conserve. Consequently, he will try continually to augment his power and to perfect his

energies, certain that they alone will permit him to conduct his life the best. He associates with others and respects them as it pleases him. He quits and combats them when struggle is more to his tastes and in his interests.

Polymorphism, variety of experiences, research for novelty, flow, in an anarchist milieu, from freedom conquered by force. It is this that, without repeating the Stirnerian distinction between individuality and freedom, makes it possible for me to affirm that anarchy will represent the triumph of arbitrariness, that is to say pure freedom that ends only where individual power finishes—not the abstract and unreal concept of freedom that democrats and moralists perch in the seventh heaven.

Armand, to justify his solidarism, affirms again that the presence of warlike individualities in an anarchist world would give rise to the necessity of other individuals arming themselves in order to properly defend themselves. As it is impossible to always remain on the alert, these individuals would end by conferring on others the task of protection so that the police and judiciary mechanism would be inevitably revived. Armand forgets that the generalization of a free life presupposes a state of superior self-consciousness in individuals. Arriving at an anarchist stage, because they are avid for freedom and expansion, they will prefer to manage their own defense sooner than re-place themselves under the humiliating tutelage of the law and the State. Out of what motive could a man who is not a cowardly beggar ask others for a bit of protection, when in an anarchist milieu he will be able to carry means to defend himself or to attack, even associating with others and using all the arms which morality and regulations stop him from using?

Perhaps anarchy will never be realized as a form of general life, because the crowd and the people will remain eternally unaware and will never comprehend the unlimited desire for independence that is the patrimony of the elites. Perhaps it will only exist throughout the centuries as the a-normal attitude of some a-normal aristocrats who will oppose their "No" of despair and revolt against all the constituted social regulations!

But if anarchy triumphs as the norm of universal life it will

only be in the wild, chaotic, and arbitrary form as I conceive it. The libertarian communism of Malatesta, the individualizing associationism of Armand, the solidarist mutualism of Proudhon, are all social conceptions too orderly and too rigid for the anarchist individualist wanting to unfold his uncurbed instincts and powers. It is in chaos that supreme anarchy exists. It is towards chaos that we tend with all the energies of our perverse and sacrilegious spirit.

Finally, Armand recognizes for us, sinners and profligates, the right to associate freely and to accomplish without obstacles our work of propaganda and persuasion.

But when, tomorrow, we found "schools of voluptuousness", when we raise "Temples of Venus" where we will teach that coition is one of the most beautiful things of life, that polygamy is the natural state of love, that sexual depravities are refinements of pleasure, that incest is normal because there is nothing to prohibit in the erotic relations between individuals, then we will hear no more of the right to resist by force the tartuffes who, in the name of morality, of hygiene, and of similar lies, would forbid that which spreads our dissolution? Just as it has not created geniuses and heroes, Christian civilization has not given rise to great sinners. Phryne, Cleopatra, and Messalina are figures of the past. We who, like a Madam de Longueville, do not love "innocent pleasures", like an Oscar Wilde, think that "he who invents a splendid sin is greater than he who discovers a new religion" —we believe that in an anarchist world, side by side with free association and free war, free art and dynamic life, will prosper free love and sexual autonomy.

And in the multiformity of its aspects, our depravation will accomplish, in renewed surroundings, a work of beauty.

In Praise of Chaos

By Enzo Martucci

Libertarian communism is also known, particularly in Latin countries, by the name of “anarchist communism”. It is not. On the contrary, the two words are a contradiction in terms.

Communism signifies a social condition in which the means of production and all material goods belong to the mass of the people who identify themselves with the totality or majority of society. Everyone has their goods disposed of according to the way decided by those who govern and whose law all must obey.

Anarchy signifies the absence of government: that is to say, a state of things in which the individual is not held in obedience to anyone, lives as he pleases, and is limited only by the extent of his power. He uses moral and material goods in the particular manner he prefers without having to get the approval of his fellows.

One hypothesis has it that the universal realization of anarchy would return man to nature. It would create an equilibrium—however unstable—between individuals who—urged on by the free life, the need to survive, and strengthened by struggle—would be able to contain each other and live without government.

Communism, on the other hand, even if it is not authoritarian and Marxist, but libertarian and Kropotkinist, would be a society in which the legislative and executive power would be exercised either by acephalous mass assemblies (populism) or by delegates elected by the masses (democracy). Both would mean that the individual would always be governed by the many. And this would be a government worse than any other, whether by one or a few, because the mass is stupid, ferocious, tyrannical, and worse than the lowest individual.

How could libertarian communism be brought about?

It could be by means of absolute conformism to the industrial-machinist society that man has already achieved. This would reduce all to a mechanical equality, feeling, thinking, and acting identically – in this way making control and repression by the State unnecessary. Then there would be a standardized anarchy.

Or it could be by means of a new organization: individuals united by categories into federations, the federations into communes, the communes into regions, the regions into nations, the nations into the International. At the head of each a directive council invested with the authority and power to make itself respected by any individual dissenting from the decision of the majority. Hence, a State that would not call itself a State, but would be one nonetheless complete with a hierarchy, laws, and police.

And also with prisons. Malatesta wrote in his essay "Anarchy" that prison-hospitals would exist in which delinquents, considered as insane, would be "confined and cured".

I remember that in a polemic I had with him in *Umanita Nova* in 1922, he wrote: "Martucci, in the name of the sacred rights of the individual, does not want that there remains the possibility of harming a ferocious assassin or a ravisher of children."

I replied that the assassin and the ravisher could be left free in a remote district or on an uninhabited island, but not made to suffer imprisonment which would be un-anarchist. In my book *The Banner of the Anti-Christ*, I wrote:

The pretense of curing, rectifying, or correcting is extremely odious because it compels an individual who wants to remain as he is to become what he is not and does not want to be.

Take a type like Octave Mirbeau's Clara (see his *Garden of Torture*), tell her that she must undergo a cure to destroy her perverse and abnormal tendencies which are a danger to herself and to others. Clara would reply that she does not want to be cured, that she intends to stay as she is, risking every danger, because

the satisfaction of her erotic desires, excited by the smell of blood and the sight of cruelty, gives her a satisfaction so acute, and emotion so strong, which would be impossible if she was changed into a normal woman and restricted to the usual insipid lusts.

Nor are normal individuals basically good, as libertarian communists like to believe. Man by nature is a skinful of diverse instincts and opposing tendencies, both good and bad, and such he will remain in any kind of environment or society.

Libertarian communism is no more than a system of federalism and like all social systems would oppress the individual with moral and juridical restraints. Only the superficiality of a Proudhon could give such a system the name of "anarchy" which, on the contrary, means the negation of all government by ideas or by men.

Anarchists are opposed to authority both from below and from above. They do not demand power for the masses, but seek to destroy all power and to decompose these masses into individuals who are masters of their own lives. Therefore anarchists are the most decisive enemies of all types of communism and those who profess to be communists or socialists cannot possibly be anarchists.

Anarchy is the aggregation of innumerable and varied forms of life lived in solitude or in free association. It is the totality of experiences of individual anarchists trying to find new ways of non-gregarious living. It is the contemporary and polychromatic presence of every diverse mode of realization used by free individuals capable of defending their own. It is the spontaneous development of natural beings.

In it one will find that everything is equivalence and equilibrium: conflict and agreement, the brute and the genius, the solitary and the promiscuous—all will have the same value. One can designate opposites with the same word: "altus" can be top or bottom, height or depth.

In substance anarchy would mean the victory of

polymorphism, which is opposed to the monism of all social systems, including libertarian communism.

Some maintain that in the absence of government or law we would have the complete triumph of **bellum omnium contra omnes**: the war of each against all. They are mistaken.

In a free world there would always be struggle, which is indestructible because it is natural. But it would be a struggle between the approximately equal forces of men strengthened by naturalism.

During a long polemic he had with me between 1948 and 1950, Mario Mariani tried to demonstrate that in a condition of anarchy war among man would increase: "If today a man has no fear of attacking his fellow and the policeman who stands behind him, he will certainly have no fear if I eliminate the policeman. Algebraically speaking, if A has no fear of B despite C, he will have even less fear if B is alone."

My reply was: Today A has no fear of B despite C because he knows that both lack decision and force. B relinquishes them because he relies on C to defend him. And C protects him not because he has any lively feeling or strong interest, but only because it is his trade. Therefore he does not inspire much fear. Hundreds of police in Paris failed to capture Jules Bonnot, the illegalist, alive and had to launch an attack on his house in order to kill him. It is true that behind this protection there is the apparatus of social repression with formidable means at its disposal, but today's delinquent underrates the collective's organization and always hopes to escape it or avoid detection.

Again, if A finds B as resolute as he, then their forces will be equivalent. The case is clear and does not allow illusion. At that moment, the dispute between them will be resolved.

Anarchy, then, is neither continual warfare which would weary everyone, nor social harmony which would weaken everyone if it were possible (which it is not, due to the diversity of individual types and their conflicting needs and aspirations).

If history is not an infinite process, as I firmly believe, than when it exhausts its cycle it will disappear opening the way to anarchy.

If, on the other hand, history endures, then anarchism will remain —that is, the eternal revolt of the individual against a stifling society. Thus proving the immortality of that “tendency to chaos” that the lawyer d’Anto finds so deplorable, but which is to me worthy of every praise.

Between association and organization there is the same difference as between a free union and marriage. The first I can dissolve when I wish, the second I cannot dissolve or dissolve only under certain conditions and with certain permissions.

It is not by organizing into parties and syndicates that one struggles for anarchy, nor by mass action which, as has been shown, overthrows one barracks only to create another. It is by the revolt of individuals alone or in small groups, who oppose society, impede its functioning and cause its disintegration.

Translated from the Italian by
Stephen Marletta

This article first appeared in
*Minus One: An Individualist
Anarchist Review*, #26

Manifesto dei Fuorigregge (Manifesto of the Outsiders)

In present civilization, which transforms the individual into a small cog in the social machine; in a collectivized and herd-like world, which marries its new lies to the old lies of the Church and drives each of us in the name of God and Society, of a heavenly and an earthly paradise, to become a slave, to suppress the particular and the distinct given to him by nature, and to identify himself in everything with everyone else; in a degenerated humanity which neither feels nor thinks, but only acts solidly and automatically as its leaders suggest, and has no egoistic aim outside of a mini-car, a fridge, a beefsteak and a council flat—in such circumstances personality disappears, originality dies, and there remains nothing but a robot which, after it has been fueled and oiled, looks for nothing else.

And this is precisely what is wanted by the priests and demagogues, the wolves who rule today in place of the eagles and lions who have unfortunately gone. What is wanted is a man who is not that man, but the man—a puppet who can be cheated and manipulated as one wants, using the vile but efficacious tactics which the Grand Inquisitor of Dostoyevsky's "Brothers Karamazov" explains to Christ in the prison of Seville.

The plan has succeeded. Men are eunuchs. The appeasers have given up the struggle for exclusive spiritual and material domination and have agreed to share the power. Gromyko and Nenni have already kissed the hand of the pope. The Vatican has thwarted its own bad actors like La Pira, Father Balducci, and similar types, and is reconciled with Communism. The Catholic Smiths and the Marxist Jones have shaken hands. And the new Loyola of the "spiritual exercises" has already brought up to date the great maxim that both bourgeois and proletarian will accept: "It is necessary to believe that the white I see is black if the Church hierarchy so decides."

The vast, submissive mass, in the illusion of obtaining an easy and protected life, let themselves be guided by the cunning, who will soon lead them to the slaughter-house of an atomic war against the fanatical Chinese Colossus which will secure for the Russians, the Americans, and the pope the lordship of the earth. But there are still some men who do not want to be led on a leash, who are not content with the prefabricated ideas supplied by the shepherds, and who want to remain arbiters of their own lives. It is to them, the consciously or instinctively discontented, that we turn. To them we say:

1) Don't be made into fools. Don't trust the lies told to you by the heads of governments, churches, unions, and parties, who hypocritically declare that they act in the collective interest when it is their own personal, group, and class ends that they serve.

2) Don't vote. Don't elect masters who will flatter you to get your vote, but when in power will trample you down like snakes and exploit you like donkeys. Don't let yourselves be organized, but let each one act alone or in a free association with a few comrades, thus beginning the dissolution of a social order based on the obedience and docility of its subjects, and by your example awaken those who are now sheep but still have in them the urge to live and can add their strength to your rebellion.

3) Liberate yourselves from the fatal influence of every social, moral, religious, and juridical spook. Remember that the individual is the only reality that moves and stays afloat on the infinite sea of universal nothingness. Above the individual there is nothing and no one. Therefore you no longer have to stay paralyzed within the narrow limits of the "permitted" and the "prohibited", but can dare what you please, use your freedom to the extent of your power and act as you will—on condition that you know how to use your energies and are willing to face the risks involved. Is it not better to live for one day as a free man than a hundred years as a slave?

4) Destroy the State. This is the worst enemy of the ego. "The State—said Stirner—is always a status, an order destined

to paralyze my movements, my liberty, a power supreme to me, ever imminent and threatening.” And Nietzsche added: “State I call it where all drink poison, the good and the wicked; state where the slow suicide of all is called ‘life’. Bring the State to nothing, therefore, and also the herd-spirit, the customs, the prejudices, and all those other social influences outside of the State that tyrannize over the individual. Realize that individualist anarchy is the only way of living natural to man when he is not forced away by suggestion, deceit, or violence. Use every means—the inflexible decision of a Corrado Brando, the heroic temerity of a Jules Bonnot, the logical proofs of a Max Stirner, to reach the noble end of total liberation. We will be at your side.

This is the call we make to the discontented of the world, the refractories of every country, the “irreducible” everywhere. This is the invitation we make in the hope that our forces, freely united, will be successful in sweeping away this miserable civilization of motorized barbarians and at last return to nature which has created man in order that he remains such, or surpasses himself, but crushes him inexorably if he degenerates and transforms himself into a robot.
For the Italian Individualist Anarchist Movement:

Enzo Martucci
Celestino Pomodoro
Andre Chanel
The Edelweiss Group, 1965

A Comment by S.E. Parker

I very much appreciate the spirit of the “Manifesto die Fuorigregge” and agree with much of what it says about the world in which we live, but I cannot agree with two points our Italian friends make.

1) They optimistically call upon us to “destroy the State” and sweep away “this miserable civilization”. It is tempting

to believe that these exhortations are more than wishful thinking, but I, for one, cannot.

2) There is no convincing proof that anarchist ideas and aspirations can appeal to more than a minority of individuals. The authors of the manifesto themselves refer to the “vast, submissive mass” without explaining how it can cease to be such, and they single out the “discontented of the world” as the object of their appeal. Even doctrines that pander to the herd-mentality—e.g. the purist socialist sects—remain the faith of a handful of zealots. Why should one assume that the far more intellectually exacting individualist approach should be any more successful in winning over even a “mass minority”?

3) The outstanding characteristic of most people throughout the ages has been their desire to have their thinking and acting done for them and they have always been willing to let some ruling group take on this chore as long as it did not grind their faces too much into the shit. They may have revolted against bad masters, but only to put good masters in their place. They have never revolted against masters as such. Nor is there any cogent reason to expect them to do so.

Because of this, authority will exist in any conceivable kind of society whether it is called the State or something else. Inevitably, the demands of this authority and the demands of the individualist will clash and there will always be a permanent conflict of interests between them. It is here that the relevance of individualist anarchism exists as a prophetic analysis of the nature of such a conflict.

Individualist-Anarchism

by S.E. Parker

"Individualism" is one of those words like "anarchism" and "egoism" that has been abused out of both ignorance and intent. For many radicals it is a synonym for the "free-for-all" of the capitalist jungle, and some defenders of capitalism have tried to use it to justify economic exploitation and monopoly. A little intelligent thinking about the nature of capitalist society, however, with its ever-present boss-men and mass-men, is enough to upset this idea. What is individual about the armies of city gentlemen marching into and out of their offices at the same time five days a week and vegetating in the cages of their suburban conventions in between? And how individual are the herds of industrial workers standing before the machine god and repeating the same servile rituals throughout their lives? To ask these questions is to answer them.

Individualists

Individualist anarchists do not want to be plus ones in the statistical millions of obedient citizens. They have counted themselves out from the herd and their anarchy exists in their strength to affirm themselves. They have severed their anarchism from all democratic and socialist myths. To hell with "the people want this" or "the workers want that"! Let us live our own lives, follow our own interests, and be ourselves. The individualist will go his own way, even if he must go it alone. He would not be much of an individual if he didn't.

Government

But if the individual lives for himself then what is to stop him from trying to rule over others? Two things, at least.

Firstly, if these others are as self-willed as he is, then they will oppose their wills to his and so frustrate his efforts. Secondly,

and most importantly, individualists know that authority is a relationship between ruler and ruled that binds both and destroys the independence of each. As Max Stirner well put it:

He who, to hold his own, must count on the absence of will in others, is a thing made by these others, as the master is a thing made by the servant. If submission ceased it would be all over with lordship.

Individualist anarchists do not regard government as simply the product of a conspiracy on the part of a wicked few to oppress the innocent many. The many would not be governed if they did not want to be governed, if they were capable of self-government. Rulers and ruled are two sides of the same coin of a currency which individualists reject. Their way lies outside of both.

Co-operation

Does the individualist reject all co-operation between people? The individualist agrees with Ibsen that "he is strongest who stands most alone," but he sees the value of co-operation to satisfy some of his needs. There is nothing contradictory in this, for only he who is strong enough to stand alone is capable of forming a genuinely free association with others. But such an association is not an end in itself—it lasts only as long as those who form it find it useful to them. It is not a sacred thing towards which its members have duties. It is their creation and their servant, nothing more.

Economics

In economics the individualist does not believe in collectivism, whether socialist, syndicalist or communist. For him, individual ownership of the means of production is the way to guarantee the product, or its equivalent, to the producer. In this area, as all others, however, individualists are first of all pluralists and regard any system, no matter what its name, that would bind them to any one economic

relationship and deny them a choice of alternatives, as authoritarian. The difference between the individualist and the collectivist approach to economics lies in the fact that the first would leave each individual free to provide for himself what he needs, whereas the second wants to make society the manager and provider of the means of life. Any system which makes the individual dependent upon the good or bad will of others is repugnant to the individualist. It matters little to them whether the means of production are under the control of a handful of private monopolists, the State, a federation of syndicalists, or a Commune, if they have no independence or freedom of choice.

Revolution

But speculations about a future economy have only an academic interest. Individualist anarchists do not intend to wait until the "morrow of the revolution" before they get any benefit from their ideas. It is today that concerns them, not a hypothetical future. The individualist welcomes anyone traveling a similar road to his own, but he does not need them in order to start his journey. The Christian looks to the will of his god, the Marxist and the syndicalist look to the will of the revolutionary proletariat, but the individualist looks to his own will and relies on nothing outside himself. Consequently, he does not believe in a "dialectic of history", "the inevitable outcome of the class struggle", "the due process of law", or any other collective, group or supernatural force as the means of his liberation. Self-liberation is the only form of liberation that has any meaning for him. He has no time for millennial narcotics as a sop for present miseries and oppressions.

Taken from the privately-published pamphlet *Individualist-Anarchism: An Outline* by S. E. Parker



2.

Rebels Building Dreams: *second wave individualists* *reflect on their predecessors*

The first world war dispelled many of the illusions of the first wave egoists. No longer was it even conceivable that enlightened self-mastery stood a chance against the machines of mass warfare. Groupthink and social organizations demonstrated their capacity, time and again, for the destruction of free will and human life. Egoists spent this time germinating. World War II demonstrated collectivist thinking and practice par excellence and further reinforced cynicism and hopelessness toward the social body.

This section reviews the notions from the first wave that the power of egoist ideas could have general influence. In the face of the horror of war it was obvious that libertarian ideas were on the wane and the momentum of society was towards treating people more-and-more like a mass and less and less like self-mastered individuals.

The second wave of egoists dispel us of the notion that the revolutionary impulse is a natural and normal phenomenon of the mass. Instead the masses may be stupid and stupefied. If there is hope to be had, it is in the free self action of individuals unfettered by the spooks of nationalism, industrialism, and revolutionary zeal.

John Henry Mackay's Appreciation of Stirner

The significance of "The Sole One" is still, as it was fifty years ago, divined and felt rather than known. How could it be otherwise in times when, in fact, everything totters to which we have hitherto clung, when we are zealously striving to replace the old estimates of worth by new ones, when the old stale wine is being again and again poured into new bottles instead of being poured away, and when we are still so little convinced of the absolute worthlessness of most of the estimates of worth!

We are a generation living betwixt night and day. Half awakened, we still rub our somnolent eyes, and are afraid to look into the light.

We cannot separate ourselves from the old abodes of our ideas, although they collapse over our heads; we are too cowardly to forsake the old home and commit ourselves to the sea of self-consciousness that can alone bear us to the other shore; we have not yet any genuine confidence in the future, although (or rather because) we have no longer confidence in ourselves.

We no longer believe in God; assuredly it is so. We have become atheists, but we have remained "pious people." We no longer pray in the presence of the church bogey; we kneel before the sanctuaries of our heart.

We still get into ecstatic states as formerly, and the wretchedness of our awakening is the same. Only we awake more frequently, and our condition is that of reeling betwixt intoxication and doubt; it is no longer the holy, eternal ecstasy of the first "true" Christians.

Then this man comes amongst us.

He does not come with the condescension of the priest—he is not in the service of God, or of any idea whatsoever; nor with the fussiness of the teacher—he leaves us to believe or reject what he says; nor with the anxiety of the physician—he lets us live or die, for he knows that our fancy is our disease. Nor does he come like the philosopher who tries to catch us in the net of a new system of speculation. He despises the philosopher's language, the hideous, obscure, and unintelligible language, used as a privilege by those who only want to talk among themselves; he makes for himself a language of his own, for he knows that all knowledge can be intelligible when it wants to be intelligible.

He does not speak of us; he hardly even speaks to us.

He speaks of himself, and always of himself only; and we see how this ego of his strips itself of one fetter after another, until it stands free and unconquerable, in proud self-splendor, as its own master, the last on the field which it has finally won.

It is nothing more nor less than the declaration of the sovereignty of the individual, his incomparability and his uniqueness, that Stirner announces. Hitherto one had only spoken of his rights and duties, and where they begin and end; Stirner, however, declares that we are exempt from the latter, and have control over the former. We must make our choice. And since we cannot go back into the night, we must enter into the day.

For we know now that we are all of us egoists. When we survey our actions, we see that some of them have carried us further, much further, than our consciousness wishes to acknowledge, while others have got us entangled in discords quite incapable of being harmonized. Henceforth it will be in vain for us any longer to attempt to deceive ourselves and others concerning the motives of our conduct. Now that we have acknowledged them, what else remains for us but to accommodate ourselves to them?

The result will teach us what we have to thank Stirner for, if the example of those who have so lived their life has not yet shown it to us.

It is our final acknowledgment. Let us no longer stand up against it. For verily, not too early does the day dawn, after

this all-too-long night. He has raised the bowed head, and put a sword into the languid hand. He has removed our faith and given us certainty.

He has again reminded us of our true interests, of our profane, personal particular-interests, and shown us that it is precisely their pursuit, and not sacrificing ourselves to ideal, sacred and external interests, to the interests of all, that brings back the happiness to life, which we seem to have lost.

Since he has dissected the state of the politician, the society of the socialist, and the humanity of the humanist, and has made it obvious that they are limitations to our individuality, he has given the death-blow to all authority—at the same time destroying the majority's and collective body's sovereign will and privilege—and in place of the citizen, the worker, the man, comes the ego, in place of the incorporeal annihilator, the real creator!

But not that only. Since he devotes the other part of his work to the most thorough investigation of the conditions under which alone the ego is able to develop itself to its uniqueness, he exhibits it to us in its power, its intercourse, and its self-enjoyment—the medium of its force and its final victory.

And in place of our weary, sore-tortured, self-tormenting race, comes the proud, free race of the "sole ones," to which the future belongs.

He did what he has done for himself, because it was a pleasure to him.

He demands no thanks, and we owe him nothing.

He has only reminded us of our indebtedness to ourselves! *That is what* he has done; how he has done it is not less worthy of admiration.

If *originality* and *force* are signs of true genius, Max Stirner was a genius of the first rank. He sees the world and men entirely with his own eyes, and everything stands before him in the clearest light of actuality. Nothing can perturb or deceive his penetrating gaze; neither the night of the past, nor the crowd of desires of his own age. His is an absolutely original work, and there is none that could have been written with more impartiality and freedom from prejudice than "The Sole

One and His Prerogative." There is nothing, absolutely nothing, which Stirner accepts as established and given, unless it be his own ego. Nothing bewilders him, confuses him, or imposes on him *a priori*. He thus appears as the genuine child of that critical age, only so infinitely in advance of it that he begins where the others leave off. This impartiality gives to his words that self-intelligible assurance which so bewilders one person and acts so triumphantly on another.

The *logic* of this thinker is also incomparable. The rigid consistency of his conclusions does not shrink from any, not even from the ultimate consequences. He does not leave it to the reader to extend his thoughts to the limit of their sphere, he does it himself. Conceptions which hitherto appeared unimpugnable, he decomposes one after another, and lets them crumble to dust.

It is not with the outer form of the Christian conception of things, of the rotten, crumbling church of the present day that this battle has to do, but with that spirit which, in ever new forms, continually constructs new strongholds of absolutism, the spirit of Christianity which, like a gloomy vapor, hangs over the past.

It is Stirner's achievement to have divested this spirit of its sanctity, to have unmasked it as the unsubstantial ghost of our imagination. While the most radical thinkers of his age Strauss, Feuerbach and Bauer merely groped with timorous criticism at the conceptions of sanctity, he decomposed them and allowed them to crumble away.

He vanquishes Christianity in its ultimate consequences. It is annihilated. It lies behind us with the millennium of its humiliation, the smut of its fraternity, the innumerable horrors with which it has stained the page of history, with its falsehood, with its repudiation of all pride, of all individuality, of all genuine pleasure and beauty; and although it still prevails among us in its final effects, Stirner has nevertheless removed it from us as a curse!

He stands on the boundary-line between two worlds, and a new epoch in the life of the human race begins with him—the epoch of freedom.

As yet we have not found any better name for it than that of anarchy: the order determined by reciprocal interest, instead of the lack of order under the sway of power which has hitherto prevailed; the exclusive sovereignty of the individual over his personality, instead of his subjection; his responsibility for his own actions, instead of his tutelage—in short, *his uniqueness*. For it is on the foundation of the Christian view of things that the supports of all those conceptions rest which uphold the sway of power; when Stirner has withdrawn the ground from under them, they must fall, and with them falls that which they have supported.

So violent will be this bloodless and proportionally rapid and sure revolution of all the relations of life, that his immortal book will one day be compared only with the Bible in its wide bearings.

And as this holy book stands at the commencement of the Christian era to carry its devastating effects for two thousand years into almost the remotest corners of the inhabited world, so does the unholy book of the first self-conscious egoist stand at the entrance to the new age, under the first sign of which we live, to exercise as blessed an influence as that of the “book of books” was pernicious.

And if we would once more say what it is, how could we do it better than in its author’s own words? It is this: “*A violent, reckless, shameless, conscienceless, presumptuous—crime*” perpetrated on the sanctity of all authority! And, hailing with joyous shouts the outburst of the purifying, emancipating storm conjured up by him, we ask with Max Stirner:

*Do not the thunders roll in the distance,
and dost thou not see how the heavens are
ominously silent and becoming obscure?*

Translated by Thomas Commonon
From *Max Stirner, sein Leben und
sein Werk*, pp. 161-4

“Anarchy”

by John Henry Mackay

Ever reviled, accursed, ne'er understood,
Thou art the grisly terror of our age.
“Wreck of all order,” cry the multitude,
“Art thou, and war and murder's endless rage.
“O, let them cry. To them that ne'er have striven
The truth that lies behind a word to find,
To them the word's right meaning was not given.
They shall continue blind among the blind.
But thou, O word, so clear, so strong, so pure,
Thou sayest all which I for goal have taken.
I give thee to the future! Thine secure
When each at least unto himself shall waken.
Comes it in sunshine? In the tempest's thrill?
I cannot tell—but it the earth shall see!
I am an Anarchist! Wherefore I will
Not rule, and also ruled I will not be!

Translated from the German by
Harry Lyman Koopman

To Max Stirner “The Ego and His Own, 1845”

by John Henry Mackay

Nothing fell from thy hands
But this one book—no more.
O vine in sunniest lands
That such a fruitlage bore!

I look from the leaves, and eye
Around me the present woe;
Wildly for saviors men cry;
Thee — they no longer know.

They knew thee ne'er, the benighted!
They could but rail and condemn.
Well hast thou them requited,
For thou hast fathomed them!

Not scorn, but appreciation!
To him the world was a play;
At his smiling contemplation
Its last veil fell away.

Mankind ever loves the deceiver,
For the liar their laurels they twine;
But thou hast deceived them never, —
Thou ever were simply thine!

O genius! To whom his age
Never in homage bowed,
Known not, nor counted sage
Was he by the empty crowd;

Who never "self-conquest" chasing —
No conquest over others he gained;
Who never "his brother embracing,"
The cup of deception drained

Who, heaven-high excelling
The world of spite and pelf,
Alone his foe men quelling,
Planted himself on — himself.

O Genius, wert thou sunken
Into the silence of night?
No! my lips have drunken;

I am awakened to light.

Immortal! With awe I greet
Thy name from the night around.
I seek the trace of thy feet;
No longer can it be found.

What goal did presumption set thee?
Thine own god thou wouldst be.
I love thee. Let men forget thee;
What are their ravings to me?

I see thee thrusting aside
And below thee the screaming throng;
Then soaring afar and wide
Our eagle-pinions strong.

Whither? Thou knows no ponderer.
None has followed thy way.
Silent sweeps the world-wanderer,
Night behind him, before him day.

Past the gods, whom distance blots;
On, on, to the utmost sublime!—
Yea, thou art gone; but thy thoughts
Watch over the slumbering time.

Translated from the German by
Harry Lyman Koopman

John Henry Mackay: A Biographical Sketch — Born in Scotland in 1864, John Henry Mackay grew up in Germany where he established himself as a talented author of fiction and poetry. He also earned the reputation as one of the finest (if not the finest) propagandist of individualist anarchist thought in any language. In all his writings, whether poetry, short stories, novels, “Books of Freedom” (his best known work), Mackay’s core perspective—that each flesh-and-blood individual is unique—breaks through; his love of freedom evident even when it brings tragedy rather than triumph.

John Henry Mackay always held that his most significant contribution to the world was reintroducing it to Max Stirner. Mackay reveals his own intellectual debt to Stirner in the introduction to his novel *The Anarchists* (1891). And in the second edition of his volume of insurrectionary poetry, *Sturm*, the dedicatory poem is “To Max Stirner” (reprinted above). Mackay added other poems to this edition which reflect the growing influence of Stirner: “Anarchy”, “I”, and “Egoism”. Indeed, his interest in Stirner was so strong that Mackay spent nine years and much money researching and writing the first biography on Stirner.

As indicated in his poem “To Max Stirner,” Mackay ran into considerable difficulty re-tracing Stirner’s life. He did eventually find and secure memorial tablets upon Stirner’s grave and last place of residence (as he reports in an announcement that appeared in Benjamin Tucker’s journal *Liberty*, August 13th, 1892). Finally, in 1898, *Max Stirner: Sein Leben Und Sein Werk* was published in German. The book was translated into English, but before it could be printed, it was lost in the tragic fire that destroyed Tucker’s publishing establishment.

In 1907, precious months before the fire, Tucker published the first English edition of Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, translated by his close friend Stephen T. Byington and several associates. In his preface, Tucker sums up Mackay’s role in furthering this new wave of interest in Stirner’s ideas:

But the chief instrument in the revival of Stirnerism was and is the German poet John Henry Mackay...he met Stirner’s name in Lange’s *History of Materialism*, and was moved thereby to read his book. The work made such an impression on him that he resolved to devote a portion of his life to the rediscovery and

rehabilitation of the lost and forgotten genius... and his biography of Stirner appeared in Berlin in 1898. It is a tribute to the thoroughness of Mackay's work that since its publication not one important fact about Stirner has been discovered by anyone.

For Mackay, freedom from dogma and ideology (what Max Stirner called "fixed ideas") was as important as equal freedom in social life, and in the process of living out these theories Mackay became Germany's leading voice for individualist anarchism—a lone voice crying in the wilderness of German modern-nation-statism—predicting well in advance the horrible consequences of uniting nationalism with socialism. Mackay's contemporary relevance lies not only in his elegant defense of individual sovereignty (which is relevant in any age) but also in his emphasis upon the psychology of the free individual: its development and interpersonal manifestation as "radical tolerance," to quote one of his translators, Hubert Kennedy.

Radical Tolerance is not some wishy-washy stance or whimpering plea that we should be "nice" to each other. Rather, it is a call to struggle with the internal and external forces in one's life; a call to engage in the paradox of having to struggle with oneself in order to radically accept one's self. In *The Freedomseeker*, Mackay's sequel to *The Anarchists* and the second of his "Books of Freedom", this theme is richly explored. The hero, young Ernst Foerster, archetype of the anarchist, the true individual, and of Mackay himself, learns this lesson early on. After standing up alone against a tyrannical schoolmaster, and deserted by fellow classmates, Ernst realizes:

That life was a battle, a battle in which the choices were either to succeed or to go under, to affirm himself or to lose himself, a battle which started soon after the entry into life and ended only with death... In addition he had realized that he was

alone in this battle and that he would have to fight it out alone against himself and against all others. He had also realized that he that is alone is not abandoned but only he who cannot be alone with himself. He swore never to abandon himself, come what might!

In the language of Nietzsche, Mackay (Foerster) had to “overcome” himself in order to become himself. The victory over oneself is the triumph over one’s smallness: one’s fear, hypocrisy, doubt and self-condemnation. It is the triumph of loyalty to the best one is and can become. It is “choosing” all that one is, embracing oneself wholly—indeed, holding oneself “holy”. It is Nietzsche’s “amor fati”—embracing one’s fate, one’s entire life from birth to death. It is complete “tolerance” of oneself—radical self-acceptance (Mackay developed these ideas in the context of his own struggle to accept his homosexuality). It is Max Stirner’s call to liberation from self-persecution in ***The Ego and His Own***:

If religion has set up the proposition that we are sinners altogether, I set over and against it the other; we are perfect altogether! For we are, every moment, all that we can be; and we never need be more. Since no defect cleaves to us, sin has no meaning...

There are strong clues in some of Mackay’s other writings that reading Stirner inspired him to overcome society’s condemnation (which he internalized as do many others) of his homosexual desires—his “sinful nature”. But the struggle against one’s self-imposed limitations applies to most other areas of life as well, especially the artistic or creative. Radical acceptance is as simple and as difficult as getting out of one’s own way, and for Mackay this was

the most direct route to real happiness:

We have no other choice but to set ourselves in harmony with ourselves—this is our one and only goal—and our life runs its course between the demands of this innermost wish (our discontent) and its fulfillment (our satisfaction).

For Mackay, liberation evolves or develops as one becomes more and more what one is. This is clearly the theme of *The Freedomseeker*, aptly subtitled “The Psychology of a Development”, in which “The Seeker” becomes “The Finder” and “The Victor”. Though Mackay wrote at length on Anarchy, or the free society, his message remains one of individual emancipation or “individual anarchy,” defined loosely as a state of consciousness in which there is no internalized overlord laying down rules that must be obeyed. The very principle of “Authority” (that which must be accepted without question, motive, or proof) does not exist in such a mind. In the words of Mackay’s close friend and comrade Benjamin Tucker: “Consequences are the only god”. In *The Anarchists* Mackay indicates that this consciousness, or individual anarchy, is “passive” in the sense of not seeking to impose upon reality, but to instead see things as they are, with an “undazzled gaze.” It is thus not rigid, reactionary, fearful, or dogmatic—but rather flowing, creative, mercurial, and joyful. The process of realizing conscious individual anarchy, or becoming what one is, is embodied in the fictional character of Carrard Auban, an example of a self-owning individual, modeled after Mackay:

Ever since Auban began to think, he had struggled—struggled against everything that surrounded him. As a boy and youth, like one in despair, against external fetters, and like a fool, against the inevitable; like a giant against shadows, and like a fanatic against the stronger. As a man he had struggled with himself: the persistent, exhausting, hard struggle with himself, with his own prejudices, his own imaginations, his exaggerated hopes, his childish ideals.

Once he had believed that mankind must radically change before he could be free. Then he saw that he himself must first become free in order to be free.

John Henry Mackay died in 1933. Reprinted below is a moving eulogy written for him by fellow traveler E. Armand, which appeared in the July-August 1933 issue of *The Clarion*, a monthly anarchist publication. We're including this obituary for its historical value, its rarity, and because it illustrates the high regard that other individualists of that era had for Mackay.

John Henry Mackay

by E. Armand

The theoretician of individualist anarchism in Germany—Mackay—is no more. The author of *The Anarchists*, *The Freedomseeker* (*Der Freiheitsaucher*), *The Storm* (*Der Sturm*), and of many poetic compositions, short stories, romances and novels expired in Berlin, May 16, 1933.

Mackay was not only that. He made enormous efforts to rediscover the traces of Max Stirner. To that purpose he sacrificed his wealth. He entered into relations with friends (still living) of the author of *The Ego and its Property*. From his researches there resulted a volume that no one who is interested in Stirnerism can ignore: *Max Stirner, His Life and His Works*. Mackay created a real cult for Stirner. One may say that it is because of him that Stirner occupies the position that is accorded him in the history of the individualistic philosophy.

The individualistic-anarchist movement loses in him one of its finest exponents, one who was too proud and too artistic to allow himself to descend to ideological compromises.

From what his critics say, his writing places him as a stylist on a level with the best German classicists. Some of his poems appear or have recently appeared in anthologies of poetry from across the Rhine. The *Berliner Tagblatt*, in announcing his death, says that his short stories and novels will live on. The literary work of Mackay is tinged with melancholy, with resignation, and colored with pessimism. It may be that we have to see in this a consequence of his ascendancy.

Mackay was born February 6, 1864, at Greencock, near Glasgow, Scotland, of a Scotch father and a mother who was born at Hamburg, Germany; his native tongue was German. Mackay travelled. He passed through Italy, Switzerland, lived in London, in Paris, visited Chicago, the east of the U.S., and finally established himself in Berlin, where for many years the struggle of everyday existence tormented him, at times beyond endurance. He died at the very doorstep of his doctor.

Benjamin R. Tucker writes to me that he has lost in Mackay a friend of fifty years standing. Pierre Ramus deplores the loss of this indomitable fighter. I can say that it is not without deep sorrow that I witness the passing of this pioneer of the individualism with which I have been identified for more than a quarter of a century.

The Anarchists

A Picture of Civilization at the Close of the Nineteenth Century

recalled by Jim Kernochan

In no other field of social life does there exist to-day a more lamentable confusion, a more naïve superficiality, a more portentous ignorance than in that of Anarchism. The very utterance of the word is like the flourish of a red flag; in blind wrath the majority dash against it without taking time for calm examination and consideration. They will tear into tatters this work, too, without having understood it. Me their blows will not strike.

John Henry Mackay

I first read John Henry Mackay's *The Anarchists* while on an Amtrak train heading to Boston from New York. It was almost ten years ago: a knee pointed out of the hole of my faded blue jeans, long dirty-blond hair had not been washed, a ragged fatigue backpack was tossed on the overhead luggage compartment. In spite of the attire, I was even then not much into the mindless rebellion and violence that was symbolized by my '60s image. Instead, I saw myself as a thinking person's rebel; an Individualist.

Of all anarchists I knew about, I most admired Emma Goldman: her gutsy confrontations with the State; her taking issue with those in her own ranks who succumbed to narrow-mindedness and conformity. Active in the gay movement, I, too, had no desire to indulge the puritanical sexism and homophobia of the Left; and did not kowtow to agendas made up by steering committees comprised of "functionaries of the revolution" representing "the people" or whatever buzzwords were in fashion.

While Emma Goldman was an emotional attraction, it was not until zipping through New England reading *The Anarchists* that I saw the various arguments clanging in my head (about the rights of the individual and the repressive nature of the collective) so coherently and intellectually presented. Up to then, I was ill-prepared to defend my firebrand egoism — and when expressing such ideas, would sound like a cascade of falling silverware instead of a person with a well thought-out philosophy.

The aspiring writer in me was overwhelmed by Mackay's eloquence. I rapturously looked at each word as a cat observes a mouse through a pane of glass. A work of "fiction," *The Anarchists* is the polemicist's answer to the cultural snob's maligning of the "political novel." A more stunning advocacy of anarchism is still hard to find!

The Anarchists opens in 19th century London on a "wet, cold October evening" as "a man coming from the direction of Waterloo Station was wending his way to the railroad bridge of Charing Cross through labyrinthine, narrow and almost deserted streets." The man is Carrard Auban: an individualist

and freethinker—who detests the State, its privileges, its terrorism, its mere existence.

It is 1887—the year the British Empire is touting the jubilee of Queen Victoria, and the American Empire is flexing its muscles in Chicago with the impending execution of “the Haymarket Martyrs.” Radicals in London, as elsewhere, gather to protest this indecent charade called “justice”. As happens in every meeting where the various trains of the Left come together, there is much savoring the prospect of exploiting the tragedy, and much clucking over the proper function of the collective.

And then there is Auban, former revolutionist, deeply torn by his admiration of the Martyr’s courage, and disdain for their “folly” in refusing clemency:

My fate would have been theirs....However, I was not happy. I do not believe that self-sacrifice can make us truly happy.—And I should not have liked to die so—I felt it again today. No, I want to battle and conquer without receiving a wound!

My background was working class, but an education has separated me from it, leading to a certain alienation from the poor. Yet, I identify with Auban’s compassion for the downtrodden and their situation, and his opposition to those who would use them as fodder to further a political cause. Yet further, I also share his anger that many victims allow themselves to be blindly led and governed— and his hatred for a world never lacking for horrifying subservience to authority. Mackay, through Auban, plays the contrarian, the wet blanket smoldering the hot coals of leftist collective/state action, which he sees as one more source of working class oppression. His solution: the self-emancipation of the individual.

For it is this and nothing else that Anarchism wants: the removal of all artificial obstructions which past centuries have piled up between man and his liberty, between man and his intercourse

with his fellow-man, always and everywhere on the basis of that colossal lie, designed by some in shrewd and yet so stupid self-infatuation, and accepted by others in equally stupid self-abasement: that the individual does not live for himself, but for mankind!

My visit to Boston ended with me getting to know someone much like myself, making me feel less strange and more assertive about my less-than-popular ideas: Carrard Auban.

I recently removed *The Anarchists* from its prominent place on my bookshelf: now my hair is clipped and my clothes are often seen as “conservative”. It is now the reserved ‘80s. Reading Auban’s tale after ten years’ absence finds me struck by how much Ed Koch’s late 20th Century New York has come to resemble Victoria’s late 19th Century London. Like the former “World Metropolis,” New York is two worlds at war with each other: the rich living in glitzy, garish areas— versus the poor living in stark, staggering poverty. The “Big Apple” has become a rotten haven for Yuppie invaders: baby-booming professionals pushing the poor out of their neighborhoods, out to the margins of the City—or out onto the street itself.

This strict class division reveals that, despite heroic efforts of liberal and radical reformers, government participation in the economy ends up benefiting a select few— real estate magnates like Donald Trump, and those who can afford to pay their rents. Mackay’s call for economic emancipation still rings true: just walk the streets of New York as he walked the streets of London.

In my shaggier hippie days, my only disagreement with Mackay’s Auban was with his cynical view of the effectiveness of social movements in general, and those who dominate these movements in particular. After all, in less than a decade the gay movement of the ‘60s had made great strides in slaying bigotry and winning a rightful niche in society. The activists he described were my friends, people I respected.

Reacquainting myself with Auban has surprised me because the passage of time finds me closer to Mackay’s critique of

social movements— they are authoritarian. In other words, after years of rabble-rousing, gay freedom fighters, with an incremental element of success, became gay bureaucrats, and have thus sought to maintain their positions (in the Democratic Party) by silencing the “riff raff” in their own communities. Friends in the movement have told me how a gay man should act, have sex, and even vote; such is the zealous homage they expect paid to each insipid word that flies from their lips.

Don’t misunderstand me. I believe social movements are necessary—but necessary evils, repressive little clusters which make demands upon the State, resulting in some much-needed reforms. But, after being scorched by enough comrades (demanding loyalty oaths, marching orders, and ideological purity) I, like Auban, have quietly departed from movement agitation. And as if tiptoeing out of church during the middle of mass, I have left the pious to follow the leader. It is a decision I feel comfortable with and one Auban would have liked; one I made on my own.

“Did you ever contribute anything to the happiness of mankind?”

“Yes, I have myself been happy!”

Hence, I leave Mackay’s Auban for a second time, feeling even closer to the character than the first visit, as if he were a hoary old uncle offering tidbits of advice I know to be right (My political ideas have received a fine tuning.). Meanwhile, should you ever be faced with an overwhelming tendency to submit to organized—or unorganized— authority, read *The Anarchists* and discover that, like all bad habits, deference to authority CAN be overcome! It is like lighting a cigarette, thinking better of it, and leaving it to burn out on its own.

Deadly impulses... reduced to ashes.

From *The Storm! A Journal
For Free Spirits*, 1986

***Men Against The State:
The Expositors of Individualist
Anarchism in America, 1827-1908***
by James J. Martin

reviewed by S. E. Parker

This second edition of *Men Against The State* is most welcome. It comes at a time where there is a distinct revival of interest in the Warren-Tucker school of anarchism. In a model of historical scholarship, Dr. Martin details the growth and decline of the talented group of libertarian writers and publicists whose ideas found their ultimate synthesis in the work of Benjamin Tucker. He describes in depth the activities of Josiah Warren, Steven Pearl Andrews, Lysander Spooner, J.K. Ingalls, W.B. Greene, Ezra Heywood, and the Tucker associates. His story is a fascinating one, but it may well prove depressing for those whose perspectives are shaped by the belief that anarchism can be universalized.

Consider: here was a movement born at a time of social ferment and optimism in a country where the government was comparatively weak. It had capable theoreticians, practical exponents of "community living" and its supporters were virtually all "natives". Yet after eighty years of activity it petered out, despite the efforts of a few survivors.

Some reasons: Because of their desire to establish a future society on the basis of their ideas the Warrenites and Tuckerites tried to fit their anarchism into a societal context. They had to tailor their individualism in order to make it compatible with social engineering. As a result, their championing of individualism was deformed by the irons of utopia. Warren's experiments showed that anarchism could become at least a partial reality for a small minority of individuals. But this was all he accomplished in a positive sense. His belief that the example of his "equity villages" would convince

the mass proved delusory. The mass remained a mass and the individualists remained "outsiders". Nor does the gulf between them today appear any more bridgeable.

Neither Warren nor Tucker seems to have really come to grips with the intractable problem of social organization. Robert Micels has outlined with somber effectiveness what is called the "iron law of oligarchy" – the invariable tendency of all organized efforts to give birth to an oligarchy. This means that any social application of anarchism—were it possible—would fall into the hands of new oligarchs who would become—defacto if not de jure—rulers over the individual. At most it would result in what Estey called the "anarchism of groups", but not the "anarchism of individuals".

Later anarchist individualists have developed a more realistic perspective: the continual conflict of the individual with the social—the Unique against the Collective.

However, Josiah Warren's concept of the **individualization of interests** as opposed to their **combination**, was one of the most fruitful contributions ever made to anarchism. Its eclipse by attempts to link anarchism with collectivism proved disastrous, and led to the idiotic identification of anarchism with "leftism" –even with such totalitarian monstrosities as Maoism.

The value of Warren's concept remains, however. Properly used it is an effective weapon in the struggle for the individual. The "sovereignty of the individual" may never replace the sovereignty of governments, but it can always be opposed to them.

Originally printed in
Minus One

Pioneering Egoist Texts

by S. E. Parker

Every man is an egoist – whoever ceases to be one becomes a thing. He who pretends it is not necessary to be one is a thief. Anselme Bellegarrigue

The only consistent philosophical basis for anarchist individualism is conscious egoism, which finds its most radical and extensive expression in Max Stirner's pioneering epic *The Ego and His Own*. Stirner's work, however, is not easy to read, but for many years it was the only durable account of philosophical egoism available. Now, with the reissue of James L. Walker's long-neglected classic *The Philosophy of Egoism* and John Badcock's *Slaves to Duty*, it is possible to approach *The Ego and His Own* by an easier route. Together with the first of The Libertarian Broadside Series, Stirner's *The False Principles of Our Education*, they provide a fitting supplement to, and an illuminating comment on, Stirner's magnum opus.

Walker deservedly earned the title of "Father of Egoism" in the U.S.A. By his early twenties he was expounding an embryonic form of egoism and had reached substantially the same conclusions as Stirner before he heard of the latter in 1872. Under the pseudonym of Tak Kak he opened a debate on the subject in the columns of Benjamin Tucker's *Liberty* in the 1880s and succeeded in carrying most of the Tuckerites, including Tucker himself, into the egoist camp. The bulk of *The Philosophy of Egoism* however, appeared serially in the magazine *Egoism*, published by Georgia and Henry Replogle from 1890-1898. In 1905, it was published in its entirety by Walker's widow, a year after his death from smallpox in Mexico.

When the book first appeared it was described in *Liberty* as "no more concise exposition of the philosophy of egoism has ever been given to the world. In this book Duty, Conscience,

Moralism, Right and all the fetishes and superstitions which have infested the human intellect since man ceased to walk on four feet, are annihilated, swept away, relegated to the rubbish heap of the waste of human intelligence that has gone on through the progress of the race from its infancy."

Little has appeared in the English language since then to alter this judgment. Indeed, reading Walker in the light of certain recent "egoists" one sees how he stands head and shoulders above them, particularly those who retail constipated moralisms from under the sign of the Randian Revelation. How Walker would have been amused by their interminable mental gymnastics over "rights" and "force" which resemble nothing so much as the legendary medieval debates on how many angels could dance on the point of a needle. For him both "right" and "force" were expediencies to be claimed or exercised as an individual saw fit—and had the power!

In a style alternating between the magisterial and the pithy, and lit and lightened with flashes of telling eloquence, Walker launches broadside after broadside at the ramparts of altruistic idealism. Every type of "supernal altruist" from the priest to the moralizing freethinker, from Nietzsche (yes, Nietzsche who wanted us to live for the Overman!) to the quasi-individualist Herbert Spencer, comes under his withering fire. I am tempted to quote from many passages in which he deftly turns the tables on the anti-egoists and shows how nearly 2,000 years of Judeo-Christianity has covered what Stirner called "the noble nature of egoism" with the rancorous slime of the self-sacrificed, but I will content myself with only one in which Walker is replying to some of his critics writing in "libertarian papers":

Many show absolutely no understanding of Egoism. It is an affair of objective classification of acts, they suppose. Thus if I have an apple and eat it, that is Egoism, they suppose. If I give the apple to my friend, that is Altruism, they suppose. How simple! Then I, being an Egoist and liking to see some of my friends

eat my apples, must not indulge this pleasure unless I can stand certain persons' charges of inconsistency. Let me give them a point: I select my friends. My apples are not foreverybody to help himself. Let me give them another point: The man who eats his own apple, not because he likes it, but because he thinks it is Egoistic to eat it—not to talk of duty—is only a deluded Egoist, by which I mean that he has missed being an Egoist in the definite sense in which I am using the word in these closing chapters.

As James J. Martin remarks in his foreword: Walker was one of "the giants of philosophical egoism".

Badcock's essay "Slaves to Duty" nearly suffered the same fate as Walker's book, but was saved from complete neglect by Laurance Labadie who reprinted it in 1938. First delivered as a lecture in 1894 to the London South Place Junior Ethical Society, it appeared shortly afterwards as a pamphlet. Badcock subjects the "duty" spook to a thorough investigation and after he has finished it there is not enough left to give even a modicum of consolation to the most credulous member of the Society for Psychical Research.

Since I have written the Introduction to this corrected and annotated edition I will leave it at that—adding, however, that the appendix is a much needed reprint of John Beverley Robinson's little 1915 masterpiece "Egoism". I doubt if anyone else has surpassed Robinson in compressing so much about egoism into just four pages.

The fourth of the Libertarian Broadside Series consists of three of Benjamin Tucker's most pertinent essays: "State Socialism and Anarchism", "The Attitude of Anarchism Towards Industrial Combinations" and the personal, little-known, "Why I Am An Anarchist". For anyone wanting to grasp the salient ideas of Tucker's interpretation of anarchism, these essays can be recommended. Tucker was a stylish writer and always presented his case with impeccable polish.

The essays are preceded by an outstanding Introduction by

James J. Martin, which, for me, was the most important part of the booklet: particularly since Martin is the greatest living "authority" on Tucker's life and ideas.

After paying tribute to Tucker's intellectual eminence and literary ability, Martin goes on to consider the relevance of Tuckerism today. This is a crucial question for anarchist individualists, since Tucker and his contemporaries not only lived, as Martin puts it, in a "mainly stable world State system at the height of the era of world colonialism", but were necessarily strangers to our air-conditioned nightmare of nuclear weapons, concentration camps, gas chambers, and the sophisticated repressive techniques of modern collectivist manipulators. The corporate, corporation and warfare states were largely smudges on the horizon when they were most active in formulating their ideas. The problem of the individual versus organized collectives loomed large seventy years ago, but its growth since then has been so staggering that one cannot conceive of its solution, even if one were convinced that individualism could become the active concern of the majority of mankind. As the hero of Paul Herr's novel *Journey Not to End*, remarks: "The true radical in the Age of Organization is a hermit in a cave."

An exaggeration, perhaps, but a pardonable one!

Martin asks what can be done now in this "Age of Organization". Intellectually, those of the opposition who claim Tucker as a precursor, simply repeat the critiques of the past "disguised by present day fashionable stylistic conventions". Actively, there have been no significant operational improvements on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries:

One would be inclined to conclude from the evidence at hand that no new day in the affairs of men is about to dawn. An interminable period of Statist night-time lies ahead, during which the matter of individual survival will supersede all other goals. It remains to be seen whether radical political activity along the traditional lines of mass politics, which always runs the

risk of succeeding and thereupon creating an even worse State, or anonymous individualist philosophical strategies, best lend themselves to meeting the objective adequately.

Not a conclusion to commend itself to those who, seeking utopia, at the same time seek to cripple individualism within the fetters of mass politicking. But for those who are beyond such stupidities, for the remnant who understand what individualism is really about, such strategies will be among the first of their priorities. From “internal exile” to the desperate heroism of militant illegalism, the options lie open. What each will do is up to each... Individualist strategies are the products of individuals – not of groups or parties.

The Influence of Tucker's Ideas in France

by E. Armand

Tucker! What memories his name invokes in our mind! The present generations have forgotten the pioneer of "anarchist-individualism" or "philosophical anarchism" in the United States; I am not unaware of this. It is human to forget. But myself, I have never forgotten my first contact with *Liberty*, now more than thirty years ago. I sought my way and then edited a paper *l'ère nouvelle*, a Christian anarchist organ. I was at that time under the influence of Tolstoy, to whom I am indebted not only for being an opponent of governmental violence and Statist constraint, but for having comprehended that "salvation is within ourselves." But Tolstoyism did not satisfy me any more than the Kropotkin brand of anarchism satisfied me, as represented by the French tendency of the *Temps Nouveaux*. A personality belonging to this last movement was nevertheless eminently sympathetic to me: that of Élisée Reclus. I had been to see him several times, we had conversations, and had been in accord on many points. But I am aiming at something else.

It is at that time that I made the acquaintance, intellectually speaking, of Tucker. That did not imply solely the assimilation of his doctrine. To establish contact with Tucker meant inquiring into everything which his predecessors or those to whom he alluded had written: Josiah Warren, Stephen Pearl Andrews, Max Stirner, Proudhon for example. Tucker and those whom I am going to cite taught me the theory of the "individual," the doctrine of "individual sovereignty," of the association of "egos." I had learned from Tolstoy that it is within ourselves that salvation lies.

At the same time they swept from my brain all the traces of metaphysics which it had still sheltered. From then on my mind was clear.

I do not claim that I ever posed as an orthodox "Tuckerian." I feel within myself the soul of a heretic. I have always felt myself an outsider, one *en debors*, a non-conformist through rapport with movements that were most sympathetic to me. Moreover, I read, studied, deepened my mind with Emerson, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Whitman. I was in contact with Crosby, Horace Traubel, Voltairine de Cleyre. However, I am still indebted to Tucker for being revealed to myself. My knowledge of Tucker implied that of John Henry Mackay with whom I had maintained friendly relations until his death, as also with Jo Labadie.

Not that the economic discussions which comprised *Instead of a Book* had entirely convinced me. But it is because the *spirit* of this work which suits my temperament better than the anarchism of John Most or Peter Kropotkin, however much I respect the character of the latter. My nature, my aspirations, are in better accord with the *Ego and His Own*, *The Anarchists*, *Der Freiheitsucher*, for instance, than with the *Conquest of Bread*. I am not, and cannot be a Communist-Anarchist. I do not believe in a single solution of the problem of man. I am a free associate and live absolutely convinced that there is room upon our planet for the flowering of all the nuances of the libertarian rainbow.²

I hold that the isolated individual or free association must be able to dispose freely of their production and regulate their relations with others as they intend, whether individuals or another association. I hold that there exists no "liberty" nor possibility of "equal liberty," or exercising of "reciprocity" — without the possession in inalienable title of the "means of production," (or an equitable equivalent.) I hold that any contract which does not include the clause of cancellation is a leonine or

1 For example from the point of view of illegalism or economic non-conformism. And on several other points. The individualism of *en debors* bears a special significance but it would be ingratitude to deny its origin.

2 I am convinced that the communism termed anarchist or libertarian as the majority of its adherents understand it, would show itself as fatally absorbing, if not despotic, as Bolshevism. The same goes for Syndicalism, Jacobinism of the extreme left, etc.

oppressive contract. Enemy number one is he who imposes the contract— whether it be an individual, a federation, a majority³ or the State. I claim for the individual as for the association the right to defend itself against all tentacles of invasiveness, whether it be an individual, a majority or the State which is shown to be invasive. I hold that “mind your own business” is the only “moral law” and that “interference with another’s affairs is a crime, the only crime, and as such it must be opposed.” For those four or five directives, which are so very clear, I am indebted to Tucker. And throughout all my thirty five years of propaganda, whether in *l’ère nouvelle*, *hors du troupeau*, *les refractaires*, *par delà la melee*, *l’en dehors*, they have wound like a guiding thread through all I have spoken or written.

In *l’en dehors*, I am less occupied with presenting solutions to economic problems than affirming and exposing the individualistic viewpoint of life and the human problem. Times have changed since the appearance of *Liberty*. There has been the war and the diminution of general culture which has followed it. In several important European countries the political impotence of democratic parliamentarianism has caused the dawning of regimes which have annihilated the victories to which individualists are very particularly attached: liberty (of the press) or the public expression of opinions, liberty of union, liberty of association. An inevitable economic crisis causes a relegation to the second place of the pursuit of the individual’s autonomy. They iterate to us in all tones of the scale that the very concept of liberty is a superannuated idea or petty-bourgeois. They proclaim that all is lost and that there is no hope of relief; here if the individual is not submerged in the collective soul, there if he does not permit himself to be absorbed by the totalitarian State. How to maintain individual values, personal non-conformism, in the midst of the general upheaval; how to resist the general authoritarian involvement, overt or hidden? That is the problem I am forced always to keep in sight. On the other hand, I do not believe that it is enough to attack *en bloc* the solid structure of author-

3 And etiquette matters little.

ity; according to my opinion, it is most appropriate to under-
mine separately the pillars upon which it rests.⁴ Shaken to its
foundation, spiritual, ethical, intellectual, the edifice will fin-
ish by some day tottering.

From there on, my propaganda was with the view of
uprooting in the individual certain prejudices, certain moral
habits. For several years my activity was specialized on some
very definite points and the ostracism which has fallen upon
my propaganda (interdiction of circulation of *l'en dehors*
in the countries with dictatorial regimes) shows that I have
hit the nail on the head.⁵ It goes without saying that this
specialization has never caused me to neglect the appeal to
the necessity of individual culture or the indispensability of
hewing out the personality.

Moreover, I am no sectarian. The proof of this lies in my
constant collaboration with *l'Encyclopedie Anarchiste* of
Sebastian Faure, the first libertarian orator I have heard.
This goes back to the era of the Dreyfus affair: which does
not make me any younger (not him either.) I admit indeed
that other opinions than mine are professed and that there
are consecrations to other propagandas than those towards
which my determinism is attracted.⁶

I have met Tucker twice, twenty-five years apart. I have not
met him when he was in full propagandistic activity. I have
met him when he had ceased his activity. The first time we

4 You find "anarchists" who affirm that it is counter-revolutionary! It is in the
"tomorrow of the revolution" that one will regulate a horde of questions, the
solution of which embraces the details of daily life. In the meantime, the years
pass and the individual dies, crushed under, embittered, sacrificed to a mystic!

5 Such is our position with regard to the sexual question. Because we have re-
membered, like Schiller, that love, equally with hunger was a great motivating
cause of the activity of man, they have vowed us to germinate. As if the solu-
tion of the economic problem, important as it is, ought to be the *only* subject
which could preoccupy a propagandist or a propaganda! I do not speak here
of the individualists among whom our theses have many precursors.

6 On condition that we are not obliged to be silent and not forced to re-
nounce our right of criticism and free examination concerning activities which
are not our own.

were far from being in accord on a great number of points; the second time we were in agreement on almost all points. But after every conversation I had left more encouraged, more determined to struggle for the sovereignty of the "ego" and free association in all branches of human activity.

reprinted from *Free Vistas* 2, 1937

Stirner on Education

by S. E. Parker

"The False Principle of Our Education, or Humanism and Realism" is the first of Max Stirner's important seminal essays to be published in the English language. It is both a fascinating foreshadowing of his major work, *The Ego and His Own*, and an interesting critique of "progressive" as well as "classical" education.

At the time this essay first appeared in 1842, a big controversy was raging between those educationists who favored a "humanist" approach to education and those who favored a "realist" approach. The first was the formal and exclusive education of the aristocratic style. The second was the practical and universal education of the democratic style. Although he tended to prefer the latter, Stirner asked of the advocates of both: "Do they consciously cultivate our predispositions to become **creators** or do they treat us only as **creatures** whose nature simply permits training?" He answers that the school, whether humanist or realist, does nothing fundamentally but treat its pupils as creatures:

Truth itself consists in nothing other than man's revelation of himself, the liberation from all that is alien, the uttermost abstraction or release from all authority, the re-won naturalness. Such thoroughly true men are not supplied by school: if they are nevertheless there, they are there **in spite** of school. This indeed makes us masters of things, at the most, masters of our natures; it does not make us free natures..

...in the pedagogical as in certain other spheres freedom is not allowed to erupt, the power of the **opposition** is not allowed to put a word in edgewise: they want **submissiveness**. Only a formal and material training is being aimed at and only scholars come out of the menageries of the humanists, only "useful citizens" out of those of the realists, both of whom are indeed nothing but **subservient** people.

The idea of the **opposition** of egos as a source of creativity, which Stirner develops in detail in *The Ego and His Own*, is brought out here as well, particularly in regard to children. Stirner sees the child as neither angel nor devil and while he despises being an authority over the child, he nonetheless does not favor letting the child tyrannize over the adult:

Childlike obstinacy and intractability have as much right as childlike curiosity. The latter is being stimulated; so one should also call forth the natural strength of the will, **opposition**. If a child does not learn self-awareness, then he plainly does not learn that which is most important. They do not suppress his pride or his frankness. If pride turns into spite, then the child approaches me with violence; I do not have to endure this since I am just as free as the child. Must I however defend myself

against him by using the convenient rampart of authority? No, I oppose him with the strength of my own freedom: thus the spite of the child will break up by itself. Whoever is a complete person does not need to be an authority.

It is here that Stirner, writing in 1842, tackles a problem that still plagues "progressive" educationalists today. The biological and emotional dependence of the child upon the adult has been the stumbling block of all efforts to apply complete freedom in education. Perhaps the child does not always need the sweetness and light of those who are **always** "on his side" any more than he needs cruelty and discipline. Perhaps, as Stirner suggests, conflict and opposition are part of its development towards self-awareness along with love and care. Perhaps the adult does not have to shrink from using his will against that of a child, but at the same time does not have to pose as an authority..

"The False Principle of Our Education" is preceded by an excellent introduction by James J. Martin in which he **points** out the relevance of Stirner's ideas to the contemporary educational scene, but is skeptical of their acceptance by "most people":

Unfortunately, what Stirner perceived as the dawn of a potentially greater era for individualist realization turned out to be only a temporary crack in the ice flow of authority, which has congealed and solidified steadily in this century and a quarter of the industrialized State.

He concludes:

The war of wills between the individual and the collectivity will undoubtedly go on as long as the race of man persists, and the schoolroom will continue to be one of its ubiquitous battle

grounds. As the school training machinery of the State grows ever more pervasive and inescapable, and no less so even in most of the privately organized institutions, it may be that, for some time to come, such as one may number among Stirner's "free men" are most likely to come into existence and endure in an auto-didact underground.

Voltairine de Cleyre

by S. E. Parker

Voltairine de Cleyre is one of the most unjustly neglected figures of American radicalism. Essayist, poet, translator and orator, she played a prominent part in the libertarian movement between 1887 and her death in 1912 at the age of 45.

It is for this reason that I welcome Paul Avrich's well-written and serious biographical study, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre* (Princeton University Press). In it he vividly depicts her struggles to assert herself as a free individual, her relations with her comrades and the evolution of her thought. He also gives us fascinating sketches of some of her close friends and corrects the errors made by Emma Goldman and Hippolyte Havel in their biographical essays about her.

Voltairine de Cleyre began her public life as a lecturer in the free-thought movement. She became interested in anarchism as a result of the Chicago Affair of 1886 and at first championed the ideas of Benjamin Tucker, to whose paper *Liberty* she contributed. She soon came under the influence of her friend and lover Dyer D. Lum, however, who, like Tucker, was a mutualist, but favored militant participation in trade union struggles. Towards the end of her life she began to work closely with the libertarian communists, but refused to commit herself to their ideas, preferring to call herself an "anarchist without adjectives" and adopting a pluralist view of any future "free society". Indeed, Paul Avrich shows conclusively that, despite claims by Rudolf Rocker and Emma Goldman, she did not embrace communism. But I am not convinced that her efforts to maintain a balance between individualism and communism rested on any sure foundation. My own experience has shown that one eventually has to choose

between one or the other and I chose individualism.

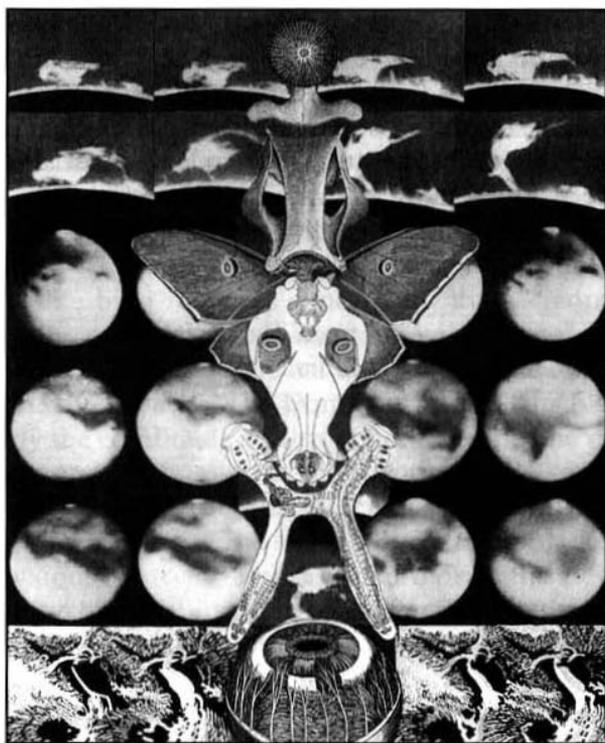
In this connection Voltairine de Cleyre's attitude towards philosophical egoism is significant. Her mentor, Dyer D. Lum, believed that "the devotee of a cause is never the devotee of self" and he sneeringly dismissed egoists as "dung-beetles", "people who think a great deal of their ego and don't give a rap for society". In her obituary essay about him, written after his suicide in 1893, she describes his views without any dissent so one may take it that she then agreed with him. In her later writings, however, she began to stress the importance of "thinking a great deal" of one's ego. Even in one of her most "Tolstoyan" essays, "Crime and Punishment", she wrote "I believe that the purpose of life (insofar as we can give it a purpose, and it has none save what we give it) is the assertion and development of a strong, self-centered personality". In "Anarchism and Literature", not only does she echo Max Stirner by stating that "none can decide for you so well as you for yourself; for even if you err you learn by it, while if he errs the blame is his, and if he advises well the credit is his, and you are nothing", but she pays tribute to Stirner as "the pride of Young Germany who would have the individual acknowledge nothing, neither science nor logic, nor any other creation of his thought, as having authority over him, its creator".

Nonetheless, despite her recognition of the value of egocentricity, Voltairine de Cleyre remained haunted to the end of her life by a religious concern for the sacredness of principles, the notion that one has to serve a "cause" greater than oneself. Two years before her death she wrote one of her most impressive essays, "The Dominant Idea", which shows very clearly the conflicting strains of her thought. She praises the "liberty and pride and strength of the single soul" and "the immortal fire of Individual Will which is the salvation of the future". At the same time she holds up for emulation that most obnoxious source of support for authority, the view that "to conceive a higher thing than oneself and live towards that is the only way of living worthily". Indeed, she concludes her essay by transforming "Individual Will" into her "Dominant Idea" and thus negates it.

It is not surprising that not long after writing this essay she became overwhelmed by a bleak despair about her life and ideas. Her vain attempts to walk the philosophical tightrope between egoism and altruism, the profane and the sacred, eventually crumbled. She found emotional refuge from her dilemma in the shape of the Mexican Revolution which "at any moment of our lives...may invade our homes with its stern demand for self-sacrifice and suffering". Abandoning her critical awareness, she plunged into a frenzied campaign to rally support for the Mexican revolutionaries whom she idealized in a manner beyond belief in one so intelligent. She died before she could witness the revolution ending in a mere change of rulers, as is the melancholy habit of such ventures.

The life and ideas of Voltairine de Cleyre offer much of interest to individualists. She came so near to adopting a thoroughgoing individualist position, but sadly could not overcome the religious-collectivist nonsense she had imbibed in her youth ("God must fall in every shape" cried John Henry Mackay). In my early days as an "anarcho-communist" I found her writings both inspiring and sufficiently disturbing to implant in my thinking a seed of doubt about my championing of this contradiction in terms that later formed part of a blossoming of anarchist individualism. In Paul Avrich she has found an able biographer whose pages bring her to life once more.

from *The Egoist: An
Individualist Review* #42



3.

Smashing Fossilized Patterns: *individualists & egoists critique leftism and its heritage*

This section addresses the anarchist problem with the left. At its heart this problem is central to what exactly it means to be an anarchist. This critique is best summed up by understanding the left as desiring, experimenting with, theorizing about, and strategizing social engineering by terms that are different in style, but not in substance, from what currently exists. This means that the critique of the left is also a critique of utopian idealism & socialist thinking within anarchist thought and as a result this critique challenges the mythology that has been constructed of the anarchist project today.

Individualist and egoist anarchists are not believers in a single human nature that is universally Good, counterposed against a greedy, avaricious bad human nature. Anarchists who believe in a single collectivist vision of humanity have always been confronted by those who believed no such thing is possible or desirable.

Anarchism versus Socialism

by S.E. Parker

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

But what is socialism?

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

Since, for socialists in general, the economic question is paramount – every problem tending to be reduced to the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism – there is one belief which all socialists, from Statists to libertarian communists, share, and that is the belief in the need to put the ownership or control of the means of production into the hands of some collective body, be it the government or "society". Socialism above all is, as Auguste Hamon has said, a "social system in which – a social doctrine *by which* – the means of production are socialized". It is my argument that this wish to make society the owner and provider of the

means of life is to put a new authority over the individual in place of the old and is therefore not anarchism. Anarchism stands for leaving each individual free to provide for himself what he needs and is therefore not a complement of socialism but its opposite. It follows that those anarchists who think that anarchism is a form of socialism are deluding themselves and sooner or later will have to choose between them, for they cannot logically be both.

Undoubtedly there are some socialists who are genuinely concerned for the freedom of the individual and believe that by taking the means of production away from the capitalists and giving them to society, or the State as representative of society, they will abolish the subjection of the many to the privileged few and so secure the liberty of each individual. But how would this alter the position of the individual producer? Under capitalism he has to submit to the will of a handful of monopolists. Under socialism he would have to submit to the will of the collective. He would have no freedom to produce and exchange as he wishes and without this his individual freedom cannot exist.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Either the economy could be of such a nature

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

The libertarian communist ideal is, he continues,

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

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

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

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

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

Social Totalitarianism

by Francis Ellingham

Imagine a book written by an individualist-anarchist as an ironic parody of anarcho-communism—a pseudo-philosophical treatise in which a completely totalitarian social system is solemnly advocated in the name of perfect anarchist freedom—and you have a good idea of the book *Social Anarchism* by Giovanni Baldelli. The only difference is that this book is meant to be taken seriously.

"Social anarchism", writes Baldelli, "means that anarchism is intended to be for the good of society". And the word society "applies particularly to those activities which can most aptly be compared to the circulatory, respiratory, and digestive functions of a living body". Can an individual be free as a cell in the social body? He can, according to Baldelli, if society is ethical. And he duly unrolls a blueprint of an "ethical society" in which "those invested with authority, whom we may call guardians of the ethical customs and institutions that society has created" are "to denounce any impingement and infringement, to keep naked power at bay, and to pay it back if necessary in its own currency". Compare this to the "guardians" of Plato's "Republic"!

Baldelli has a key concept: "the ethical capital of mankind". This is "an agglomerate of wills directed to good purposes and socially beneficial". Contributions to it are made by "whatever dictates to one man's actions which are beneficial to another". In the ethical society this metaphysical capital will be "skillfully invested", but at present it is "exploited" by the State, which can be defined as "organized exploitation of ethical capital".

Every modern State originated "from an act of usurpation against its own people" who had already become ethical

through "habit and customs" (it never occurs to Baldelli that custom could be unethical, or that ethical people might not let themselves be usurped). By exploiting the ethical capital the State destroys it, since good will "must ordinarily be sustained by its being reciprocated". Thus the State should be overthrown – and replaced with "the rule of authority" based on "Natural Law" as interpreted by the discipline of "Social Deontology". This new discipline (when fully developed) will "determine what is right and what is wrong" and provide us with "an arithmetic of values" –i.e. "an axiological calculus" capable of assisting in the solution of complex social problems.

Authority, to Baldelli, "is not the opposite or enemy of freedom but its necessary complement". He proves this by defining authority as "the right to take and carry out decisions with the assent of every person whom the decisions affect". But (and this is a typical maneuver) he soon forfeits his own definition and starts using the word authority in its normal sense – the right to make decisions, full stop. Thus "an offender who refuses to accept...a decision by an ethical authority...calls upon himself the use of compulsion". And thus the ethical society turns out to be rigidly controlled by a host of authorities ("local", "cultural", "economic", and "mediating"), which are responsible to one another "in a system that joins all together in a tangle of chains where each link is interlocked with several others". This principle of "multilateral responsibility" is supposed to preclude any danger of centralized tyranny. The possibility that the individual might feel the whole "tangle of chains" to be a tyranny is not discussed.

In the ethical society essential goods are distributed free "on lines similar to those adopted in Great Britain for the supply and distribution of rations during the Second World War." What is essential for each individual "should be determined by the individual himself, a medical authority, and a local economic authority, jointly" –but the individual's say is limited to such matters as "cultural peculiarities" (e.g. no meat for vegetarians); such "anarchist" choice already exists in British prisons! There is no compulsion to work, but

“work will be remunerated in the form of purchasing power, and non-essential goods will be obtainable only through purchase” —and the “range of non-essentials” will be “vast”. Moreover, if the ethical society runs short of provisions, “able-bodied non-workers will naturally be the first to suffer when a reduction in the individual quota of essential goods is made imperative. The choice of working or starving will then face them...for which society could not be blamed”.

Work is to be measured in “ergons” and remunerated in “edens” — units of measurement that are “uniform throughout each community and groups of communities linked into an economic whole by coordinated planning”. Naturally a worker cannot claim the whole product of his labor, since he owes a “tremendous debt” to society for his upbringing and education, his “right of usufruct” of land and raw materials, his tools, his home, and all the other goodies laid on by the ethical authorities according to the best principles of Social Deontology. Among these goodies are institutions “for the relief of harm and the discouragement of harmfulness”. These differ only in name from those of bourgeois “law and order”. Thus there is no army or police force, but “emergency corps” will “stave off organized attempts at suppression of liberties” and be responsible for “detection and apprehension of perpetrators of murders and torts” — *tort* being the ethical word for crime. Punishment “cannot be ethical”, but “there will, in an ethical society, inevitably be authorized infliction of pain. It must be understood as a defensive measure....” Written law has grave defects, but “precisely stated regulations” will “give guidance to those who exert power in the name of society”. Instead of a judiciary there will be “assessors of torts” — “men of experience and sensitive intelligence and keen social vocation”. In the event of such splendid men making a mistake, you could appeal to an “approver” — “someone of integrity and competence” appointed by a local authority.

Under these flawless arrangements, “without judging an offender except to establish whether he suffers from hubris, society will take the necessary steps to avoid repercussions damaging to faith in an ethical society”, meaning “voluntary

removal to another community" or "some form of confinement and compulsory reparation" (nor must we forget "authorized infliction of pain"). Many potential offenders, however, will be dissuaded from perpetrating torts by "preventors" — men qualified "by a special ethical education or by such a vocation as priesthood or psychiatry" to help "persons in need of enlightenment, advice, and relief"

To bring all this about, Baldelli is ready to kill. In the aftermath of the "antipower struggle" (antipower is "engendered by power" and is "the motive force of genuine revolutions") we shall find that "hardly any leading exponent of the revolutionary forces will be without at least one death on his conscience" — although no homicide must be committed "except under valid circumstances of self-defense". What is valid? Well, since we learn in the closing paragraphs that "no one has the right to decide which is the right way for any person at any time" (not even Social Deontologists?) we cannot be sure. But we may take it that self-defense against the ethical society, or antipower engendered by the power of the guardians, would **not** seem valid to the fanatical author of this hopelessly confused, absolutely preposterous "anarchist" book.

from *The Individuunist*, 1971

Stirner, Marx and Fascism

by S.E. Parker

John Carroll, in his introduction to his abridged edition of Stirner's *The Ego and His Own*, quotes "the Polish Marxist" Leszek Kolakowski as stating that "Stirner's grounds are irrefutable. Even Nietzsche seems inconsequential to him." It would seem that either Kolakowski has changed his mind, or Carroll has misquoted him, for a glance at the section on Max Stirner in the first volume of Kolakowski's book *Main Currents of Marxism* reveals an all-too-familiar Marxist "critique" of Stirner's philosophy.

In the space of eight pages the reader is treated to several of the usual "interpretations". We are told, for example, that egoism would mean "a return to animality and the unbridled sway of individual passion", and that Stirner condemned "culture in the name of the monadic sovereignty of the individual". Both of these accusations were explicitly denied by Stirner, but this does not deter Mr. Kolakowski. Having made such statements without bothering to document them, he goes on to write the following passage:

As recent studies by Helms have shown, Stirner's doctrines inspired not only anarchists but various German groups who were the immediate precursors of fascism. At first sight, Nazi totalitarianism may seem the opposite of Stirner's radical individualism. But fascism was above all an attempt to dissolve the social ties created by history and replace them by artificial bonds among individuals who were expected to render implicit obedience to the State on grounds of absolute egoism. Fascist education combined the tenets of asocial egoism and unquestioning conformism, the latter being the means by which the individual secured his own niche in the

system. Stirner's philosophy has nothing to say against conformism, it only objects to the Ego being subordinated to any higher principle: the egoist is free to adjust to the world if it appears that he will better himself by doing so. His "rebellion" may take the form of utter servility if it will further his interest; what he must not do is be bound by "general" values or myths of humanity. The totalitarian ideal of a barrack-like society from which all real, historical ties have been eliminated is perfectly consistent with Stirner's principles: the egoist, by his very nature, must be prepared to fight under any flag that suits his convenience.

This is a typical piece of Marxist nonsense. No one could be more obsessed with the creation of "social ties" based on "history" than the fascists. Vidkun Quisling, the Norwegian fascist, wrote

we recognize the profound truth of the historic past as well as the historic present...we must be permitted to believe in the continual historical and divine mission of the Nordic people's of the world.

And far from being "asocial" the fascists insisted on the "organic society" as the goal of their effort. Fascism, stated Mussolini, "is always...an organic conception of the world". Like the Marxists, fascists were strident opponents of "atomic individualism" and loved to attribute causal efficacy to abstractions such as "History". As for their "egoism" fascists continually denounced "selfishness" and "individualism". The First Programme of the German Nazi Party proclaimed the principle "the common interest before the self" The Belgian fascist Jean Denis wrote: "The human being thrives not by referring everything to itself in a vain and selfish individualism but, on the contrary, by giving up the self and

becoming part of communities". And his colleague Leon Degrelle concurred when he stated:

This is the true Fascist miracle; this faith, the unspoilt, burning confidence, the complete lack of selfishness and individualism, the tension of the whole being towards the service...of a cause which transcends the individual, demanding all, promising nothing.

What has such insistent altruism got to do with Stirner's conscious egoism? The answer is clear: nothing!

Where Kolakowski gets the idea that "Stirner's philosophy has nothing to say against conformism" is a mystery to me. Conformism rests upon the principle that the ego must subordinate itself to a "higher principle" and on Kolakowski's own admission Stirner's philosophy opposes that. At one point Kolakowski even summarizes Stirner as saying "My Ego is sovereign, it recognizes no authority or constraints such as humanity, the truth, morality, or the State".

It is certainly true that Stirner thought that a conscious egoist might at times have to **pretend** conformity if he or she does not have enough power to assert him/herself openly against authority. But such strategies are firmly based on a recognition of the purely prudential nature of such a pretense, as is shown in the following example given by Stirner:

The fetters of reality cut the sharpest welts in my flesh every moment. But my **own** I remain. Given up as a serf to a master, I think only of myself and my advantage; his blows strike me, indeed I am not **free** from them; but I endure them only for my **benefit**, perhaps in order to deceive him and make him secure by the semblance of patience, or again, not to draw worse upon myself by contumacy. 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.

Thus the only relationship an egoist has with the "totalitarian ideal of a barrack-like society" is that of a prisoner of war waiting for the first chance to escape from his captors.

Kolakowski claims that Marx "seeks to preserve the principle of individuality—not, however, as something antagonistic to the general interest, but as completely coincident with it". This is, no doubt, intended as a contrast to Stirner's view "Let us therefore not aspire to community, but to **one-sidedness**". Marx's "preservation of individuality", however, is highly suspect. According to Kolakowski when communism is achieved "the individual will accept the community as his own interiorized nature." In other words, the conformity of community will be manifested as "conscience" and the individual will be "integrated" into the "community" by virtue of the command of an internalized authority.

Again, "it was Marx's view that under communism men's individual possibilities would display themselves **only in socially constructive ways**" (my emphasis). But who will decide what is "socially constructive" and what criteria will be used? What happens if an individual persists in behaving in socially unconstructive ways? Marx may have advanced "the outlines of a theory in which true individuality...is enabled to find a place in the community without sacrificing the uniqueness of its own essence", but fine words like these are cheap and are apt to evaporate when confronted with what is construed as "a social egoism". The trouble with Marx's "outline", like all outlines of this sort, is that what is "true individuality" is decided by those who do the outlining, and those whose individuality is "untrue" stand a good chance of finding themselves at the wrong end of a gun—or its "therapeutic" equivalent.

Kolakowski claims that Marx believed that under communism "there is no question of uniformity being either imposed or voluntarily accepted". Nonetheless, despite the promise that "in a communist society the universal development of

individuals is no empty phase”, this could not take place by means of “the assertion of his rights against the community”. Community, community, community—always the “community”! But if I cannot assert “my right” “against the community” then my “unique essence” must be identical with the communal “essence” and my “essence” will be nothing but an expression of the “community”. No wonder that Stirner’s one reference to Marx pointedly remarks that “To identify me now entirely with Man the demand has been invented, and stated, that I must become a real generic being”. Marx may have abandoned his talk about the spook “Man”, but he did so only to replace it with the spook “community”.

Preceding the quotation from the fascist Jean Denis that I gave above are the words “The concept of the individual which forms the erroneous philosophical foundation of the present regime... must be replaced with the concept of the human being which corresponds exactly to the reality of Man—a social being endowed with a fundamental dignity, which society can help develop and with which it has no right to interfere”. That is, of course, conditional upon “the giving up of the (untrue) self and becoming part of the communities”. In what way do Denis and Marx differ in their conception of “the community”? It is clear that both fascist and communist are at one on this point. Both think that the “true self” or the “true human being” can only be achieved when the “true community” has been brought about by means of the proper “historical development”. Both, despite their protestations to the contrary, view the individual as the subject of a religion of society whose content and context are decided by them.

Marxism, like fascism, is a philosophy of the herd.

Marxism, like fascism, is an enemy of individualism.

My uniqueness, as a Stirnerian individualist, is a result of my awareness of myself as a specific individual living at a particular time who cannot be defined by the gafflegab of peddlers of social salvation. I am here and now—not there and then.

*from Minus One: An Individualist
Anarchist Review #44*

Enzo Martucci on Communism: First published in 1963 with the financial help of a generous sympathizer, the book *La Sotta Rossa* (The Red Sect) by individualist anarchist Enzo Martucci has been reprinted several times in response to many requests.

Its raw materials are a continuous propaganda of individualist anarchism since the age of 16, first-hand accounts and close studies of communist and anarchist leaders, imprisonment, hypocrisy, betrayal, poverty.

Its keystone is Martucci's repudiation of communism and authority. Reading this one soon becomes aware of Martucci as a fighter of long standing, not only against bourgeois society, but also against the communist so-called alternative. Martucci explains that there are two types of anti-communism—the bourgeois and the anarchist. The first is “narrow-minded, stupid and reactionary”. The second is

diverse—expressing a strongly individualist sentiment, which rebels against the chains and hypocrisies of the present world, but at the same time opposes the advent of a future even worse in its rigid fitting of men into barracks and beauracrat-industrial-Stalinist society. (Page 7)

In the chapter called “What is Marxism?” Martucci deals with historical materialism. He demonstrates that egoism is the motive force in humans and that it does not depend on the satisfaction of economic needs alone. There is also the spiritual, which is quite often independent of the stomach:

Reality is the reverse of what Marx wrote. Man certainly has economic needs, but he also has sentimental, idealistic and passionate needs, and just as the first acts on the second, so this in turn acts on the first.

To Martucci the Communist objective is antithetical to anarchy and he spells out the differences quite eloquently in the following passage:

Between us there exists a reciprocal and violent antipathy. The issue is not only determined by a diversity of ideas, but also by the irreducible opposition of temperaments. I have a tormented and restless soul—

romantic and dionysiac in temperament. My excessive sensibilities, my ardent passions, my breath for a new life of boundless freedom, make me a brother of those poets and vagabonds of the nineteenth century who sought beyond the stable order of things for the most mad intoxications. With Nietzsche I could set sail dreaming of a hot, tropical south, or a Greece arrayed in incorruptible indigo; with Stirner I could direct myself towards a chaotic future involving a free-and-easy anarchy, licentious as a Bacchante; bare-chested and erect with hair blowing in the wind; with Baudelaire I could inhale the poisonous fragrance of the flowers of evil, or madden with desire for a beauty that descends from heaven to hell, making the universe less foul and time less weary. But with Gramsci or Togliatti? I would have to take the People's train to Moscow! No!

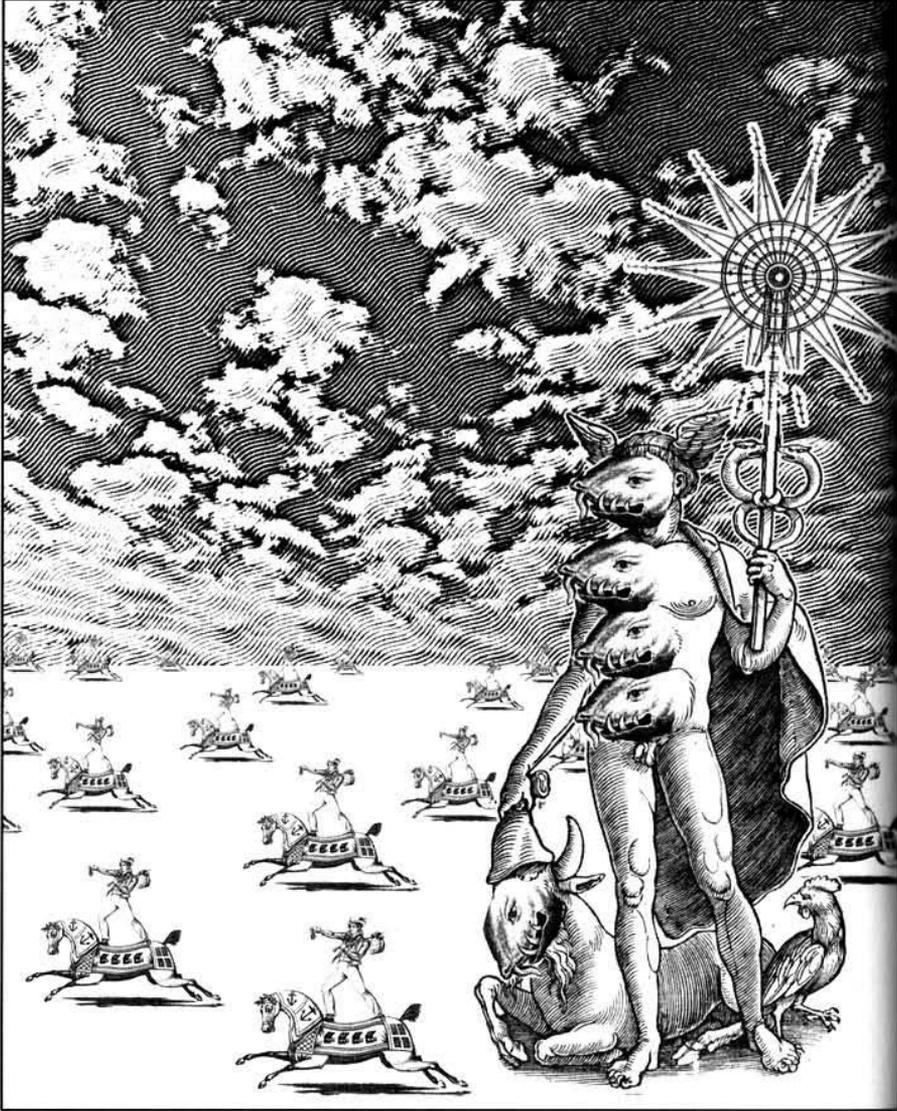
Later he writes:

I am a disciple of Nietzsche and Stirner, a convinced amoralist and a believer with LaRochefoucauld that Evil as well as Good has its heroes. I can understand Alexander the Great who conquered the Orient and died of debauchery in Babylon; Nero who, to satisfy an artistic fantasy, set fire to Rome; Napoleon who stained Europe with blood while dreaming of world domination; Bonnot, the bank robber, who, alone against 500 police, fell heroically at Choisy le Noir.

I understand the tyrant as well as the rebel: the ego that affirms itself in freedom. But I despise the slave and the spy: the ego that humiliates itself and crawls. I admire the evil that makes the great—even when unfortunate—the evil that produces the promethean attempt, the strenuous struggle against the world. But I detest the object which reduces men to vermin and uneasily explains away his acceptance of an existence in which he is exploited on all sides in order to survive. Barabbas does not nauseate me, but Judas does. And for me this is a question of sentiment, not of morality.

For Martucci, humans are not of one piece, logical and utilitarian; they are not cubes or theorems, not mathematical formulae.

lae, but problematic and mysterious beings who continually reveal themselves in new ways, abandoning themselves to diverse and opposing passions that burst forth from an obscure depth. Communism, or so-called “scientific socialism” seeks to reduce all humans to a phantom equality, to kill the anthropoid in order to bring forth from its skeleton a robot, over which shines, like far-off, bloodshot suns, the hateful faces of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. But reason will never succeed in disciplining the passions, nor will utopian engineering (whether communist or anarchist) succeed for very long in subduing life to its orders.



4.

Savage Summit:

Egoist Perspectives on Nietzsche

Anarchists of an individualist bent have generally been attracted to Nietzsche, who is, ultimately, one of the foremost champions of the individual. He was not a proto-fascist (despite their attempts to co-opt his ideas) but an advocate of a kind of self-mastery that continues to challenge proponents of *resentiment*, and to insist that *reactions* to power be distinguished from power itself.

These essays speak directly to his challenge, and contextualize it alongside the ideas of Stirner. They explore the connections and relevance of these thinkers to each other and to our modern period, as well as Nietzsche's ideas on the aristocracy, moralism, eternal recurrence, the overman, individualism, christ, and his legacy (and Stirner's) for anarchists.

Nietzsche

by Enzo Martucci

Nietzsche was a great philosopher and a fine poet. His individualism has much in common with mine. His exaltation of the individual, his evaluation of egoism, his negation of all the religious, moral and social bonds that oppress the personality, his recognition that force legitimizes every action because it is the only means by which the ego can obtain all that it desires — all these constitute a common platform between us.

Even the idea that “man is a bridge between the brute and the overman, a bridge above a deep gulf” is common to us both—even if for Nietzsche the bridge leads to a type like Alexander the Great, Caesar, or Napoleon, and for me a type like Corrado Brando or Jules Bonnot.

Both anarchism and imperialism are children of individualism inasmuch as they are born of the need which prompts the individual to be free and not to submit to anyone or anything, to expand life to the fullest extent, even oppressing others if the individual thinks it necessary and has the force to do so.

Beginning like Corrado Brando the individual can end in the tyranny of a Caesar. Yes, but egoism can be awakened in everyone. If individualist sentiments are generalized, if humanity dissolves into separate personalities, free, resolute and independent, each one of whom will not submit to others, then imperialism becomes practically impossible as a form of domination. Each individual would resist those who wanted him to submit. If he fell in battle he would not become a slave, and if he succeeded in repelling the attack he would preserve his freedom and continue to live without masters.

In this way we would realize an anarchy that could never be transformed into a proper *egoarchy* because of the oscillating equilibrium that would exist between alert individuals

who have developed to the maximum their ability to resist aggressors and to decisively counter-attack them. We would achieve a natural state, in which post-history would be realized by individuals different from those of history – which is characterized by the permanent submission of the gregarious mass to a few leaders who use them as cannon-fodder.

But such a post-history – which I believe has some possibility of being realized in the future – had no meaning for Nietzsche. He believed that everything must repeat itself eternally, always gliding along the rails of history. From this arises the possibility of the triumph of imperialism, of the domination of a few superior men over the multitude of the weak and cowardly, who will forever remain so because gregariousness is so deeply rooted in them that they feel the need for community and masters.

To arouse individualist sentiments in the souls of these slaves is impossible. Although given to humans by nature only a few possess them today due to the conditioning of herdism.

Since man began, [wrote Nietzsche] there have been herds (associations of families, communities, peoples, states, churches) and always the obedient are many compared to the small number who command. Considering, therefore, that men have been well trained into obedience, it is easy to suppose that the average man now has an innate need which takes the form of a conscience which obeys orders: you must absolutely do this, you must not absolutely do that—in a word, you **must**. Man seeks to satisfy this need and give it a motive.

From this Nietzsche deduces that:

According to the force, the impatience, and the energy of the need, man hoards without choice and with a gross appetite accepts all which

those in command whisper in his ears, be these his parents or masters, class prejudice or public opinion. The result is that in Europe today the herd-like give themselves airs as being the sole species of authorized man and glorify the virtues which make them useful to the herd as the only real human virtues.

All this is perfectly true now and has been perfectly true throughout history. But humans were naturally individualistic in the beginning and only afterwards became gregarious—or herd-like—by an accident which developed their original sociability beyond the needs of free and casual relationships. If the fundamental egoism and particularism, which still manifests itself in rare individuals, is asleep in the subconscious of everyone and could be awakened under the stimulus of exceptional circumstances (like the destruction of civilization), then who could prove that this subconscious individualism would not come to the surface and lead man once more towards the free and spontaneous life for which he was born?

Nietzsche's theory of the Eternal Recurrence is unproven and unprovable. The theory, that is, that everything must repeat itself as it was in the past, and that even if we return to the beginnings of things we will reproduce in the same way and with the same substance all that has been done before. This means that there is no possibility of any novelty and that the only gay and heroic note in this cold and blind mechanism is the spontaneous revolt of the overman who shatters the monotony of the common life, shines with a strange light and then disappears, destroyed by the machine that continues its senseless, eternal work.

But this conception of Nietzsche's, inspired in great part by others akin to the Pythagoreans, is unproven and it is therefore possible to suppose that life will once more know novelty and the cosmos express the chaos from which it came. And this same chaos of eternal energy produce innumerable combinations which are varied and opposite. By means of this intuition we can free ourselves from the oppression caused by

the cold and arid mechanical determinism of Nietzsche and warm ourselves by the heat of a creative energy which, in its exuberance, does not follow any pre-established plan like that of the Christian Eternal Father, but spontaneously develops every variety of existence.

Therefore the overmen are not fatally condemned to remain exceptions. Life can change even in our world. With major or minor success, all those liberated from the herd can be directed towards the ideal of the overman. Will these live in amoral spontaneity—or in the immoral morality of Nietzsche, that overturned ethic which raises to virtue everything that Christianity degrades to sin?

Duty is always a law which oppresses the individual. The duty to be hard, cruel and dominating when one does not want to be such is as oppressive as the duty to be pitying when one is not disposed to pity.

Conquer and win—yes. But if we are not inclined to conquer and win we can renounce this, even if we must pay with our lives or in some other way.

Existence is spontaneity.

Nietzsche creates a new discipline. I, who reject all discipline, deny even his.

Even so, I consider him very near to me.

Translated by Stephen Marletta
from *Nichilismo*

Notes on Stirner and Nietzsche

by S. E. Parker

During the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of this there was a great awakening of interest in the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche. At the same time there began an assiduous search for his precursors. The philosopher of egoism, Max Stirner, was one of those suggested and some commentators even went so far as to claim that Nietzsche was his disciple. Others vehemently rejected this claim and argued that either Nietzsche knew nothing about Stirner or, if he did, was not influenced by him. It is certainly true that there are parallels between the thinking of Stirner and Nietzsche on some points, but are these enough to identify one with the other? I do not think so.

Both Stirner and Nietzsche are outspoken iconoclasts. Both emphatically reject the Judeo-Christian-humanist moral code. Both savage the idiocies of democratic egalitarianism. Both express anti-statist sentiments, but both scorn anarchists—Stirner in the figure of Proudhon, one of the first theoreticians of anarchism, and Nietzsche anarchists in general. Indeed, so often do they appear to speak with one voice that the claim that Nietzsche was a disciple of Stirner seems, at first glance, plausible. A few examples will show their similarities.

For Stirner, as for Nietzsche, "truth" is an instrument, not a sacred "thing-in-itself". Stirner writes "before me truths are as common and indifferent as things... There exists not even one truth... that has stability before me, and to which I subject myself" (*The Ego and His Own*—all quotations from Stirner are from this, his main work). This is not to say that there are no truths in the sense of the "fact of the matter" since "for thinking and speaking I need truths and words as I do food

for eating," but that "all truths beneath me are to my liking; a truth above me, a truth I should have to direct myself by, I am not acquainted with". Nietzsche, too, states that the truths he proclaims are "my truths" (*Beyond Good and Evil*).

Stirner rejects possession by fixed ideas. When an idea becomes a "maxim" for a man

he himself is made a prisoner of it, so that it is not he that has the maxim, but rather it has him... The doctrines of the catechism become our principles before we find it out, and no longer brook rejection.

For Nietzsche, also, convictions are prisons:

The man of faith, any kind of 'believer', is necessarily subservient to something outside himself: he cannot posit himself as an end... Any kind of faith is the expression of self-denial, and of estrangement from self. (*The Anti-Christ*)

Both Stirner and Nietzsche proclaim an "ethic of power". Stirner states:

Might is a fine thing, and useful for many purposes; for 'one goes further with a handful of might than with a bagful of right'. You long for freedom? You fools! If you took might, freedom would come of itself.

According to Nietzsche life is "appropriation, injury, conquest of the strange and weak, suppression, severity, obtrusion of its own forms, incorporation, and, at least, putting it mildest, exploitation. (*Beyond Good and Evil*) When Stirner writes "what I can get by force I get by force, and what I do not get by force I have no right to, nor do I give myself

airs, or consolation with my imprescriptible right" one cannot imagine Nietzsche disagreeing.

However, despite their apparent agreement about certain matters, Stirner and Nietzsche are not one but two and their destinations lie in different directions. Both, for example agree that "God is dead", but their responses to this realization are not the same. For Stirner it is not enough that "God is dead" – "Man" must also perish in order to make way for himself, the unique one.

At the entrance to modern times stands the God-man. At its exit will only the God in the God-man evaporate? They did not think of this question, and thought they were through when in our days they brought to a victorious end the work of the Illumination, the vanquishing of God; they did not notice that Man has killed God in order to become now - 'sole God on high'.

For Nietzsche, on the other hand, the "death of God" creates an anguishing moral void that must be filled with a new ideal for "mankind": the creation of the Superman. "All beings have created something beyond themselves, are ye going to be the ebb of this great tide? Behold I teach you Superman" (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*). Indeed the language he uses to describe the advent of his ideal being is that of religious prophet:

Awake and listen ye lonely ones! From the future winds are coming with a gentle beating of wings, and there cometh good tidings for fine ears/Ye lonely ones of today, ye who stand apart, ye shall one day be a people; from you, who have chosen yourselves, a chosen people shall arise and from it Superman. (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*)

In order to achieve this "elevation of the type man" (*Beyond Good and Evil*) Nietzsche demands the sacrifice of self. Stirner, in contrast, repudiates any setting up a goal for future being and does not worry himself about "Man". For him the question is: "Why will you not take courage now to really make yourselves the central point and the main thing altogether?" The Stirnerian egoist's reply to the Nietzschean ideal is succinctly put by J. L. Walker: "We will not allow the world to wait for the overman. We are the overmen" (*The Philosophy of Egoism*).

Again, Nietzsche, for all of his fierce onslaughts on Judeo-Christian morality, is a moralist. In place of the leveling doctrines preached by the pious of the pulpit and the political platform, Nietzsche seeks to create two types of morality: that of the masters and that of the slaves. In negating existing morality his concern is to replace it with a new morality. Although Zarathustra is a "destroyer" and breaks "value to pieces", he does so in order "to be a creator of good and evil". Stirner, too, negates existing morality, but he does so not that he may cleanse it of any poison he believes infects it, but that he can put his own satisfaction in its place. He does not wish to submit to any moral principle no matter what fixed idea is invoked to sanction it: God, Man or Superman. However much Stirner might have relished reading Nietzsche's caustic criticism of current moralizing his conclusion would have been that Nietzsche is incapable of ridding himself of the domination of morality itself and so remains—a possessed man. The conscious egoist is literally "beyond good and evil" and accepts with an untroubled mind that all things within his power are "permissible" even if they are not all expedient.

In his *The Philosophy of Nietzsche* Georges Chatterton-Hill claims that Nietzsche "depasses" Stirner because "with Stirner the individual is himself the ultimoratio, and his own individual satisfaction constitutes the justification of his egoism." With Nietzsche "the egoism of the individual is justified only in the light of its ultimate value to the race... Nietzsche has gone out beyond Stirner. He has adopted Stirner's conception and

depassed it." Chatterton-Hill is wrong. Nietzsche does not adopt "Stirner's conception" and hence cannot "depass" it. At bottom Stirner and Nietzsche are two disparate facts that cannot be reasoned into one. Despite Nietzsche's scintillating idol-smashing he is haunted by yet another idol: the idol of an abstractified "Man" scheduled for redemption by the creation of the Superman. Nietzsche's championing of "egoism" is conditioned by the achievement of this goal and he frankly states that when an individual does not correspond to his prescriptive ideal of an "ascending course of mankind" then "it is society's (sic) duty to suppress egoism" (*The Will to Power*) This is not the view of an egoist, but that of a moralist demanding that a choice be made of his view that "mankind" is more important than individuals. Nietzsche's philosophy implies that supra-individual "entities" like "mankind" or "race" are entitled to the subordination of my interests and even the sacrifice of my life. Stirner, on the contrary, rejects all such sacrificial creeds. He joyfully prizes himself as more important than "mankind" or its "ascending course". He does not concern himself with myths of human redemption, but with the real world of his own, unique being.

In 1917 there appeared a work entitled *The Will to Freedom*. Its author, a Christian theologian named J. N. Figgis, devotes several pages to the relationship between Stirner and Nietzsche. He concludes them by imagining what Stirner's response to Nietzsche would have been had they been contemporaries:

Stirner on Nietzsche?

by J.N. Figgis

"Bah!" he would have said, "free air, pure air. Get out of my sight with your Gesperster, your will to power, your life with a capital L, and

your superman – super-ghost you should have said. You call yourself Zarathustra the ungodly, the Antichrist, the immoralist. Go away! You are no better than the cobweb spinner of Konigsberg and his great-aunt the Categorical Imperative. Your eternal recurrence, and all your talk of eternity, the aim of all delight, your belief in the genii of the ring, your finding eternity in the moment recalls to me that hoary old humbug of Jena, who found the Absolute Idea objectified in the Prussian State. As to your superman, he is a ghost – like all other ghosts, and your disciples will be slaves like the rest of their crowd. Idealists, Comteists, Liberty-loving atheists – all of you are no better than the Christians you despise.

“Yes, I tell you you are a Christian, like all the others, except that you have added self-deception to their vices. You think you are new, yet you are as much a preacher of duty as Lycurgus. Your Dionysus cult is religion back once more. Whether you call it Dionysus or Christ, it is all the same, if you are to fall down in reverence. Capital letters are all idolatry. You even make an idol out of Life. What is Life, pray, that I am to fall down and worship it? I reject the monstrous slavery of your amor fati. Besides, I know nothing about it. I only know that I am here.

“Poor fellow! You have tried hard to be shocking, and have succeeded only in being silly. You actually talk of redemption, of the salvation of man. Go back to your Frau Pastorin and to Church.”

The following is extracted from the unpublished English translation of *Max Stirner's Philosophie des Ich* by Herbert Stourzh, Berlin, 1923.

Stourzh on Stirner and Nietzsche

by Herbert Stourzh

Compared with Nietzsche, Stirner has been termed "lacking in temperament," to which one can only reply that this judgment based on taste derives from erroneous presuppositions. Stirner's teaching does not abolish longing; its redemption is not extinction. The end of "possession" is not the end of inspiration, nor is the abolition of "fixed ideas" the abolition of the ideal. Max Messer aptly remarks of the "egoist":

It is not from the right of universal validity or of the universal human applicability of this ideal world, but from the right of the personality that he takes for himself that the egoist's courage comes and his ability to resist and to hold his own in his own world... no matter how crazy and useless this world may appear to others.

Stirner's quietism is a strange quietism, all right. He is indeed quietistic with regard to prescribed temperament, and passive with regard to decreed emotions. Yet his joy in the free ideal that can replace service to the fixed idea is accompanied by all that vitality and activism which first makes possible the supplanting of the allocentric with the egocentric.

Regardless of whether one looks more at the negative or the positive side of Stirnerian "egoism," more at his joyful nihilism or his buoyant self-confident teaching of "selfhood", or (in another dimension) more at his relationship to the outward or the inward— one can everywhere observe the same wonderful

elasticity that the special attitude (or rather change in attitude) of the "unique individual" necessarily brings with it.

Oswald Spengler says of Nietzsche: "... he himself did not fulfill his demand that the thinker should stand beyond good and evil. He wanted to be a sceptic and a prophet, a critic and a herald of morality at the same time." Does Stirner the moral critic and moral sceptic fulfill this demand?— which, incidentally, Spengler himself does not.

To be sure, Stirner too is a "herald of morality" and a prophet— though this time truly beyond good and evil. There no doubt that Stirner— without contradicting himself— would have seen in Nietzsche a "man possessed," a "fanatical" servant of "fixed ideas," a slave of his master-morality exchanging old chains for new. One will look in vain for imperative systems of feeling and behavior in Stirner. Though Nietzsche's artistry is admirable, and though his polyphony and polychromy deserve special mention, he nevertheless often mingles the meaningful with the chaotic. John Henry Mackay, the re-discoverer of Stirner, expresses himself on this point with particular vehemence. He calls it

an absurdity not deserving serious rebuttal to compare Stirner's profound, tranquil and lucid genius with Nietzsche, that confused, vacillating, self-contradictory spirit staggering about almost helplessly between truth and error.

He continues:

I have observed that most Nietzsche enthusiasts talk about Stirner with a sort of cool and most comical superiority: they do not quite dare approach this giant and are secretly afraid of his stringent logic. With Nietzsche they do not need to think so much: they let themselves be lulled by his language, while the real Nietzsche usually remains a stranger to them.

Instructive too is Messer's assessment, particularly since it is positive towards Nietzsche on the whole:

Regardless of how much more prolific, powerful and comprehensive Nietzsche is, it was Stirner who at one stroke produced that sublime perception to which, but not beyond which, Nietzsche rose. And so Stirner with his one book is like a monolith rising directly up from the plain like a narrow cone, while Nietzsche's work resembles a long mountain range with delightful valleys and icy chasms, whose highest peak scarcely overtops the summit of the solitary pointed rock.

Even an adversary of Stirner like Kronenberg confesses that it is particularly Stirner's "greater clarity and intellectual energy" that distinguishes him from Nietzsche. Edward von Hartmann, too, finds that Stirner's book "is stylistically the equal of Nietzsche's writings, while it towers above them in philosophical content".

originally published in *Ego*, 1991

Nietzsche: Antichrist?

by S.E.Parker

(All quotations from Nietzsche, unless otherwise stated, are from the edition of *The Antichrist* published by Haldeman-Julius in 1930)

There have been many great attacks upon Christianity, strong and effective in their different ways, and one hesitates to distinguish any one of them by the superlative 'greatest', but if I were to use this superlative - especially with respect to sheer blasting force of inspired denunciation - I should apply it to *The Antichrist* of Friedrich Nietzsche... One is not only impressed intellectually, but one is thrilled and moved to the depths by the splendid, sweeping fervor of his attack.

It is with these words that the renowned American freethinker and publisher, E. Haldeman-Julius, begins the introduction to his 1930 edition of *The Antichrist*. That Nietzsche is anti-Christian – that is, anti-the Christian Church – is apparent to anyone who has read him. The question I want to ask, however, is he really anti-*Christ* as he claimed to be? Before giving my answer it may be useful to briefly outline the way in which Nietzsche viewed Christianity.

Nietzsche does not primarily concern himself with the usual questions regarding the dating of the Christian gospels, their consistency or inconsistency, or whether Christ did or did not exist. In other words, the validity of the documentary evidence for Christianity. Nor does he concern himself with the arguments for or against the existence of God, although he calls himself an atheist. He adopts what he describes as a "psychological" approach which revolves around the question: Does Christianity enhance or depreciate life? He writes:

“What is good? – everything that increases the feeling of power, the will to power, and power itself, in men. What is evil? – everything based in weakness. What is joy? – the emotion of power increasing, of a resistance overcome. Not contentedness, but more power! Not peace at any price, but war! Not ‘goodness’, but more ability!....The weak and the misbegotten shall sink to the ground: that is our humanitarian slogan; and they should be helped to sink. What is the most harmful vice? – pity, shown to the misbegotten and the feeble – Christianity.”

Nietzsche argues that the attacks made upon Christianity up to his time have not only been timid but false. Christianity is a crime against life and the problem of its “truth” is of no value unless it leads to a consideration of the validity of its morality.

Christianity attempts to reverse natural selection. The Christian is a sick and degenerate individual who tries to thwart the natural course of evolution and wants to make the unnatural into law. He seeks to preserve the physiologically botched, those who are weak, and to strengthen their instinct to preserve each other. Those who do not regard this attitude as immoral belong to the same sickly crowd.

Genuine love of mankind, [he writes] exacts sacrifice for the good of the species: it is hard, full of self-control because it needs sacrifice.

He adds

Neither as an ethical code nor as a religion has Christianity any point of contact with things as they actually are. It is concerned with purely fantastic causes... and purely fantastic effects. It communes with purely fantastic creatures... it professes a fantastic science, a fantastic psychology... this world of pure fantasy is to be differentiated, to its disadvantage, from the world of dreams, for the dream-world at least reflects actuality, whereas the

other falsifies, slanders and denies actuality.

All religion is born of fear, but the Christian religion is essentially a product of servile mentalities. The slaves were in fear of their masters and wanted revenge for their inferiority. Christianity sprang from their resentment and had as its aim the undermining of the confidence of the ruling castes by means of guilt-inducing ideas of sin and pity. It was a leveling doctrine like its offspring socialism. The result of this triumphant slave revolt was the destruction of the intellectual accomplishments of the ancient world. The scientific method, the art of reading, the sense for fact—all were in vain. They were

buried in a night. Not trampled to death by German and other heavy feet! But brought to shame by crafty, stealthy, anemic vampires. Not conquered—merely sucked dry!

Nietzsche ends *The Antichrist* with an indictment of Christianity as

the one great curse, the one intrinsic depravity, the one black impulse of resentment, for which no subterfuge is too vile, or too furtive, or too underhand, or too mean. I say the thing is the one indelible blot on the achievement of man...

Despite the fierceness of Nietzsche's indictment, however, his case against Christianity is incomplete. As Benjamin de Casseres has pointed out:

"The Antichrist... is an evasion. It was a tremendous onslaught—the greatest ever made—on Christianity. But Christianity and Christ are identical." (I Dance With Nietzsche)

Nietzsche, in fact, lets Christ off lightly, focusing his hatred on St. Paul whom he regards as the real intellectual founder of the Christian creed. Nietzsche accuses Paul of sacrificing "the Saviour; he nailed him to his own cross." He even blames the disciples for

possessing the "most un-Christly desires for revenge," as if the numerous threats of hell and damnation attributed to the Christ of the New Testament could be construed as anything else but a very Christly desire for revenge! Later he claims that these threats were "put into the mouth of the Master" by "these trivial people." And in another place he complains that

The character of the Saviour, his teaching, his way of life, the meaning of his death, and even the sequel to his death - were all altered until nothing in the record even remotely approximated to fact.

Just what this alleged "fact" was and how he knew it differed from "the record" Nietzsche does not say. Indeed it would seem that here he was contrasting his own private fantasy about Christ with the public fantasy of the Church.

Nietzsche's famous statement that "there was only one Christian and he died on the cross" is yet another example of the reverential way he approached the Christ myth. Even such an ardent Nietzschean as Oscar Levy admits that

We are confronted here with a weakness in the strong mind of Nietzsche who, with all his deep insight, was more of an anti-Christian than an anti-Christ and who had, from his ancestral stock, a remnant of veneration for the Saviour in his blood.
(The Idiocy of Idealism)

But there is more to Nietzsche's reverence for Christ than the influence of his ancestral stock. If "Christ" is taken as a symbol for the "redemption of mankind" then Nietzsche would have felt a strong affinity with him, for he too wished to redeem mankind with his gospel of the Superman despite his statement in Ecce Homo that "The very last thing I should promise to accomplish would be to 'improve' mankind. I do not set up any new idols: may old idols only learn what it costs to have legs of clay."

Here, for example, is the messianic Nietzsche in full flight:

Ye lonesome ones of today, ye seceding ones, ye shall one day be a people: out of you who have

chosen yourselves shall a chosen people arise—
and out of it, the Superman.

“Verily a place of healing shall the earth become!
And already is a new order diffused around it,
a salvation-bringing odor—and a new hope! (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*)

This Salvationist strain in Nietzsche’s thinking was clearly brought out in *The Philosophy of Nietzsche* by Georges Chatterton-Hill:

Those who represent the Overman as an incarnation of selfishness are grievously mistaken. It is not his own pleasure that the Overman seeks, but the justification of eternal Becoming, which is the eternal world process... the redemption of humanity through suffering, through great and intense suffering. And out of this intense suffering emerges precisely that supreme object and work of art which is the Overman, who by his deeds shall justify all that which is miserable and pitiable in life, and raise it to a pinnacle of beauty. The Overman modeled in the school of suffering shall in turn reflect his own glory on the whole of life: and life viewed in the wondrous light shed on it by the glory of the Overman shall be redeemed and affirmed and sanctified and justified.

It is a characteristic of all religious and messianic doctrines that they demand the submission of the individual to some supra-individual entity or goal. The Christian views the individual as an instrument of his God, the Marxist views the individual as an instrument of the Dialectical Process, and Nietzsche, in his turn, views the individual as an instrument for the realization of the Superman. Having declared “the death of God” he became obsessed with the problem of finding a new goal for “mankind” His answer was the creation of the Superman. The godless were to have a new god.

But I would ask why does my life need to be “justified” and “redeemed”, “purified” by suffering, and the creation of the Su

perman? To me, all this is simply the old Christian rubbish given a new coat of paint. One of the reasons that I am an atheist is because I reject any belief that demands I serve it. I want my beliefs to serve me. If I am told by Nietzsche that Christianity is a servile creed, a permanent whine from those who are not strong enough to face reality, then I agree with him. But if he goes on to say that I must live my life for the coming of the Superman, I then classify his words in the same category as I do those of the Christian and his Christ: mystifying spookery! I live my life for my sake, not for the sake of a goal set by someone else and transcending me.

Nietzsche himself aptly observed that:

The man of faith, any kind of 'believer', is necessarily subservient to something outside himself: he cannot posit himself as an end, and he cannot find ends within himself. The believer does not really belong to himself, he is only a means, he needs to be used, and he needs someone to use him. His instinct accords the highest place to a morality of abnegation; and everything within him—his prudence, his experience, and his vanity—prompt him to espouse this morality. Any kind of faith is an expression of self-denial, and of estrangement from self...

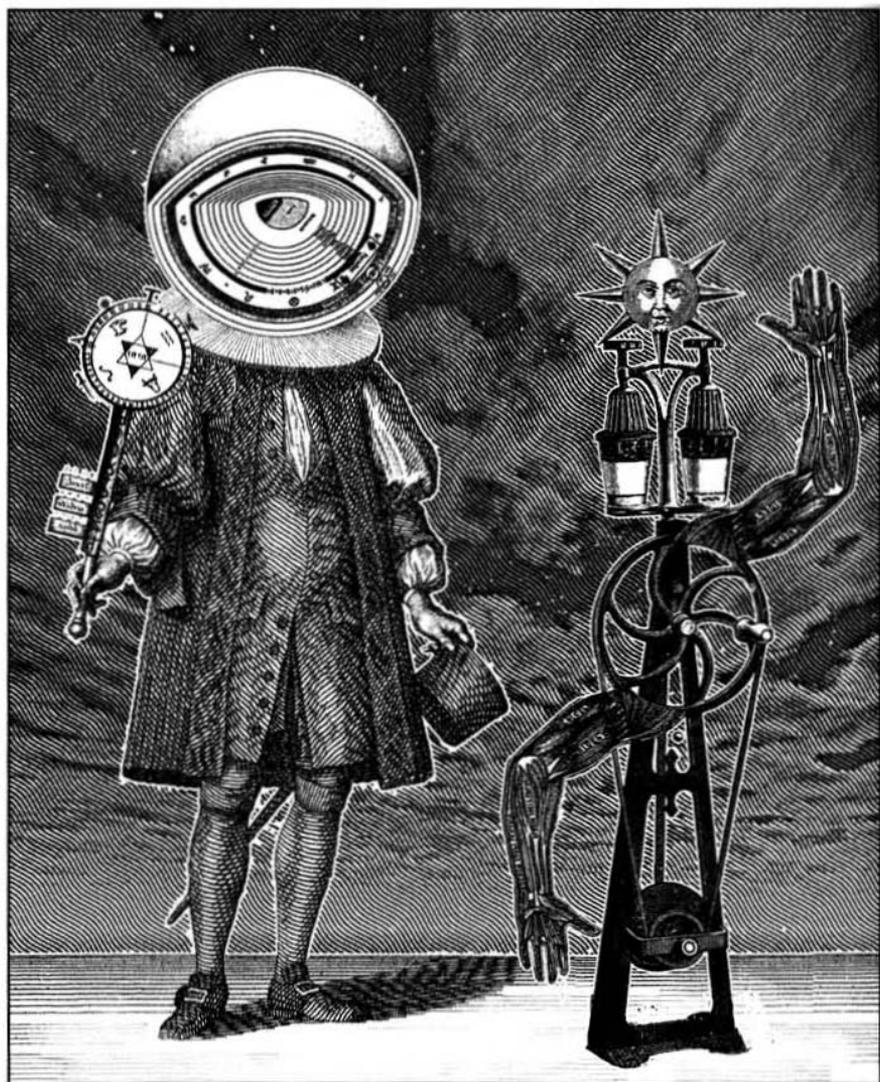
Had Nietzsche taken his own words to heart and applied them to his own faith he would have freed himself from all religion. Then indeed he would have been more than anti-Christianity, he would have been anti-Christ.

Since writing the above I came across the following passage in another work by Benjamin de Casseres: The Muse of Lies. Although de Casseres was an ardent admirer of Nietzsche what he writes supports my theme:

Nietzsche's doctrine of the 'Eternal Return' was best illustrated in himself, for he preached the ideal of sacrifice and a living for a 'Beyond'. He was the last great Christian. The will to create the superman, the Beyond-Man, orders one even to sacrifice one's friends, says Nietzsche in one of his aphorisms. Is this not the ecclesiastical furor par

excellence? Can you not see the cowed fanatic in that? Can you not smell the fagots and the pitch-pile? Can not we nihilists and mockers see the psychologic germ of the new Torquemada in that sacrificial admonition? The Eternal Return! Indeed thou wert a Return, o thou dancing, Dionysian forerunner of an Inquisition.

Originally published in *Ego*:
An Individualist Review, No. 2



5.

A Maze to Trap the Living: *society & the unique one*

Perhaps anarchists are viewing anarchism through the wrong lens. Perhaps there will always be an irreconcilable conflict between the individual and society no matter the form or shape society takes. Perhaps if anarchists were to relate to society with more hostility we would see that *assimilation is the underlying drive to society*. Social bodies consume. The classical anarchist argument is that the state—a categorical bad, is at war with society—a categorical good. This section emphasizes the egotist's explicit conflict with society and tells the stories of several individuals in relation to this antagonism.

Society has not freed us—not in its relationship to the individual, not in its mass, or its family form. Society is not a good that has been besmirched by the institutions of patriarchy, capitalism, and the whole stinking mess. In the final analysis the anarchist must oppose society.

Anarchism and Individualism

by Georges Palante

The words anarchism and individualism are frequently used as synonyms. Many thinkers vastly different from each other are carelessly qualified sometimes as anarchists, sometimes as individualists. It is thus that we speak indifferently of Stirnerite anarchism or individualism, of Nietzschean anarchism or individualism, of Barrésian anarchism or individualism, etc. In other cases, though, this identification of the two terms is not looked upon as possible. We commonly say Proudhonian anarchism, Marxist anarchism, anarchist syndicalism. But we could not say Proudhonian, Marxist, or syndicalist individualism. We can speak of a Christian or Tolstoyan anarchism, but not of a Christian or Tolstoyan individualism.

At other times the two terms have been melted together in one name: anarchist individualism. Under this rubric M. Hasch designates a social philosophy that it differentiates from anarchism properly so-called, and whose great representatives, according to him, are Goethe, Byron, Humboldt, Schleiermacher, Carlyle, Emerson, Kierkegaard, Renan, Ibsen, Stirner and Nietzsche. This philosophy can be summed up as the cult of great men and the apotheosis of genius. It would seem to us to be arguable whether the expression individualist anarchism can be used to designate such a doctrine. The qualification of anarchist, in the etymological sense, can be applied with difficulty to thinkers of the race of Goethe, Carlyle and Nietzsche, whose philosophy seems on the contrary to be dominated by ideas of hierarchical organization and the harmonious placing of values in a series. What is more, the epithet of individualist can't be applied with equal justice to all the thinkers we have just named. If it is appropriate for designating the egotist, nihilist and anti-idealist revolt of Stirner, it can with difficulty be applied to the

Hegelian, optimist and idealist philosophy of a Carlyle, who clearly subordinates the individual to the idea.

There thus reigns a certain confusion concerning the use of the two terms anarchism and individualism, as well as the systems of ideas and sentiments that these terms designate. We would here like to attempt to clarify the notion of individualism and determine its psychological and sociological content by distinguishing it from anarchism...

Individualism is the sentiment of a profound, irreducible antinomy between the individual and society. The individualist is he who, by virtue of his temperament, is predisposed to feel in a particularly acute fashion the ineluctable disharmonies between his intimate being and his social milieu. At the same time, he is a man for whom life has reserved some decisive occasion to remark this disharmony. Whether through brutality, or the continuity of his experiences, for him it has become clear that for the individual society is a perpetual creator of constraints, humiliations and miseries, a kind of continuous generation of human pain. In the name of his own experience and his personal sensation of life the individualist feels he has the right to relegate to the rank of utopia any ideal of a future society where the hoped-for harmony between the individual and society will be established. Far from the development of society diminishing evil, it does nothing but intensify it by rendering the life of the individual more complicated, more laborious and more difficult in the middle of the thousand gears of an increasingly tyrannical social mechanism. Science itself, by intensifying within the individual the consciousness of the vital conditions made for him by society, arrives only at darkening his intellectual and moral horizons. *Qui auget scientiam auget et dolorem.*

We see that individualism is essentially a social pessimism. Under its most moderate form it admits that if life in society is not an absolute evil and completely destructive of individuality, for the individualist it is at the very least a restrictive and oppressive condition, a necessary evil and a last resort.

The individualists who respond to this description form a small morose group whose rebellious, resigned or hopeless

words contrast with the fanfares for the future of optimistic sociologists. It is Vigny saying: "The social order is always bad. From time to time it is bearable. Between bad and bearable the dispute isn't worth a drop of blood." It's Schopenhauer seeing social life as the supreme flowering of human pain and evil. It's Stirner with his intellectual and moral solipsism perpetually on his guard against the duperies of social idealism and the intellectual and moral crystallization with which every organized society threatens the individual. It is, at certain moments, an Amiel with his painful stoicism that perceives society as a limitation and a restriction of his free spiritual nature. It's a David Thoreau, the extremist disciple of Emerson, that "student of nature," deciding to stray from the ordinary paths of human activity and to become a "wanderer," worshipping independence and dreams. A "wanderer whose every minute will be filled with more work than the entire lives of many men with occupations." It's a Challemeil-Lacour with his pessimistic conception of society and progress. It is perhaps, at certain moments, a Tarde, with an individualism colored with misanthropy that he somewhere expresses: "It is possible that the flux of imitation has its banks and that, by the very effect of its excessive deployment, the need for sociability diminishes or rather alters and transforms itself into a kind of general misanthropy, very compatible, incidentally, with a moderate commercial circulation and a certain activity of industrial exchanges reduced to the strict necessary, but above all appropriate to reinforcing in each of us the distinctive traits of our inner individuality."

Even among those who, like M. Maurice Barrès, by dilettantism and artistic posture, are averse to the accents of sharp revolt or discouraged pessimism, individualism remains a sentiment of "the impossibility that exists of harmonizing the private and the general I." It's a determination to set free the first I, to cultivate it in what it has of the most special, the most advanced, the most rummaged through, both in detail and in depth. "The individualist," says M. Barrès, "is he who, through pride in his true I, which he isn't able to set free, ceaselessly wounds, soils, and denies what he has in

common with the mass of men...The dignity of the men of our race is exclusively attached to certain shivers that the world doesn't know and cannot see and which we must multiply in ourselves."

In all of them individualism is an attitude of sensibility that goes from hostility and distrust to indifference and disdain vis-à-vis the organized society in which we are forced to live, vis-à-vis its uniformizing rules, its monotonous repetitions, and its enslaving constraints. It's a desire to escape from it and to withdraw into oneself. Above all, it is the profound sentiment of the "uniqueness of the I," of that which despite it all the I maintains of unrepressible and impenetrable to social influences. As M. Tarde says, it is the sentiment of the "profound and fleeting singularity of persons, of their manner of being, of thinking, of feeling, which is only once and of an instant."

Is there any need to demonstrate how much this attitude differs from anarchism? There is no doubt that in one sense anarchism proceeds from individualism. It is, in fact, the anti-social revolt of a minority that feels itself oppressed or disadvantaged by the current order of things. But anarchism represents only the first moment of individualism, the moment of faith and hope, of actions courageous and confident of success. At its second moment individualism converts, as we have seen, into social pessimism.

The passage from confidence to despair, from optimism to pessimism is here, in great part, an affair of psychological temperament. There are delicate souls that are easily wounded on contact with social realities and consequently quick to be disillusioned, a Vigny or a Heine, for example. We can say that these souls belong to the psychological type that has been called "sensitive." They feel that social determinism, insofar as it is repressive of the individual, is particularly tormenting and oppressive. But there are other souls who resist multiple failures, who disregard even experience's toughest examples and remain unshakeable in their faith. These souls belong to the "active" type. Such are the souls of the anarchist apostles: Bakunin, Kropotkin, Reclus. Perhaps their imperturbable

confidence in their ideal depends on a lesser intellectual and emotional acuity. Reasons for doubt and discouragement don't strike them harshly enough to tarnish the abstract ideal they've forged and to lead them to the final and logical step of individualism: social pessimism.

Whatever the case, there can be no doubt concerning the optimism of anarchist philosophy. That optimism is spread, often simplistically and with naivety, in those volumes with blood red covers that form the reading matter of propagandists by the deed. The shadow of the optimistic Rousseau floats over all this literature.

Anarchist optimism consists in believing that social disharmonies, that the antinomies that the current state of affairs present between the individual and society, are not essential, but rather accidental and provisional; that they will one day be resolved and will give place to an era of harmony.

Anarchism rests on two principles that seem to complement each other, but actually contradict each other. One is the principle that is properly individualist or libertarian, formulated by Wilhelm von Humboldt and chosen by Stuart Mill as the epigraph of his "Essay on Liberty": "The great principle is the essential and absolute importance of human development in its richest diversity." The other is the humanist or altruist principle, which is translated on the economic plane by communist anarchism. That the individualist and humanist principles negate each other is proven by logic and fact. Either the individualist principle means nothing, or it is a demand in favor of that which differs and is unequal in individuals, in favor of those traits that make them different, separate them and, if need be, oppose them. On the contrary, humanism aims at the assimilation of humanity. Following the expression of M. Gide, its ideal is to make a reality of the expression "our like." In fact, at the current time we see the antagonism of the two principles assert itself among the most insightful theoreticians of anarchism, and that logical and necessary antagonism cannot fail to bring about the breakup of anarchism as a political and social doctrine.

Whatever the case and whatever difficulties might be met

by he who wants to reconcile the individualist and humanist principles, these two rival and enemy principles meet at least at this one point: they are both clearly optimistic. Humboldt's principle is optimistic insofar as it implicitly affirms the original goodness of human nature and the legitimacy of its free blossoming. It sets itself up in opposition to the Christian condemnation of our natural instincts, and we can understand the reservations of M. Dupont-White, the translator of the "Essay on Liberty," from the spiritualist and Christian point of view (condemnation of the flesh) as concerns this principle.

The humanist principle is no less optimistic. Humanism, in fact, is nothing but rendering divine of man in what he has of the general, of humanity, and consequently of human society. As we see, anarchism, optimistic as concerns the individual, is even more so as concerns society. Anarchism supposes that individual freedoms, left to themselves, will naturally harmonize and spontaneously realize the anarchist ideal of free society.

In regard to these two opposing points of view, the Christian and anarchist, what is the attitude of individualism? Individualism, a realist philosophy, all lived life and immediate sensation, equally repudiates these two metaphysics: one, Christian metaphysics, which *a priori* affirms original evil, the other the rationalist and Rosseauist metaphysic, that no less *a priori* affirms the original and essential goodness of our nature. Individualism places itself before the facts. And these latter make visible in the human being a bundle of instincts in struggle with each other and, in human society, a grouping of individuals also necessarily in struggle with each other. By the very fact of his conditions of existence the human being is subject to the law of struggle: internal struggle among his own instincts, external struggle with his like. If recognizing the permanent and universal character of egoism and struggle in human existence means being pessimistic, then we must say that individualism is pessimistic. But we must immediately add that the pessimism of individualism, a pessimism of fact, an experimental pessimism, if you will, pessimism *a posteriori*, is totally different from the theological pessimism that *a*

priori pronounces, in the name of dogma, the condemnation of human nature. What is more, individualism separates itself every bit as much from anarchism. If, with anarchism, it admits Humboldt's principle as the expression of a normal tendency necessary to our nature for its full blossoming, at the same time it recognizes that this tendency is condemned to never being satisfied because of the internal and external disharmonies of our nature. In other words, it considers the harmonious development of the individual and society as a utopia. Pessimistic as concerns the individual, individualism is even more so as concerns society: man is by his very nature disharmonious because of the internal struggle of his instincts. But this disharmony is exacerbated by the state of society, which, through a painful paradox, represses our instincts at the same time as it exasperates them. In fact, from the rapprochement of individual wills-to-life is formed a collective will-to-life which becomes immediately oppressive for the individual will-to-life and opposes its flourishing with all its force. The state of society thus pushes to its ultimate degree the disharmonies of our nature. It exaggerates them and puts them in the poorest possible light. Following the idea of Schopenhauer, society thus truly represents the human will-to-life at its highest degree: struggle, lack of fulfillment, and suffering.

From this opposition between anarchism and individualism flow others. Anarchism believes in progress. Individualism is an attitude of thought that we can call non-historical. It denies becoming, progress. It sees the human will-to-life in an eternal present. Like Schopenhauer, with whom he has more than one similarity, Stirner is a non-historical spirit. He too believes that it is chimerical to expect something new and great from tomorrow. Every social form, by the very fact that it crystallizes, crushes the individual. For Stirner, there are no utopian tomorrows, no "paradise at the end of our days." There is nothing but the egoist today. Stirner's attitude before society is the same as that of Schopenhauer before nature and life. With Schopenhauer the negation of life remains metaphysical and, we might say, spiritual (we should remember that Schopenhauer condemns suicide which would be the material and tangible negation). In

the same way Stirner's rebellion against society is an entirely spiritual internal rebellion, all intention and inner will. It is not, as is the case with Bakunin, an appeal to pan-destruction. Regarding society, it is a simple act of distrust and passive hostility, a mix of indifference and disdainful resignation. It is not a question of the individual fighting against society, for society will always be the stronger. It must thus be obeyed, obeyed like a dog. But Stirner, while obeying, as a form of consolation, maintains an immense intellectual contempt. This is more or less the attitude of Vigny vis-a-vis nature and society. "A tranquil despair, without convulsions of anger and without reproaches for heaven, this is wisdom itself." And again: "Silence would be the best criticism of life."

Anarchism is an exaggerated and mad idealism. Individualism is summed up in a trait common to Schopenhauer and Stirner: a pitiless realism. It arrives at what a German writer calls a complete "dis-idealization" (Entidealisierung) of life and society.

"An ideal is nothing but a pawn," Stirner said. From this point of view Stirner is the most authentic representative of individualism. His icy word seizes souls with a shiver entirely different from that, fiery and radiant, of a Nietzsche. Nietzsche remains an impenitent, imperious, violent idealist. He idealizes superior humanity. Stirner represents the most complete dis-idealization of nature and life, the most radical philosophy of disenchantment that has appeared since Ecclesiastes. Pessimist without measure or reservations, individualism is absolutely anti-social, unlike anarchism, with which this is only relatively the case (in relation to current society). Anarchism admits an antinomy between the individual and the state, an antinomy it resolves by the suppression of the state, but it does not see any inherent, irreducible antinomy between the individual and society. This is because in its eyes society represents a spontaneous growth (Spencer), while the state is an artificial and authoritarian organization. In the eyes of an individualist society is as tyrannical, if not more so, than the state. Society, in fact, is nothing else but the mass of social ties of all kinds (opinions, mores, usages, conventions, mutual

surveillance, more or less discreet espionage of the conduct of others, moral approval and disapproval, etc.) Society thus understood constitutes a closely-knit fabric of petty and great tyrannies, exigent, inevitable, incessant, harassing, and pitiless, which penetrates into the details of individual life more profoundly and continuously than statist constraints can. What is more, if we look closely at this, statist tyranny and the tyranny of mores proceed from the same root: the collective interest of a caste or class that wishes to establish or to maintain its domination and prestige. Opinion and mores are in part the residue of ancient caste disciplines that are in the process of disappearing, in part the seed of new social disciplines brought with them by the new leading caste in the process of formation. This is why between state constraint and that of opinion and mores there is only a difference in degree. Deep down they have the same goal: the maintenance of a certain moral conformism useful to the group, and the same procedures: the vexation and elimination of the independent and the recalcitrant. The only difference is that diffuse sanctions (opinions and mores) are more hypocritical than the others. Proudhon was right to say that the state is nothing but a mirror of society. It is only tyrannical because society is tyrannical. The government, following a remark of Tolstoy's, is a gathering of men who exploit others and favor the wicked and the cheaters. If this is the practice of government, this is also that of society. There is a conformity between the two terms: state and society. The one is the same as the other. The gregarious spirit, or the spirit of society, is no less oppressive for the individual than the statist or priestly spirit, which only maintain themselves thanks to and through it.

How strange! Stirner himself, on the question of the relations between society and the state, seems to share the error of Spencer and Bakunin. He protests against the intervention of the state in the acts of the individual, but not against that of society.

Before the individual the state girds itself with an aureole of sanctity. For example, it makes laws concerning duels. Two men who agree

to risk their lives in order to settle an affair (whatever it might be) cannot execute their agreement because the state doesn't want it. They would expose themselves to judicial pursuit and punishment. What becomes of the freedom of self-determination? Things are completely different in those places, like North America, where society decides to make the duelists suffer certain disagreeable consequences of their act and takes from them, for example, the credit they had previously enjoyed. The refusing of credit is everyone's affair, and if it pleases a society to deprive someone of it for one reason or another, he who is struck by it cannot complain of an attack on his liberty: society has done nothing but exercise its own. The society of which we spoke leaves the individual perfectly free to expose himself to the harmful or disagreeable consequences that result from his way of acting, and leaves full and entire his freedom of will. The state does exactly the contrary: it denies all legitimacy to the will of the individual and only recognizes as legitimate its own will, the will of the state.

Strange reasoning. The law doesn't attack me. In what way am I freer if society boycotts me? Such reasoning would legitimize all the attacks of a public opinion infected by moral bigotry against the individual. The legend of individual liberty in Anglo-Saxon countries is built on this reasoning. Stirner himself feels the vice of his reasoning, and a little further along he arrives at his celebrated distinction between society and association. In the one (society) the individual is taken as a means; in the other (association), he takes himself as an end and treats the association as a means of personal power and enjoyment:

You bring to the association all your might, all your riches and make your presence felt. In society you and your activity are utilized. In the first you live as an egoist; in the second you live as a man, i.e., religiously; you work in the Lord's vineyard. You owe society everything you have; you are its debtor and you are tormented with social obligations. You owe nothing to the association. She serves you and you leave it without scruples as soon as you no longer have any advantages to draw from it...

If society is more than you then you will have it pass ahead of you and you will make yourself its servant. The association is your tool, your weapon; it sharpens and multiplies your natural strength. The association only exists for you and by you. Society, on the contrary, claims you as its good and can exist without you. In short, society is sacred and the association is your property; society uses you and you use the association.

A vain distinction if ever there was one! Where should we fix the boundary between society and association? As Stirner himself admitted, doesn't an association tend to crystallize into a society?

However we approach it, anarchism cannot reconcile the two antinomic terms, society and individual liberty. The free society that it dreams of is a contradiction in terms. It's a piece of steel made of wood, a stick without an end. Speaking of anarchists Nietzsche wrote:

We can already read on all the walls and all the tables their word for the future: Free society. Free society? To be sure. But I think you know, my dear sirs, what we will build it with: Wood made of iron...

Individualism is clearer and more honest than anarchism. It

places the state, society and association on the same plane. It rejects them all and as far as this is possible tosses them overboard. "All associations have the defects of convents," Vigny said.

Antisocial, individualism is openly immoralist. This is not true in an absolute fashion. In a Vigny, pessimistic individualism is reconciled with a morally haughty stoicism, severe and pure. Even so, even in Vigny an immoralist element remains: a tendency to dis-idealize society, to separate and oppose the two terms society and morality, and to regard society as a fatal generator of cowardice, unintelligence, and hypocrisy.

*Cinq mars, Stello, and Servitude et Grandeur militaires** are the songs of a kind of epic poem on disillusionment. But it is only social and false things that I will destroy and illusions I will trample on. I will raise on these ruins, on this dust, the sacred beauty of enthusiasm, of love, and of honor.

It goes without saying that in a Stirner or a Stendhal individualism is immoralist without scruples or reservations. Anarchism is imbued with a crude moralism. Anarchist morality, even without obligations or sanctions, is no less a morality. At heart it is Christian morality, except for the pessimist element contained in the latter. The anarchist supposes that those virtues necessary to harmony will flourish on their own. Enemy of coercion, the doctrine accords the faculty to take from the general stores even to the lazy. But the anarchist is persuaded that in the future city the lazy will be rare, or will not exist at all.

Optimistic and idealistic, imbued with humanism and moralism, anarchism is a social dogmatism. It is a "cause" in the sense that Stirner gave this word. A "cause" is one thing, "the simple attitude of an individual soul" is another. A cause

* Books by Vigny

implies a common adherence to an idea, a shared belief and a devotion to that belief. Such is not individualism. Individualism is anti-dogmatic and little inclined to proselytism. It would gladly take as its motto Stirner's phrase: "I have set my affair on nothing." The true individualist doesn't seek to communicate to others his own sensation of life and society. What would be the good of this? *Omne individuum inefabile*. Convinced of the diversity of temperaments and the uselessness of a single rule, he would gladly say with David Thoreau:

I would not have any one adopt my mode of living on any account; for, beside that before he has fairly learned it I may have found out another for myself, I desire that there may be as many different persons in the world as possible; but I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue *his own way*, and not his father's or his mother's or his neighbor's instead.

The individualist knows that there are temperaments that are refractory to individualism and that it would be ridiculous to want to convince them. In the eyes of a thinker in love with solitude and independence, a contemplative, a pure adept of the inner life, like Vigny, social life and its agitations seem to be something artificial, rigged, excluding any true and strongly felt sentiments. And conversely, those who by their temperament feel an imperious need for life and social action, those who throw themselves into the melee, those who have political and social enthusiasm, those who believe in the virtues of leagues and groups, those who have forever on their lips the words "The Idea," "The Cause," those who believe that tomorrow will bring something new and great, these people necessarily misunderstand and disdain the contemplative, who lowers before the crowd the harrow of which Vigny spoke. Inner life and social action are two things that are mutually exclusive. The two kinds of souls are not made to understand each other. As antitheses, we should

read alongside each other Schopenhauer's "Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life," that bible of a reserved, mistrustful, and sad individualism, or the *Journal Intime* of Amiel. Or the *Journal d'un Poète* by Vigny. On the other side, we should read a Benoit Malon, an Élisée Reclus or a Kropotkin, and we will see the abyss that separates the two kinds of souls...

Translated: by Mitchell Abidor
From the Book: *La Sensibilité individualiste*. (Paris, Alcan, 1909)

Biographical Note: Georges Palante (November 20, 1862—August 5, 1925) was one of the last great thinkers who methodically defended Individualism against the continuous and murderous aggressions of Society, Religion, the State, Academia, and The Herd. He is one of the most lucid analysts of humans in society—a clarifier of Emerson, Stirner, Nietzsche, and Spencer. His prose style (and critical process) is crystal-clear, sensitive, poignant, precise, logical, literary, simple; his writings exhibit all the virtues of the French tradition—in fewer words, exquisite strength and vigorous intelligence.

Throughout his oeuvre he expressed his detachment from society and his contempt for purely social values. His best book is perhaps *Combat pour l'Individu* (*The Combat for the Individual*), where he metaphorically eviscerates the esprit de corps, the administrative spirit, the small-town spirit, class spirit, the democratic spirit, etc; everything which, according to him, suppressed and degraded the originality of strong individuals. It's not that Palante was either a revolutionary or an anarchist: he didn't believe in progress and even less in a beneficent revolution. Nor did he believe in equality or any democratic or socialist theories. But his critiques of Society are of undeniable value to anarchists, which is undoubtedly why anarchists were the very first to translate his works into Italian.

All of Palante's books—particularly *Combat pour l'Individu*, *Les Antinomies entre l'Individu et la Société* and *La Sensibilité Individualiste*—might have for inscription, "Dying, we salute thee, Lucifer!" For Lucifer is the protagonist for all Individualists, the first rebel who revolted against the totalitarian State called

Heaven, and as he fell became immeasurably greater, and in the Domain of the Damned, whereto are sent by Church, State, and Society all those who antagonize them, he reigns, the eternal enemy of the collectivist, unitarian theocracy of the passive and brainless angels.

The hedonist philosopher Michael Onfray's thesis *Physiologie de Georges Palante* (*Georges Palante's Physiology*) contributed to the renewed interest in Palante's work. The 2002 and 2005 reissues of the book were subtitled *portrait d'un nietzschéen de gauche* (*Portrait of a left-wing Nietzschean*).

Anarchism, Society and the Socialized Mind

by Francis Ellingham

The most alarming feature of technological civilization is its tendency to produce what might be called "the socialized mind". As technology advances, human life is organized to an ever-greater degree and in ever-larger economic and social units. Millions of people begin to behave, automatically and predictably, as if they possessed only a single, corporate consciousness; and this highly socialized behavior has a socializing effect on thought. We tend to think more and more in term of society as a whole, less and less in terms of the unique human individual. Confronted with any economic or social problem, we tend to look for the solution which will best enable society to go on functioning, smoothly and efficiently, according to some ideal plan. The plan may be capitalist,

socialist, or whatever: it makes no real difference. We never look for the solution which will best enable the individual to mature, naturally and spontaneously, and so to actualize all his or her creative potentialities.

Thus, as soldiers develop a military mind, so the over-organized member of a technological society develops a socialized mind. And as the military mind is really only interested in the glorification of the army, so the only real interest of the socialized mind is the glorification of society. Lip service may be paid to the individual, and it may be said that the individual will benefit as society get better and better. But the socialized mind always puts society first. The development of society, with ever-rising productivity and ever-increasing technical sophistication, is regarded as inevitable and absolutely necessary, whereas the supposed benefit to the individual is mentioned —it at all— as a mere afterthought. (Similarly, the military mind occasionally claims that army life improves a man's health, or develops his character.) The individual is thought to benefit, but only as a happy coincidence.

Of course, if the individual really did benefit from the glorification of society, the fact that this was just a coincidence would hardly matter. But does he really benefit? If society functions efficiently, the individual may find himself well fed, well clothed, and well housed, without having to work excessively in return. But those are not specifically human benefits. A domestic animal can lead a luxurious, idle life; it remains an animal. If the human individual is to benefit as such, he must be able to develop that which makes him human— his creative intelligence. I would not suggest that everybody is a potential genius. But almost everybody, given a chance, is capable of doing something creatively, and of living, moment by moment, in a creative and poetic way — and only such a life is meaningful and satisfying for a human being. But creativity can only come naturally and spontaneously, when life is lived in a playful, childlike spirit. And it is precisely naturalness and spontaneity which the socialized mind, by putting society first, denies. For you cannot have a vast, complex social system, running with perfect efficiency, if men and women are allowed

to live naturally and spontaneously. They must be disciplined, regimented, de-personalized. Education must be geared to the national economy, turning out a mass of docile producers and consumers on the one hand, and on the other, an *elite* of impersonally efficient administrators and technologists. Playfulness must everywhere be extinguished, and all work must be performed in grim earnest. Creative intelligence must be ruthlessly suppressed (for nothing is more subversive) and replaced by a stupid thoughtless, purely automatic type of behavior. In short, far from benefiting the human individual, the glorified technological society annihilates him by transforming him into an automaton. And the socialized mind, which relentlessly encourages that process, is the deadliest and most implacable enemy of all individuality, all creativity, and indeed of all specifically human life.

Now, one would expect anarchists, of all people, to be quite uncontaminated by the socialized mentality. But what, in fact, is the case? To judge by what one reads in *Anarchy and Freedom*, the great majority of professed anarchists think exclusively in terms of society. If challenged to explain and justify their anarchism, they would start by enunciating a few general defining characteristics of an anarchist *society*: that it would have no State, no government, and no law; that it would be based on voluntary co-operation; and so forth. They would probably continue by dwelling on all the terrible *social* evils of State-controlled *society*. Then they might point to examples of stateless, anarchistic *societies* which anthropologists have claimed to discover in primitive cultures. And, in conclusion, they might argue that a primitive, stateless social dispensation, plus modern science and technology, would add up to a far happier and more efficient *society* than any State-controlled system.

Equally, when anarchists argue among themselves, society is almost always the first and last consideration. Most of the controversies are about such questions as, for example, whether property would be individually or collectively owned in an ideal anarchist *society*; how far modern technology would, or could, be used in such a *society*; and whether the members

of such a *society* would need a moral code to prevent *anti-social* behavior. No doubt such discussions have their value, if only as a means of stimulating thought. Nevertheless it is obvious, and very alarming, that most anarchists nowadays have a completely socialized approach. Always in the forefront of their minds is the question: "How would an anarchist *society* work?" They never start by asking: "How would an anarchist *individual* behave?" Thus, although they may pride themselves on their independence of mind, these anarchists are actually just as socialized as any orthodox politician, or any respectable social worker.

"But we must have society!" One can already hear the protests of the socialized anarchists. "Man, after all, is a social animal, and without a society of some kind he simply could not exist. We too are against the glorified technological society, as you have described it. But that totalitarian nightmare must not be confused with society *per se*. What we want is an *anarchist* society, in which the individual could live as freely and creatively as possible. Therefore we are quite right to discuss the nature of such a society, and we do not deserve this monstrous accusation that we are somehow 'socialized' and against the individual."

A good example of such an attitude is contained in the articles "Anarchism and Stateless Societies" in *Anarchy* # 58. In that article, John Pilgrim castigates a young anarchist who proclaimed in Hyde Park that "he was autonomous and didn't need society". "Without society," John Pilgrim avers, "the human animal cannot develop into a human being, and any theorizing about the nature of anarchist society must start from this point." And he quotes with approval Professor McGregor's dictum: "man today must be sociate, as well as numerate and literate".

If we wish to learn where such an attitude leads, we may turn to another recent example of the socialized mentality – Ian Vince's piece in *Anarchy* # 59. Such people as murderers and rapists, Ian Vince explains, could not be tolerated in any society, and especially not an anarchist society. "Whether you would call the place where you confine them a prison,

a hospital, a rehabilitation center or whatever, it is clear that such people have to be restrained, by force if necessary, from committing anti-social acts. This is unfortunate, but failure to do it will exact a bigger social price than the price to an anarchist conscience of incarcerating them." Ian Vince grants that such people must not be "punished or despised" – only incarcerated! Incarcerated because, otherwise, "I cannot see how any society could maintain itself..."

It is surely clear that for such so-called anarchists, society comes first and "an anarchist conscience" a very poor second. Such anarchists are like those respectable Christians who pay lip-service to their God of love and forgiveness, while sentencing the "enemies of society" to imprisonment or death. They are so attached to technological society, with its illusion of security and its dubious promise of luxury for all in the automated future, that they are ready to waive their anarchism and to crush whatever they consider to be deviant behavior by brute force. To describe such loveless treatment as "rehabilitation" or "therapy" is not only sickening but disastrous. How shall we ever get rid of our prisons if we start calling them "hospitals"?

Let us face the facts. If you believe that man is a social animal and cannot exist except in a society, or that man must be "sociate" (to use McGregor's term), then obviously you have already opened the door to the glorification of society. You have already made society sacred, and if society is sacred anybody who seriously hinders the smooth functioning of the social system must be ruthlessly put down. If you believe that all specifically human life depends on living in a society, then you are bound to put society first, and to compel the individual to conform to it. But then the individual cannot live naturally and spontaneously, cannot develop his creative intelligence, and consequently *ceases* to be specifically human. Far from being indispensable, society, in any shape or form, is fatal. And I am not confusing the glorified technological society with society *per se*, because there is no essential difference. The completely efficient, complete totalitarian society is merely society *per se* at its highest imaginable stage of development. It follows that an anarchist society, the dream of the socialized

anarchists, is just a contradiction in terms.

I am not so foolish as to suggest that the human individual can live entirely alone. What I am suggesting is that living in a society is not the only alternative to living alone. One can envisage an anarchist *milieu* which would not be organized as a society. In such a *milieu* individuals would have various relationships with each other, but they would not be related as they are in a society. They would not be regarded, and would not regard themselves, as parts of a more significant whole. They would arrange themselves as autonomous and sovereign individuals, co-operating not out of a sense of social obligation, but simply as and when they felt the need to do so. They would co-operate, not for society's benefit, but for their own. In fact they would have not concept of society at all. In their view, they would simply be men and women living in the world.

The trouble is that our minds have become so socialized that we find it extremely difficult to conceive of such a non-social, truly anarchist *milieu*. Our very terminology is socialized, so that we use the word "society" to cover every imaginable type of human culture. John Pilgrim, for example, in the articles mentioned above, talks freely about "primitive cultures" and "primitive societies", as if the terms "culture" and "society" were synonymous. But, in point of fact, none of the primitive cultures he describes is a society. The people of those cultures possess such concepts as "the family" and "the tribe", but no concept of society as a whole. Nor do they behave as if they had such a concept. It is only social anthropologists, viewing these cultures through socialized conceptual spectacles, who claim to see societies where none exist. Thus John Pilgrim's socialized terminology blinds him to the very possibility of real anarchy, for which the *absence* of society is an essential prerequisite. His socialized terminology also causes him to think and write in a peculiarly circular way. I have already quoted his sentence: "Without society the human animal cannot develop into a human being, and any theorizing about the nature of an anarchist society must start from this point." Now clearly, if you are theorizing about an anarchist *society*, you have already assumed that *society per*

se is necessary for human development. (From what other point would you normally start such theorizing?) Therefore, to avoid circularity, the sentence should have read "anarchist *milieu*" rather than "anarchist society". But in John Pilgrim's socialized terminology, the word "society" covers everything, and consequently there is no means of distinguishing between a society and a non-social *milieu*. Thus the circularity is unavoidable. And thus, once again, it appears that true anarchy is literally inconceivable by a socialized mind.

Had he been less socialized, it might have occurred to John Pilgrim to ask himself an interesting question. If it were really true that "without society the human animal cannot develop into a human being", why did Professor McGregor say that "man *today* must be a sociate". Etc? What about man yesterday?

The implication of McGregor's dictum, surely, is that in the past man was numerate and literate *without* being sociate. Otherwise the word "today" would be pointless. So how could society have been necessary for the development of man as such? Equally, if it is only *today* that man must be sociate, then presumably he could become dissociate again tomorrow. Which in an anarchist tomorrow, is surely what one would expect. It is only the socialized mind which assumes that society always has been, and always will be, an absolute necessity.

For the truth is that Professor McGregor was right. In the past, man was *not* sociate, and therefore what we call society is not an absolute necessity. It is purely a phenomenon of *today*; that is, of the modern industrial era. Before the Industrial revolution, what we call society did not exist, except perhaps in embryonic form. The rise of society was purely the result of modern technological progress, with its mass production, mass distribution, and mass consumption.

What happened was that the State, which hitherto had played no direct part in economic affairs, was gradually forced to intervene and assume control. For modern technology, to be economically feasible, has to be used on such an enormous scale, involving the lives of so many millions of people, that

the State is bound to be interested. And nowadays there is no administrative machine, except the State, big enough to cope with the many social problems created by technological progress. Moreover, modern scientific research, and the latest technical devices (nuclear reactors, for example), are so fantastically expensive that only the State can find the money to pay for them. In the past, the economic life of a country could be individually organized by small farmers, master craftsman, small family firms, and so forth, with little or no centralized co-ordination. Today, the national organization of the economy is the main preoccupation of government, and the economic activities of the individual are integrated in a huge system, which becomes ever more centralized, ever more State-controlled. Thus we have created an entirely new mode of human existence, and naturally, we have developed an entirely new concept for thinking about it—the modern concept of “society”.

What, then, do we mean by society? The key to its definition lies in the fact that nowadays, as Hannah Arendt has put it, “we see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping”. (*The Human Condition*, II, 5). Miss Arendt defines society as follows:

the collective of families economically organized into the facsimiles of one super-human family is what we call ‘society’ and its political form of organization is called ‘nation’ (Loc, cit.).

And it is, surely, the nation of one super-human family which we moderns have in mind, consciously or unconsciously, when we talk about society. We are said to be members of society, and to have duties to society, in the same way we are said to be members of, and have duties towards, our families. (Socialist politicians are particularly apt to tell us that our society is just like one, big family.) Miss Arendt also points out the inherently totalitarian nature of society. “Society,” she

writes, "always demands that its members act as though they were members of one enormous family which has only one opinion and one interest" (Loc, cit., II. 6). That is, it *demand*s the extinction of all human individuality.

"But Aristotle said that man is a social animal!" That is a point which weighs heavily in the socialized mind. However, there are two mistakes here. First, what Aristotle actually said was, *anthropos physei politikon zoon*, which may be translated, "Man is by nature a political animal" (although we must beware of assuming that the Greek conception of politics was the same as ours). Aristotle could not have called man a social animal, because the Greeks had no concept of, or word for, society. The word society is of course Roman in origin, and even the Roman *societas* did not mean society as we know it: it meant an alliance between people for a specific purpose, such as to rule others, or to commit a crime. The popular mistranslation of Aristotle's dictum is mainly due to the writings of Thomas Aquinas. But even in Aquinas's day our modern concept of society was still unknown. The word "society" meant any group, from a family to a nation. And the medieval nation was merely a conglomeration of mostly independent families (with a monarch ruling the feudal lords as *primus inter pares*); the modern nation-state, in which society is conceived as one super-human family, had not yet been born. Thus when Aquinas wrote: "It is natural for man to be a social and political animal, living in community," he was thinking of a multiplicity of more or less independent communities, not of society as we know it. Not of society *as a whole*.

But, secondly, even if Aristotle or Aquinas had been able to call man a social animal in the modern sense of "social" they would have been wrong. Man bears very little resemblance to the social animals, like the ants or the bees, who live in highly-centralized, closely-knit social organisms. The earliest men were more like wolves or elephants: they were only moderately gregarious, living in loosely organized packs. And, as we have seen, it's only very recently—since the Industrial Revolution—that man has in fact become "sociate". Of all the animals, man is actually the *least* suited to live in

a closely-knit social organism, like a hive or an ant-heap. For human beings display a greater degree of individual diversity than do the members of any other species, and individual diversity, obviously, is the last thing that is wanted in a social organism. It is true, of course that no man can live their whole life in complete isolation from others. But if that is all that is meant by "social", practically all animals are social.

The fact is that in modern usage the word "society" is dangerously ambiguous. To say that a man dislikes society can mean either that he is opposed to the present social order or, merely, that he is not sociable or friendly, disliking the *company* of others. To say that one enjoys *the* society of women is not to say that one would enjoy living in a society of women. In the simple sense of "company", or of having some kind of relationship with others, society is indeed an absolute necessity. But the society of which we are said to be members, and towards which we are said to have duties (which of course, is the society I have been discussing throughout—society the super-human family, society as a whole), that kind of society is not only not a necessity; it is a monstrous, cancerous evil. The socialized mind confuses those two entirely different meanings of "society", and assumes that because man must live "in society"—meaning simply in relationship with others—therefore he must live in *a* society. The results of this verbal confusion are disastrous.

What, then, is the lesson of all this? Surely that anarchists, if they are to be anarchists in more than a Pickwickian sense, must scrupulously avoid the socialized approach to anarchism. They must cease to approach every problem of anarchist theory by asking themselves: "How would an anarchist society work?" Instead, they must ask: "How would an anarchist individual behave?" That is what might be called "the individualist approach". Let us now compare these two approaches.

To turn once more to John Pilgrim's article in *Anarchy* # 58, it is interesting to see that he reaches the following conclusion:

I have attempted to show here that the absence of the State as a method of social organization does not necessarily involve the absence of those other undesirable features of western

society that we would like to see abolished: competition, class divisions, status seeking, authoritarianism, restrictions on individual freedom, and so on.”

Incidentally, note that the individual is mentioned last.

The anarchist postulate [continues John Pilgrim] that the State is the prime reason for divisions in society and the source of its inequalities is simply inadequate...The abolition of the State is obviously desirable, but we need a great deal more knowledge of the methods of creating social cohesion, before such an abolition could become viable on terms that we would accept.

Now John Pilgrim is clearly right in saying that society without a State would not necessarily be an ideal place to live. Apart from anything else, the Marxist ideal of a stateless, but also totalitarian society, ought to be sufficient proof of the inadequacy of mere statelessness as the anarchist goal. But if your prime object is to create an ideal society, and if you believe that the ideal society is an anarchist society, you are practically driven to adopt mere statelessness as your goal. For how can you define an anarchist society except by saying, in one way or another, that it would have no State? The word “anarchy” comes of course from the Greek *anarkhia* and means “absence of government”. It seems, then, that the term “anarchist society” must simply mean any society without a government—and therefore without the administrative machinery for governing which is called “the State”.

Thus John Pilgrim has arrived at an impossible position, as a direct result of his socialized approach. Since he thinks primarily in terms of society, he conceives of anarchism as being, essentially, a doctrine which rejects the State. At the same time, he can see that the mere abolition of the State will not produce a desirable way of life, and so he is forced to admit that anarchism—or rather, his socialized idea of anarchism—is

“simply inadequate”. To adopt Nurse Vaell’s phrase, anarchism is “not enough” for John Pilgrim. He demands “social cohesion” as well. But why, then, does he bother with anarchism at all? Why doesn’t he accept the Marxist ideal of statelessness plus social cohesion, and join the Communist movement?

All socialized anarchists are bound to end in a similar mess. Once they notice the pretty obvious fact that the abolition of the State would not, by itself, bring in the millennium, they become extremely embarrassed. For, in their socialized minds, anarchism can only mean the abolition of the State. The result (as Ian vine’s piece in *Anarchy* # 59 also illustrates) is that anarchism, for them, ceases to be all-important. It begins to be subordinated to the demands of society.

Now, with the individualist approach, no such difficulties need arise. For if your prime interest is not the anarchist society but the anarchist individual, the State need not appear in your definition of anarchism. Since by derivation the word “anarchy” means “absence of government”, you may define an anarchist individual as one who neither governs, nor is governed by others; and who is not governed by himself—that is, by selfish fears and cravings, by moral or religious idealism, or by any other form of self-will. Anarchism may then be defined as the doctrine that every human being would do well to become an anarchist in that sense, living absolutely freely, naturally and spontaneously. (Which, incidentally, is also the basic idea of Taoism and Zen Buddhism.) Not a word about either society or the State.

It is clear that if all human beings became anarchists in that sense, we *would* have the millennium. All forms of power and authority would have disappeared, through the unwillingness of any individual to dominate or exploit others, or to submit to domination or exploitation. And the problem of social cohesion would simply not arise. For “society as a whole” would be an unknown concept, and men and women, left in direct relationship with each other, would find themselves co-operating with the kind of love that can only come naturally and spontaneously—unmotivated, genuine, creative love. Thus, with the individualist approach, anarchism is “enough”. It goes with-

out saying that the State as we know it is rejected by the individualist anarchist. But the rejection of the State is not regarded as anarchism's very essence. Merely as one of its innumerable (and in practice largely unpredictable) consequences.

Another major drawback to the socialized approach is that it forces the anarchist theorist to use social and political concepts like "State", "law", "government" and so forth, which—as Kenneth Maddock showed in *Anarchy # 16*—mean different things to different people. (They can even mean different things at different times to the same person.) But with the individualist approach, we can think in terms of easily recognizable human qualities: the various qualities of the ideal anarchist man or woman. For example, one necessary quality of the perfect anarchist, obviously, is fearlessness. Now we all know what it is to be afraid, and we can all recognize the difference between, say, the man who cringes before his boss and the man who, rather than put up with obvious tyranny, is prepared to tell the boss where he gets off. Thus we are no longer dealing with vague, ambiguous concepts, but with plain facts of everyday life, which everybody understands. And through thinking about the concrete behavior of the anarchist individual, rather than some abstract idea of an anarchist society, we may begin to see what an anarchist *milieu*, composed of such individuals, would be like.

From *The Abolitionist*,
1969 issue

A Note on Authority

by Enzo Martucci

The freedom of an individual ends where his power ends.

If I want, and my power permits, I can command others. But in this case the power exercised over them is not authority, because they are not bound to recognize and respect it. In fact, if they would rebel and use their power to impede **my attempt at domination** then all would remain free without anyone threatening to lord it over them (Anarchy).

If, on the contrary, from docility or cowardice, they did not rebel and allowed themselves to be dominated, then we would have the triumph of the best in the biological sense of the word (Natural aristocracy).

Authority is a power that oppresses in the name of the Sacred (God, Morality, Society, etc.), which it pretends to represent. It is a power which all must adore and serve even if they possess the energy and capacity to overthrow it.

To destroy authority one must overthrow the Sacred—commit the crime that Stirner describes. Only in this way can we be anarchists.

from *No Al Gregge*
(No To The Herd)

A Letter to a Friend

by Laurance Labadie

Apropos your series of articles on Human Rights:

There was a University of Chicago "professor" who wrote a book entitled *Might is Right*, under the pseudonym of "Ragnar Redbeard". In it he maintained that life is essentially a battle in which "to the victor belonged the spoils", and claimed that the truth of this fundamental warfare is disguised by various pretenses, ruses, and moral codes, originated and propagated by the weak who couldn't stand up to the stern realities and who expected to soften-up their adversaries. He elaborated his contentions by citing history, politics, business, religion, etc., in fact all the activities of humans (and animals?). The book is rather uncomfortably convincing, though I think the author was terribly unscientific and unreasonable in *justifying* what seems a pretty sorry scheme of things.

It does not seem to require much acumen to realize that the power of might is the most potent ingredient regarding human conduct, and over-rides all "rights", and until mankind decides to forego the use of might it will naturally be the deciding determinant. Stirner said, "I would rather have a handful of might than a bagful of right", or words to that effect. Anyhow, that is the only language that governments, as such, understand.

"Rights" could hardly have preceded government in some form, as you surmise. Your "rights" are postulated as being *against* something, and the only thing anyone could be against was some hindrance to living, *viz.*, government. "Rights", therefore, are usually considered as limitations on government (such as the Magna Carta and the American Bill of Rights, etc). That government had power, and could often over-ride "rights", made it appear that the "rights" were *granted* by governments. Naturally, it wasn't long before the theory arose that governments themselves were protectors of human "rights". In fact, this is the kind of baloney taught in all "state-supported" schools, everywhere and at all times, and of course religious schools and

churches teach that God grants all "rights".

Whether warfare, even though disguised, was and is a normal mode of human activity, it has been fairly well established that the origin of government was a band of robbers who in conquest set themselves up as rulers over the people they had plundered and subjugated. As it was to no advantage to have these slaves scramble among themselves, the tyrants "maintained law and order" among them, and in time even directed them in "public works", such as building roads, making armor, battleships, etc., originally of course for purposes of further plunder and conquest. As time went on, the slaves actually believed they couldn't do without their masters, until today we see them concernedly run to the polls to elect new ones every few years.

These stupid human animals can become inured to almost anything, and only occasionally rebel and demand "rights" for themselves, against their masters. They never dream of abolishing mastership itself. The most energetic advocates of "rights" are, naturally, authoritarian socialists, communists, fascists, nationalists, 100% Americans and what have you, and other such lack-wits ad nauseam, who want to set up a supreme master in the State which will take care of them and direct them in all things.

Prior to government, there could not have been any concept of "rights" whatever. Men breathed, ate, hunted, propagated, etc., because it was the natural thing to do. No one could even imagine that he did so because he had the "right" to do so. The American Indian, for example, lived in this clime not because he thought he had a "right" to use the earth. "Rights", in land, originated or rather were brought here from Europe where property in land was a "right". By the way, I think your obsession about "rights" is a hangover from your ardent single-tax days.

Although it is improbable, "rights" may have originated by men agreeing to forego the use of might, to make recourse to consultation, compromise, and agreement as the most economical method of getting by in this world. And natural selection might indicate that those who resorted to this method,

rather than settling differences by warfare, in the long run survived. This was Kropotkin's and, I think, Herbert Spencer's interpretation. However, mutual agreements put into the form of contracts are of different origin and nature than so-called "rights". They come into existence among *equals*.

At any rate, the stupid belief that "rights" originated from God or the State is pure superstition, promulgated by preachers and politicians to promote their game of getting a living without work and to enhance their "take". The plain fact of the matter, it seems to me, is that, like many other transcendental, teleological, and social "truths", all theories of "rights" are merely human inventions, used by one party or another in order to enhance, as they think, their ability in getting along in the world. "Ethics" is another branch of the same tree.

The foregoing is, at least, a hasty outline of my convictions anent the doctrine of "Rights". The very advocacy of "rights" is itself a hostile attitude and I doubt whether a peaceable and gregarious society can be built on such a premise.

A more useful alternative to whatever you might write on the subject (which in any event would only be a rationalizing of your own desires) would be to discard all hallucinations about "rights" and propose acting as one's inclinations direct—in short, that "instinct" is the safest guide. Of course this will demand considerable courage from the individuals in our modern goose-stepping snivelization, and will not meet acceptance by the proponents of the "natural depravity" or "original sin" theory. Another and perhaps better alternative would be to gauge all human action according to consequences. This might involve a "transvaluation of values".

To summarize briefly, I contend that there is no such animal as "natural rights" and that all you might say about governments, constitutions, or edicts of God (ten commandments, etc.) would be mostly hogwash for the gullible. No person has any "right" to do anything, unless he has the *power* to do it, or because his neighbors do not prevent him from doing it. Or, if it be claimed that he *does* have "rights", I maintain that they are not of much value if the State or "Society" takes it in hand to veto them.

The very tendency of thinking in terms of "rights" usually results in the smug assertion of them, and then waiting until politicians embody them in laws before they can be acted upon. Why not try to get people out of the clouds in their thinking about what they may, should, or can do. Direct action is what is needed. Tell people what to *do*, and don't worry about their "right" to do it, like some pettifogging lawyer.

Humans are neither good nor bad, but egoistic. I personally believe they are rather congenial cusses, but they are so astoundingly stupid and have little confidence in their neighbors. That is why demagogues have such an easy time of it playing on their hopes and, mainly, fears. If they would only have sense enough to treat each other fairly, or at least leave each other alone, there would be no inordinate amount of trouble in the world. They would certainly have to do away with that relic of a warlike age, the State, which messes up all their activities. And yet, when I look around me and see so many of the dubs even more ignorant than myself, I can have but little hope for the human race.

So, my advice to you is to investigate human well-being *directly*, as you have been doing, rather than indulge in a lot of circumlocution and useless speculation about "rights". The latter can safely be left to metaphysicians and theologians.

Cordially,
Laurance Labadie

This letter is from a carbon copy of the typed original, signed and dated April 19, 1949.

Historical Note: When Benjamin Tucker left the United States in 1908 and went into self-imposed exile in Europe, propaganda for his brand of anarchist mutualism didn't abruptly cease. Articulate associates such as Clarence Lee Swartz, John Beverley Robinson, E.H. Fulton, Joseph A. Labadie, and others, kept up the work he had begun over thirty years before. By the 1930s, however, old age, death, or disillusionment had silenced them all. They had no successor---except one: Laurance Labadie (1898-1975), the son of Joseph.

Laurance Labadie was born on June 4, 1898, the youngest child and only son of Sophie and Joseph Labadie (the famed labor agitator, poet, and anarchist). Early in life, Laurance developed anarchistic positions regarding the social institutions he confronted. But his father's actual influence on the young Labadie's thought was not as great as might be expected: The age difference between him and his father (who was fifty years his senior), coupled with the latter's general refusal to force his philosophy on anyone, meant that Laurance did not receive the essence of anarchist thought on a silver platter. Ultimately, Laurance's views on anarchism grew out of his constant reading of literature proposing all manner of social reform.

First a worker in the auto industry and then a handyman, Laurance differed from his father in many respects. Whereas Jo was known and loved by the whole Detroit community, Laurance was, in his own words, "of a decided unsocial disposition" who preferred to live "a quiet solitary life" (from a letter to Benjamin Tucker, July 9, 1936). Laurance also differed from his father in both the form and content of his writing. He was not a poet and in his political essays, theoretical issues tended to predominate (in contrast to his father's more conversational tone). Nonetheless, Laurance's essays were always concise and readable, largely because he, as an autodidactic "never learned the ways of calculated obscurantism," as James J. Martin, his friend of thirty years, put it.

Following in his father's footsteps, Laurance became involved in the radical wing of the labor movement; also like his father, Proudhon, Tucker, and other anarchist predecessors, the young Labadie learned to set type and was soon operating the small job press used by the elder Labadie. It was upon his father's death in 1933 that Laurance began to devote most of his spare time to preserving and propagating the heritage of ideas that was left to him. He republished some of the clas-

sics of individualist anarchism, including *Slaves to Duty* by John Badcock Jr., and Tucker's *Why I Am An Anarchist*, helping to keep this vital material available—if only to a small audience. To this list he added some of his own essays such as *What Hath God Wrought?*, *The World As We Know It*, and *What is Man's Destiny?*; all remarkable for their clarity of thought and directness of style. In addition, he occasionally managed to get articles published in such libertarian publications as *Man!*, *Resistance*, *A Way Out* and *The Indian Libertarian*. Towards the end of his life he even made the columns of a university publication called the *Journal of Human Relations*—a somewhat ironic event in view of his often-expressed scorn for academics. A prolific writer, holding no reservations about trampling on anyone's sacred beliefs and belonging to no movement that might promote intellectual complacency, Laurance Labadie was just the sort of person needed to bring the ideas of the nineteenth century individualist anarchists to life in the twentieth.

While Labadie might have been a little excessively preoccupied with monetary theory throughout his life, he was also well-versed in the ideas of Max Stirner and regarded egoism as a “great unmasker” of genuine human motives, a critical tool that throws a blinding light on all the pretty[do you mean pretty? Or petty? Either works, of course... just checking] ideologies and justifications that attempt to conceal the profound self-centeredness that characterizes the human animal. This pragmatic use of egoist thought is evident in the letter printed above and is also employed to great effect in his hilarious essay “All The World's A Stage”, which was republished in the out-of-print pamphlet *Laurance Labadie: Selected Essays* (Libertarian Broadside Series, number seven).

Laurance accepted Stirner's attack on traditional morality without reservation and proclaimed in his short-lived journal *Discussion: A Journal For Free Spirits* (January, 1938):

Modern anarchism cuts loose from a priori and transcendental moral codes, resting its 'morality' firmly on expediency... Liberty is to be advanced, not because it is 'moral' or 'just', which are, after all, in themselves, but man-conceived and tentative, but because experience has shown it to be the only genuinely expedient means, given human happiness as a social goal.

Laurance Labadie died on August 12, 1975. A deterministic pessimism had become increasingly common in his later writings and from the mid-1940s until his last published article in 1970, Laurance directed his cynicism and misanthropy towards developing a much broader anarchist critique of modern society. This next short essay is a sharp example of this at-times brilliant cultural critic who begrudgingly cares enough to propose individualistic social alternatives to a species he wasn't sure deserved it.

Superstition and Ignorance VERSUS Courage and Self-Reliance

by Laurance Labadie

Every well-informed person knows, today, that man has evolved from lower forms of animal life. With this evolution in mind, we may imagine the progress he has made in ideas and social valuations. Primitive man worshipped the sun, which was natural because from it came both heat and light which are necessary to all forms of life. With the discovery of fire part of his worship was transferred to it. And if we skip many ages we may assume that by the time his creative faculties reached the stage whereby he was able to intelligently use the forces of nature, to make tools and weapons, his ideas as to the primary source of human well-being changed greatly. Probably about this time his perception and thought led him to believe that, as he was himself instrumental in controlling his well-being and seeing that many things both benevolent and malevolent occurred without his intervention, all these phenomena were caused by an anthropocentric god. The Bible gives evidence that this god had all the attributes of men, that is, he was half

demon and half benevolent and merciful. Naturally, men did all in their power to propitiate this powerful being and, in their fear, but under the pretext of loving him, catered to and gifted those who claimed to have special ability to win his favors.

These original medicine men worked hand in hand with the powerful, who managed by their physical prowess and cunning to gain control, subjugate, and exploit those not so aggressively constituted. So at this time, what we now understand as the Church and State were so closely aligned as to be almost indistinguishable. It is significant, at this point, to note that predatory instincts—robbery, murder, and afterward, subjugation—were partially justifiable on the grounds of scarcity—there was not enough to go around. Observe also that the motive for such action was not hate or malice but self-preservation. This view is in direct contradiction to the teachings of the Church and the State. The former says that all men are “born in sin” and must be washed preferably “in the blood of the lamb” (what ever that means) in order to be “saved”⁴. The latter claims to be the guardian of “law and order”. So much for the total depravity theory. However, even up to comparatively modern times has the belief persisted that the king was divinely appointed and his coronation a religious ritual.

Democracy succeeding Monarchy, it is natural to expect that this change carried with it many of the superstitions and customs of the preceding era.

Now all through this evolution man has labored under superstitions, which are in essence the same—the belief that something, whether it be a force, a personality, or mundane individuals, external to himself, was, or is, going to do something for him. This is the essence of both the god idea and—what is a transformation of the same thing—the political myth. It is the wish-thought of incompetency. It is the belief in Santa Claus. And as long as this preposterous belief exists in the minds of men they will have no self-respect, no independence, no liberty. It is the belief that makes men craven, slavish, and hypocritical. It is this belief that destroys human dignity and self-reliance and makes of man a supine prayer to non-existent gods and a credulous believer in the

wiles and promises of politicians. It is this belief that makes him a mumbler, a fool, and a dupe. Not until he realizes the importance of the maxim: God helps those who help themselves (never was the god idea so gracefully and tactfully ejected), or: If you want anything done, do it yourself— will he finally emerge from the disgraceful conditions which infest the world today.

This essay first appeared in a journal called *Libertarian Anthology*, published in Bombay, India.

Joseph Labadie: Radical Labor Archivist & Individualist Poet

Joseph Labadie, the famed “gentle anarchist” of Detroit, is best known for his extensive collection of anarchist and labor-movement literature, which he donated to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Less known is that Labadie was also a staunch individualist in his interpretation of anarchy and contributed frequently to Benjamin R. Tucker’s journal, *Liberty*—in effect becoming the spokesperson for Tucker’s “individualistic anarchism” within the labor movement (with which Labadie was associated all of his adult life). Many of his writings after the demise of *Liberty* are now collector’s items in the form of self-published booklets and leaflets. *Songs of the Spoiled*, *Doggerel for the Underdog*, and *Anarchism - Genuine and Asinine* were three of many such booklets attacking the evils of privilege and extolling the beauties of freedom, using the language of working folk.

Labadie began writing poetry at age fifty and composed more than five hundred poems that were widely printed in the daily press as well as in radical journals. Most were inspired by the struggle for social transformation and individual freedom. He published them in the form of artistic, ribbon-tied booklets printed on an archaic hand-set press by The Labadie Shop. The influence of the champions of American individualism—Whitman, Emerson, and Thoreau—was clear in Labadie’s verse, but critical judgments by other individualists were mixed. Benjamin

Tucker, admitting to a prejudice against the “Whitmanian no-form”, declined to publish Labadie’s poetry in *Liberty* or even to offer helpful criticism. But H.L. Mencken, the noted iconoclast and linguist, once told a friend, “Say what you will, Labadie has the gift. Who else has ever written nobler American?” Although often rough-hewn, Labadie’s poetic output brimmed with vitality and sincerity, and included some impassioned gems.

In the following poem, Labadie expresses the fundamentals of individualist anarchism.

IMPERIALISM

I am an imperialist,
Being emperor of myself,
My ego is my empire, over which none other may
wield the scepter of rulership.
I alone am emperor in the realm of my own
consciousness.
Who denies me this prerogative is a usurper;
Who takes it from me is mine enemy;
Who invades my territory deserves no kindly
consideration, puts his weal in jeopardy.
This empire keeps me busy with affairs its own,
So I have no time to dabble in matters foreign to its
sphere,
No inclination to add burdens to those justly, fairly,
squarely mine own.
My empire is different than any other.
In so far as is possible mine is a self-determining
entity,
And no one shall invade it but at his peril.
I am enemy of all invaders, and invader of none,
Being at peace with everyone who minds his own
business and leaves mine to myself.

Some Notes on Anarchism and The Proletarian Myth

by S.E. Parker

The question of Anarchism is not the concern of a single class, consequently also not of the laboring class, but it is the concern of every individual who values his personal liberty.

John Henry Mackay

The Masters have never lacked for a kind, sweaty force to bring back the Fugitives. They do not lack today. Call them what you will, common men, masses, proletarians, they are always the first in the sights of other conforming guns.

Paul Herr

For many years anarchism has been associated by the press and historians with a species of anti-political state socialism based on the messianic role of the "people" or the "workers". They have been supported in this view by many so-called anarchists who are actually collectivists who dislike centralization. Despite the modifications forced by reality upon the most intransigent populists, the illusion still persists as illusions usually do.

The first part of this essay is devoted to a criticism of this illusion. Why do the "masses" remain unresponsive to the "anarchist" message? Could it be that it only appeals to a minority? And if so, would it not be better to adjust one's sights accordingly?

One important element of the populist myth is the idea that during historical revolutions the "people" rise as a whole and topple their masters. They are supposed to be instinctively on the side of "freedom". The assumption is that because the worker is exploited, because he is subjected to the will of his bosses, he must therefore by virtue of his situation desire to be "free" and therefore be more responsive to Anarchist ideas than members of other classes.

In support of this assumption the proletarian mythicists assiduously collect scraps of information about the "direct action of the masses". They tell us of the black flag waving over factories during the Korean War, they go into raptures about the Berlin Uprising of 1953, the Hungarian Revolt of 1956, they enthuse about the first days of Castro's regime in Cuba and the May Days in Paris in 1968—not to mention the Paris Commune and the Mexican, Russian and Spanish revolutions. What they do not detail are the far more numerous and persistent examples of those proletarians who support the rulers who milk them; who provide the bulk of the personnel of the prisons, police and military services, who are "always the first in the sights of other conforming guns", and who persecute the outstanding individual and clamor for conformity.

One of the most onerous burdens anarchists have to carry is this association with the dreary cult of "the workers", of those "ordinary down-to-earth" millions who have willingly been the fodder of their pastors and masters throughout the ages. The proletarian mythicists can go as far back as they wish into the past to find cases of "direct action" and "creativity" on the part of "the people". What they cannot do is show how these have ever supplanted authoritarian systems, or that they have not carried within them the seeds of new forms of authority. Indeed, the overwhelming historical evidence supports Eric Hoffer's contention in *The True Believer* that usually the masses have got what they wanted from "successful" revolutions—a stronger master—and that it was only their intellectual precursors who were disappointed (when they were decimated). And it also supports the gloomy conclusions of Simone Weil in her syndicalist days:

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

2

Would I deny that the class struggle exists, then? I do not. But there is considerable confusion between the **fact** of the class struggle and the **theory** of the class struggle.

The **fact** is the undeniable existence of a conflict of interests between employers and employees—whether State or “private”. The awareness and extent of this conflict are not so widespread as the “class war” preachers would like themselves and others to believe, but it does exist and has at times resulted in improved conditions for the employees. It is as natural for a wage-earner to defend his interest as it is for a wage-payer to defend his. This is the fact of the matter and only a fool would deny it.

The **theory**, on the other hand, is based on the unverifiable belief that this conflict of interests will or can eventually lead to the abolition of exploitation and the establishment of a classless society. Whether the **rationale** is the Marxist view of a historical dialectic impelling the class struggle to the final resolution of all conflict in communism, or the Bakunist/Kropotkinist faith in the spontaneous revolutionary “creativity of the masses”, makes little difference to the basic notion that the class struggle is the royal road to utopia. However modified by qualifications, or overlaid by “scientific” jargon, the theory remains a secularized version of the messianic belief

in the coming of the "kingdom of heaven" on earth—and has about as much evidence in its favor. For over 150 years the proletarian idealists have been exhorting the "workers" to be this or that, to do this or that, and their response has been virtually nil—unless the call has been to war. After more years than any of us alive can remember, the response of the vast majority of workers to anarchist ideas has been either indifference or hostility.

No revolt of the proletariat, or their predecessors in revolutionary mythology, has ever ended their servility. Their alleged "creativity" and "desire for freedom", as a class, is so much populist moonshine and is mostly the product of guilt-ridden upper and middle class intellectuals who want to expiate their social sins. Kropotkin, who is a typical example, repeats over and over again that "Anarchism is the "creation" of the masses", but never explains the causal connection between the two. All he does is give some selected historical incidents which he interprets as being such, and these are usually democratic rather than anarchist in character.

3

The trouble with much of what is today called "anarchism" is the fact that its exponents are dominated by "socialized mentalities". By this I mean an obsession with the notion that the liberation of the individual is by way of integration with "society". Not, in this case, existing society, but an ideal, classless/stateless society that the indefinite future is supposed to bring.

The distinguishing feature of this type of socialized mentality is its possession by the belief that anarchism equals anti-statism. Once the State has been eliminated, as the argument runs, mankind will dwell in freedom. Unfortunately, this is not the case, because authority has other sources than the State. One of these is "society". Indeed, social customs and mores, because they are not specified in legal enactments, can be more persistently oppressive than the laws of the State against which, at times, there is some measure of juridical defense. Many professed anarchists recognize the oppressiveness

of the State, but are blind to that of society. Their “anarchy”, therefore, consists of replacing the vertical authority of the State with the horizontal authority of Society.

As an anarchist-individualist I acknowledge neither the legitimacy of State control over me, nor that of an acephalous mob labeling itself “anarchist”. I am in agreement with Renzo Novatore when he wrote:

Anarchy is not a social form, but a method of individuation. No society will concede to me more than a limited freedom and a well-being that it grants to each of its members. But I am not content with this and want more. I want all that I have the power to conquer. Every society seeks to confine me to the august limits of the permitted and the prohibited. But I do not acknowledge these limits, for nothing is forbidden and all is permitted to those that have the force and the valor.

Consequently, anarchy is not the construction of a new and suffocating society. It is a decisive fight, against all societies—christian, democratic, socialist, communist, etc., etc. Anarchism is the eternal struggle of a small minority of aristocratic outsiders against all the societies that follow one another on the stage of history.

Like it or not, Anarchist ideas have never been more than the property of a small number of individuals who made Anarchism their interest and pushed it as such. The investment of the exploited mass with revolutionary virtue, the haranguing of them in minute-circulation papers that they never read, is often merely an elaborate disguise for a moralism which lays down how they ought to behave, and throws a multi-colored cloak over how they have behaved, do behave, and will behave—save, of course, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, Karl Marx and Michael Bakunin, separately or together..

Those who consider that Anarchism is organically linked

with the class struggle are really in a half-way position between Anarchism and socialism. On the one hand they try to champion the ego-sovereignty that is the essence of Anarchism. On the other they remain captives of the democratic-collectivist-proletarian myths. Until they can cut this umbilical cord that binds them to socialism they will never be able to come into their full power as self-owning individuals. They will still be lured along the never-never path that is supposed to lead to the lemonade springs and cigarette trees of the Big Rock Candy Mountain.

4

Whatever my hopes may be, however repugnant I find the miseries and hierarchies I encounter, I know that rulers cannot exist without the collaboration of the ruled and that it is ridiculous to suppose that archies are the products of government alone. Without the servility of the many, the power-privileged few would lose their authority. Since I do not depend on the future realization of some ideal society as my *raison d'être*, I have no need to look to any class or group to validate my ideas.

But the rejection of socio-political myths is not synonymous with the rejection of all action by the individual. If the masses are indifferent or hostile, if the future promises to be a menacing blend of *1984* and *Brave New World*, nonetheless the imperfections of men and women will, until the final robotization, still leave gaps and fissures in the social fabric. In such interstices of the organized collective it will still be possible, here and there, to create sympathetic *milieux*, oases of asylum and resistance, for those who have both disaffiliated themselves from the values and mores of the Establishment and at the same time lost faith in both collectivist and authoritarian solutions to their problems. Such a way of going on, however, is not a product of the "class struggle". It is first and foremost an *individualist* effort: the creation of an egoistic sensibility.

Originally published in
The Match!, 1973

Enemies of Society:

An Open Letter to the Editors of *Freedom*

by 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 of "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 Levelers

which made them concerned to create a society of small proprietors and to deny with pathetic vigor the anarchist communist doctrines preached by Winstanley and the Diggers. Winstanley’s social vision, combined with the revolutionary vigor 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.

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 hosannas 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 retrospective speculations as to what would have been if 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 front page of the July 8th 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.

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 totalistic 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 favored would triumph over all the others. But he almost hit the bull's eye that time.

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 behavior that must be accepted by all (and that includes your libertarian communist utopia) and insofar as the 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 bedrocks 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 anarchism, 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.

Anarchism, Individualism, & Society: some thoughts

by Scepticus

Recently, in conversation with a politically-minded acquaintance, I mentioned that I was an admirer of Max Stirner, who he immediately classified as a “radical individualist and early anarchist theorist”. He then asked me what anarchist or revolutionary group I belonged to and was astonished to discover that the only society that I am a member of is the National Society of Non-smokers! “If you admire Stirner, who was so concerned with transforming society, how can you be so politically apathetic? This complacency is inexcusable.”

The controversy about exactly what Stirner was still continues. It says something for *The Ego and His Own* that reading the book has led different people to conclude that Stirner was, on the one hand, an anarchist and, on the other, a fascist (a term which originally meant a nationalist and state-worshiper before folks forgot the meaning and used it to condemn anyone whose political ideology they found unacceptable.) Can Stirner be legitimately described as an anarchist? The most familiar identification of Stirner is as an “anarchist-individualist”. This presumably means a person who rejects the idea of any authority whether political, economic, moral or whatever—simply being the declaration of power (physical or intellectual). Thus, the anarchist-individualist does not participate in revolutionary or radical movements because his fundamental concern is not with substituting the authority of morality for the authority of politics (the aim of evangelical, collectivist anarchists). As Stirner says, there is all the difference in the world between those who want a revolution, those, that is, who want to transform existing social conditions, and those

who want an insurrection for and through the individual, this activity not being accompanied by utopian and pious hopes that the millennium will be achieved by such purely individual action. Further, whilst the traditional anarchists (the admirers of Godwin, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Tolstoy—to name but a few) see the institution of government as an unqualified evil, the anarchist-individual slugs his shoulder and is honest enough to admit that the development of professional governors is historically inevitable.

At this, non-individualist anarchists will be seen to frown, contemptuously dismissing the Stirnerian as a “right wing petty bourgeois”. For them, the worship of the State has been effectively and effortlessly replaced by the worship of “society”, and it is still to be the collectivity which calls the tune. They certainly want to abolish a situation in which the individual is helpless in the face of the State’s economic and political strength—they want, instead, to have a situation in which the individual (for his own good naturally!) voluntarily subordinates himself to the “general interest”, and is determined by moral considerations. Although I don’t necessarily adopt the view of the misanthropist, I do feel that the anarchist view of “Man” is uncritically optimistic. We are told that it is only the repressive apparatus of the State that leads to crime and social friction. Abolish the State-apparatus and we shall all embrace our former enemies and offer incense before pictures of Prince Kropotkin! In an anarchist society the prison will be replaced by a municipal centre for “rehabilitation”, no doubt, or else the refractory person will be ostracized by everyone else. All in all, non-individualist anarchism is (like all other political theories) still infatuated with general ideas like “society” and “humanity”. Everything must correspond exactly to the theory—or else!

Unquestionably, traditional anarchism tends to regard “society” and social activities as the be-all and end-all for men. Never once do the anarchists of the collectivist school ask themselves “Why do I unquestionably assume that the maintenance of “society” is necessary or desirable? Why do I assume that the standardization of human needs and

sires will bring about 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'?" Such disturbing questions would lead to them being ex-communicated, so it is a case of adopting the line of least resistance, toeing the party line. Above all, orthodox anarchists must demonstrate that individualism is, in the final analysis, merely a product of the reactionary mind. Take Kropotkin who says "Unbridled individualism is a modern growth, but it is not a characteristic of primitive mankind." This is anarchism's contribution to anthropology, sociology and psychology: the claim that "Man" is basically fraternal, gregarious, altruistic, and that it is principally the fault of industrial and technological society that we are all so "egoistic". We must accordingly replace this "atomistic" conception of the unique self with a more "unified" view, in which each individual is seen as inseparably connected with all others, so that we can all agree with the learned divine that 'No man is an island'. Once again, glorious simplification: the idea that it is only the structure of society (mainly government) which is responsible for the ills of life, and that we must strive to replace the present form of society—divisive, in-egalitarian, monolithic—with a society in which there will be flexibility, the recognition of the individual's right to autonomy (within "socially desirable" limits, of course), plus a reassuring belief in the fundamental goodness and sociability of "Man".

It would obviously be impossible to try and live a life of grassroots self-sufficiency in our modern urban society. That much any reasonable person will admit. But does this mean that we should completely identify our welfare with this much-discussed "general welfare"? What happens if there is a non-correspondence between what I desire and what the collectivity requires? Whatever anarchists may say about tolerating diversity in their ideal society, it is still a case of the individual having to submit to the others. Now, unlike present society, whether capitalist or communist, this submission might not be legally required and legally enforceable: what we would have is the replacement of an external supra-individual power (law, State, bureaucracy) with an **internal** supra-individual power (conscience, ethics, a "sense

of decency and responsibility"). Indeed, I would suggest that traditional anarchist theory is the direct descendant in some ways of Protestantism and Puritanism. In both cases, the idea is that the individual shall be directed exclusively by his conscience, and shall be privileged to work with all others of like mind for the establishment of a kingdom of heaven on earth. Therefore, it is necessary to chasten the ego; to weaken the individual's pride in himself as a separate entity.

Originally published in *Ego: An Individualist Review* #40

Anarchy & History: An Existentialist View

by **N. A. W.**

Why am I an anarchist? There are as many paths to anarchism as there are philosophies, because each philosophy, separating the individual from institutional affiliations, throws him back upon his own critical capabilities and forces him to encounter himself reasoning and willing. But, the path of some philosophies to anarchism is more direct than others. The closer a philosophy is to the individual's concrete experience, the easier it will be to draw out its anarchist implications. And those philosophies that subordinate philosophy itself to experience, making thought a living expression of the "man

of flesh and bone", are not only anarchist by implication, but in essence, or anti-essence. I am an anarchist because I prefer to use ideas, rather than to be used by others in the name of ideas. I am a renegade against the powers and authorities that have nurtured me and that continue to maintain me, but that, despite their intention, have permitted me to recognize their own absurdity. Many may be ruled by the carrot and the stick, but all who are not renegades are ruled by the idea that they have a meaning beyond themselves and the particular effects that they have on others and that others have on them.

In our century, the individual's insertion into history has replaced his union with the Absolute as the dominant means of attaining transpersonal meaning. But, which history is my own? I am told that I am a member of a class by the Marxists, a fragment of Western civilization by the academic elite, a Jew by the Zionists, a white by the blacks (and the racist whites), a man by the women (and the chauvinist men), an American by the imperialists (and the anti-imperialists), and who knows what else? I refuse to make any of these histories my own. Their competition for my allegiance neutralizes each one of them. I can rid myself of each one; I can make each one my own. The conflicts among the authorities not only make me doubt the specific claims of each one: they make me doubt that I need transpersonal meaning at all. I find that I can express myself more fully in a union of egoists, renouncing history, than in any "community" dedicated to fabricating a history and using me as the raw material for its project.

But, try as I may to rid myself of social designations and to throw off the accumulated domination that they represent, I remain a renegade. I cannot be indifferent to the attempts of others to give me a place in their histories, to use me to give them transpersonal meaning. And worse yet, I cannot remain unmoved by the efforts of others to win the loyalties of my friends. The pressures are more often bribes than punishments, and are not exerted by people who wish to dominate me, but by people who want me to confirm that their lives have historical meaning. Let them feed me: I will bite their hands off when I have the chance! Not that I take any

special pleasure in biting. I have better things to do unless I am offered a juicy bone. Such is the renegade: an individual who bites the organizational hand that feeds him.

The renegade-anarchist, the renegade-individualist, is against history, not indifferent to it. Mystics can be indifferent to history because they believe that they have transcended the flux of temporal existence. But, the very being of the anarchist is the flux, with all of its possibilities, uncertainties and most of all conflicts and ambivalences. Embrace of the flux is not a commitment, but a consequence of ridding oneself of transpersonal meaning, particularly historical meanings. What is history but the corporation manipulating markets in accordance with its growth curves, the State plotting wars to attain hegemony, the nation concocting a common tradition, and the church (or its "scientific" substitutes) administering plans for salvation? The anarchist repudiates collective pasts and collective futures. The past is made up of the traces of friends and enemies, while the future is a horizon of possible alliances, divisions and projects. The absurd existence asks for all of the values that can be appreciated, re-created and created in their integrity: not for prudent selection of values, chosen to accommodate the mission of a group in its political wars. I demand to be myself at the same time that I demand to be nothing less than all man, everyman, every human being. I have the power to make everything human my own through appreciation and imaginative recreation, but in each action I must realize only some values, excluding others. I do not accept this dissonance prudently, sculpting myself into a human type with historical specificity. I reject Ortega's dictum that "I am I and my circumstances." I am, rather, myself, my circumstances and the perspective that I choose to take on them. And since I want nothing less than all of the values, my perspective is a multiplicity of viewpoints, often mutually contradictory.

Each anarchist develops his own classification of the different types of anarchism in order to distinguish his commitment from others. Some divide communalism from individualism, others anarcho-syndicalism from anarcho-capitalism. I prefer to distinguish **critical anarchism** from

dogmatic anarchism. The dogmatic anarchist trusts that with the elimination of self-consciously willed authority, human beings will exist in a "natural" society, principled by cooperation, mutual benefit, love or free exchange. They have their own theories of history, their own doctrines of human nature, each of which stands above the concrete person, regulative over his doubts, ambiguities, ambivalences, contradictions and agonies. Critical anarchists turn against themselves, stripping and ridding themselves of abstract identities and transpersonal loyalties until they encounter themselves as beings at war, making impossible demands on experience. I will to be all, but were my will to be satisfied, I would be nothing. I am my biography, which I continually strive to surpass.

The nineteenth century anarchist believed in a rationally-intelligible natural harmony of interests. The twentieth century State imposes a willed and contingent coincidence of interests through conditioning. The renegade, perhaps, takes advantage of the coincidence in order to undermine it...not in the name of an historically unfolding harmony, but in quest of an absurd plenitude, in which contingency and accident are not signs of weakness, but are weapons against the monopolization of destiny.

*from Ego: An Individualist
Review, #39*

Freedom and Solitude

by Marilisa Fiorina

Anarchy is the negation of authority of whatever kind, it is affection and solitude.

L. Ferre

To be alone, liberated from the yoke of collective life. Here is the most logical system for being truly free—free from convention, from dependence and the extortions of others. It is solitude alone that makes the individual really free.

Each day we are victims of hypocrisy, continually reciting the rules of bourgeois etiquette: “thank you...excuse me...I am sorry”. Others flatter, judge, criticize. Others decide for us, others live on our weaknesses, others cheat us, others steal from us, others, always others, usurp our lives.

It is they who love us, who hate us, who betray us, rob us of our thoughts, words, life. It would be logical to leave them all, to flee physically and mentally to a proper island of solitude, self-sufficient and courageous. Courageous? Courageous because it is difficult, because we are incapable of living really alone, because we have need of contact with others in order to express our feelings, to realize ourselves, even for the simplification of our actions.

It is difficult for one individual, weak, even psychologically insecure, to do without friendship, love and solidarity. And then, clearly, life in solitude would appear monotonous because, as always, our emotions, our adventures, arise from others, evolve among others.

There is another solitude, perhaps more understood, more naturally respected, than that of the hermit. It is when you no longer feel a part of these others, when you no longer participate in their mode of living, making a world apart from them in which they no longer count, from which they are excluded. It is when you no longer accept their love, their benevolence, their hypocrisy—and your solitude then

becomes freedom, rebellion, it is open defiance of society.

Anarchist individualists are alone, their life lies outside the rules imposed by others. They choose the individuals whom it pleases them to have near, to listen. The others they regard as if they were non-existent, or as enemies. Individualists live beyond the walls of society—but not as those driven out.. They are mental, rather than physical, fugitives, and their solitude is loved, it is the realization of their free thought.

Translated by Stephen Marletta
from *Il Diverso*, # 1, Spring 1978

The Morality of Co-operation

by S.E. Parker

In the London Anarchist Group pamphlet *Anarchism*, Jack Stevenson states:

Anarchists want a society based upon cooperation, not competition...we want to see everyone cooperating for the common good, not just a few capitalists for the common ill...Cooperation equals friendship and peace while competition equals war.

Here we have the old socialist panacea "cooperation" disguised as anarchism. It is one of the sacred cows of all collectivist thinking that competition is a terrible evil and is only believed in by wicked people like the "capitalists". One could point out that even during the heyday of nineteenth

century capitalism there never was any free competition in the proper sense of the term. Workers had to compete among themselves in order to sell their labor to employers, but the power of the capitalists depended heavily upon economic monopolies backed by the legal power of the State. Apart from this, however, a totalitarian state can be described, theoretically at least, as a fully cooperative social system since nobody is allowed to offer any alternative way of going on. The army is a cooperative institution, and so is a prison. "Cooperation" can very easily equate servility and conformity.

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

Jack Stevenson's statement, however, involves more than a careless use of the terms "cooperation" and "competition". He wants people to cooperate for the "common good". In place of the cooperation enforced by overt authorities like the State, he wants cooperation enforced by the internalized authority of "conscience" or the moral imperative of the anonymous authority of "public opinion". He clearly shows this when he writes: "Anarchists believe that we must start to build a different kind of society with a different kind of morality from that which has been handed down to us". In other words, let us abolish the authority of God and the State and replace it with the authority of Morality. This is not anarchism. It is simply substituting one kind of rulership for another.

Woolly thinking about morality and "freedom" is a basic

trait of what passes for anarchism — but is more often a craving for a womb-society — as is wooly thinking about cooperation and competition. Invocations of the “common good” and “humanity” still cripple the perspectives of many professed opponents of authority. As long as it remains so long will their “anarchism” be nothing but a variant of socialism, a castrated creature eternally torn between liberating the individual and stretching him on the rack of a new moral social order.

taken from *Minus One: An Individualist Anarchist Review*

Editors Note: A short rant, yes, but worthy of inclusion in this collection because it has the audacity to question one of the sacred cows of anarchist doctrine—that of co-operation, which has become something of a religious precept to those who comprehend anarchism as a new social Gospel. As some of us see it, if a generalized condition of anarchy should ever come about, it would be a place of the wildest diversity, where all the different anarchist visions will be experimented with, but no one pattern dominates. Consequently, there will be plenty of contention, struggle, conflict, and yes, competition as well.

Reprinted next is another short piece by Laurance Labadie, in which he too interrogates the fetish of co-operation, in his own inimitable, cantankerous style.

On Competition

by Laurance Labadie

Most People cannot see any further than their noses. Every individual person may be looked upon as one of many caught in an avalanche, each trying to make comfortable his immediate surroundings and oblivious to the general movement. Whole civilizations have lived in misery without knowing it, for how could they if there were nothing to compare their condition with?

People can suffer almost anything as long as they see that the other fellow is suffering the same ills. But would the ills be considered ills? The phenomenon is called gregariousness or togetherness.

Some people are averse to competition and allow the words "co-operation" and "humanism" to drool from their mouths, apparently meaning thereby a large blob of protoplasmic homogeneity that lacks all individuality. It is not individuals and their liberty that concerns them, but rather some sort of well greased squirming mass that would seem to be analogous to the brains from which such amorphous "ideas" emanate.

But if there be no competition, then there can be neither comparison nor any real standard of evaluation. Competition is but a synonym for individuality. If there were no individuality, that is no difference between humans, then for certain there would be no competition.

But does individuality imply conflict? It does only to the lack-wit who aspires for togetherness in co-operation. And the reason for this lies in the fact that the combination of differences inevitably causes conflict or suppression of individuality.

The truth is that harmony, or at least lack of discord, comes from disassociation, and the opportunity for independence.

Historical Note: Labadie appears to have first stated his "competing groups" concept of anarchy (which he developed more comprehensively over the years) in an article entitled "Anarchism and Organization", which was published in the January 1938 issue of Dwight Macdonald's post-communist journal *Man!*

In Defence of Stirner

by Enzo Martucci

Professor Ernesto Serafini, an academic who has polemicized with me before, now wants to start again and has written, amongst other things:

You who boast of not being of the school of a Malatesta, but rather of Stirner, and who present the latter as a philosopher whose thought has a logic free from the contradictions one finds in the great Nietzsche, do not understand, nor wish to understand, the contradictions that also exist in Stirner. But Ettore Zoccoli answers you well in his book *Anarchy*. Indeed, he writes on page 410:

Although supposed to be politically and socially disintegrated, other individuals still remain. Well, says Stirner, it is up to the individual to make sure that those who surround him should be only a means to his ends. Briefly, it is an egoistic antimony raised by a metaphysician, that makes of each individual, at the same time, by a transcendental hypothesis, the supreme end and the most ignored means. In fact, while offering to the individual every possibility against his fellows, it denies them any possibility of being anything but mere means. Then it offers to each of them in relation to the first individual every chance to reduce him to simply being a means. So that, at the same time in which an individual acts with the aim of considering others as means, he is faced with

the action—not associated and therefore not multiplied, it is true, but numerically additional—of all those others who invert the role regarding him. The absolute autonomy of the individual is obliterated by the absolute autonomy of all others. This imperative of absolute egoism is either impossible if the atomistic aggregation of individuals represents even a system of force in equilibrium, or, if applied, would result in the reduction to nothing of any social aggregate no matter how elementary. It is an ethical imperative that even a cannibal would be ashamed to accept.

To Sarafini and Zoccoli it seems a contradiction to consider the individual as the only reality there is, having no other end than himself, and, at the same time, to accept that this same reality can be considered by others as a means to their ends. But, in substance, there is no contradiction. There would be if we referred to the same individual, if I should regard myself as the only existing reality who, as the supreme end, cannot be a means, and, at the same time, accept the demand of other individuals to serve them as means to their ends. Then I must choose if I am the ultimate end or the least of means. But since I regard myself as the end and the others as means, the two opposed values are not attributed to the same subject but to different ones, and so there is no contradiction. Can I not regard myself in one way and others to the contrary?

No, says Serafini, because others are individuals like you. But even if they are individuals like me, I cannot consider them as I do myself.

I know myself to be the only reality because I can sense myself. If I did not exist I could not sense. Therefore, I am. And I recognize not only my reality, but also an external “reality” — the material world, the spirit of other men, etc. But is this other “reality” imagined by me, or does it exist in itself?

According to philosophic idealism matter does not exist, but is no more than a representation of the human spirit.

The universe is created in the mind which projects it outside thereby giving it objectivity, but retaining the power to differentiate and control it.

There is no argument [writes Leibnitz] with which one can demonstrate in any absolute manner that bodies exist and nothing prevents our minds presenting them as well-ordered dreams, which we judge as real and for harmony we accept as equivalent to the truth.

But if the material world is a representation of the spirit in which it alone exists, the spirit of other men can equally, as can their bodies, be a representation of my spirit in which they alone exist, together with the material world. Where is the proof that they continue to exist if I do not think or feel about them? And where is the proof that the universe continues to exist when I neither think of it, nor sense it, given that the only means of knowledge are thought and senses?

In this way, one arrives at solipsism and, in accepting it, I become certain only of my own reality, my own being, and I make myself my end and use as my means the world and other individuals, these being my creation which I can make use of as I will.

If, instead, as philosophic realism claims, the material world and human beings have an objective existence, not as I will, but in themselves, then these individuals look like me but are not the same as me. Each of us is a microcosm with his own way of feeling and thinking that gives him particular needs and aspirations which cannot always be satisfied without conflicting with others. In this case, because I live for myself and not for others, to respect and serve them in the way that I respect and serve myself is not obligatory for me. Since, they are different, therefore, I can very well use them as means to my own ends, even if I feel myself being used as means to an end.

Ergo: from the standpoint of all philosophical conceptions of reality, the contradictions which Zoccoli points out in Stirner's thought do not exist.

Nor does one find the

egoistic antimony raised by a metaphysician, that while offering to the individual every possibility against his fellows, denies them any possibility of being anything but mere means.

Stirner says that, for the individual to realize his proper egoism, he can do all that he wants as long as he has the power. But he does not deny to other individuals the possibility of not being used as means. To these he says that they too can defend themselves and not let themselves be reduced to slavery by an aggressor who intends to make them his tools. He urges the attacked to counter-attack anyone who would make them into means. In time, as individuals developed their power to the maximum, they would control each other reciprocally—only the weak, the cowardly, the lazy (in other words, the ballast)—would disappear. Then there would remain a select humanity, which would form itself into an oscillating equilibrium, which would allow each individual, at least once, to realize himself integrally, to live as he felt and willed. In a social and civic world, however, based on a general mutilation, as Brunetiere called it; in a perfect world of which the utopians dream, in which each man disciplines himself to the maximum and always restrains and suffocates his own instincts and needs so as not to tread on his neighbor's toes—in such a world there cannot be an equilibrium, which implies a differentiation and opposition of elements and forces, but a stupid, softening harmony which would take everyone through life without ever having lived and would send them to the grave having seen nothing.

In the meanwhile, in the present world, imperfect but social and civic, a minority of tyrants and cheats impose themselves, making use of every kind of astuteness, violence, riches and power, and reducing everyone else to obedience and misery, trying to convince the oppressed with the nonsense of religion, metaphysics, ethics and legalism, to resign themselves and not to use any means of liberation. And fiercely condemning

the few who rebel. So there is formed a stable disequilibrium with the result that a few are always on top, happy and ruling, and the rest are always at the bottom, suffering and serving.

If that which Zoccoli called "the imperative of absolute egoism" were applied, it would probably reduce all organized society to nothing, and would be willingly accepted by men restored to natural spontaneity and sincerity – men who find insufferable that social and civic hypocrisy which pretends to organize and govern individuals for their own good, but machine-guns them, or throws them into prison, when they try to escape from the exploitation and oppression imposed by their great-hearted directors and masters.

2

Zoccoli [continues Sarafini] rightly says that the Stirnerian ethic is far removed from any possible application and merely has a sad speculative interest as the sophisticated and delirious manifestation of a fortunately solitary thinker. Only if we returned to the life of the caveman could Stirner's teachings come true. You will have to agree also, Signor Martucci, that this is impossible.

I do not agree at all. I do not regard history as an infinite process. I believe that it must end one day. In spite of what philosophers from Aristotle onwards have said about the social tendency of man, history is nothing but the treatment of the organized and directed history of mankind, which has created conditions contrary to, and causing degeneration from, our natures. Either man will disappear, and with him history, or he will react healthily, destroy history and return to nature, gaining new strength as did Antacus when he touched the earth. Man is capable of evolution and improvement, but only by following his natural inclinations, not by suffocating them and transforming himself into a sheep or, worse still, a robot.

Education does not develop the individual, but depreciates or subdues him.

Education [says Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias*] takes the innate vigor from children and renders them weak. It makes them all alike and trains them for servile obedience. We take the best and strongest children and train them like lion cubs. We stun and fascinate them with our chattering and train them by teaching them that they have to be the same as all the others and that the beautiful and the good consist of this equality. But if there were a man who had sufficient force, he would shake off and break through, and escape from all this; he would trample underfoot all our formulas and spells and charms and all our laws which are against nature, then he who was our slave would reveal himself as the master.

But would civilization disappear? It would be better if it did. It also contributes to keeping man in shackles and it would be a good thing if it vanished. Besides, there does not exist only one civilization that presents a straight and evolutionary conception of history. As Spengler has so well shown, there have existed distinct and separate civilizations, which have all had a birth, a youth, a maturity, a decline, and a death. And all of these civilizations – except, perhaps, the Greek at the time of Pericles and the sophists – have tried to crush the originality and spontaneity of the natural individual, burdening his mind with dogmas and imposing laws on his conduct. One has done it in one way, another in another, and for different reasons, but all have agreed at least in this: the need to bridle the individual. Thus a new type of human being—who would be similar to Stirner's Unique or Nietzsche's Overman—would be unable to adapt himself to a civilization, but would want only to live in the free and luxuriant bosom of nature.

Despite this ethic which, according to Zoccoli, even the cannibal would reject, but which, according to Serafini, the caveman might accept, Stirner, "breaking his rigid individualism", endeavors to have it accepted by a social class: the proletariat. And for Zoccoli, Stirner does this in order

to pay a necessary debt to the Left Hegelian school of thought from which he came, pointing out that as it was possible to use the individualist premise as a preparation for his own egoism, so it was also possible for the same consequences to find a more organic elaboration among the writers and successive movements of revolutionary communism.

It seems to Serafini that this is yet another contradiction in the author of *The Ego and His Own*, but in fact it is not. In 1845 the proletariat was not the organized, guided, well-paid and powerful proletariat of today, but a crowd of down-and-outs, unorganized and dissatisfied, who were chomping at the bit and in whom Stirner tried to arouse their egoism so that they could oppose it to that of their masters, and take from them their wealth. And this not in order to create a new society, but solely to satisfy the needs of the oppressed individual, who can, if necessary, resort to crime to obtain his own ends. Then he will become master of that which is his own—that is to say, that which he has the might to make his own. The State, which exists only to protect the interests of the property owner against those of the expropriated, would be abolished, but there must not be created a communist society in which everyone would belong to the organized collective and the individual would be unable to own anything, not even that which he is able to conquer and keep. “

When the proletariat shall really have founded his purposed ‘society’ [says Stirner] in which the interval between rich and poor is to be removed, then he will be a ragamuffin, for he will feel that it amounts to something to be a ragamuffin, and might lift ‘Ragamuffin’ to be an honorable form of address, just as the [French] Revolution did with the world ‘Citizen’. Ragamuffin is his ideal; we are all to become ragamuffins.

This is the second robbery of the ‘personal’ in

the interest of 'humanity'. Neither command nor property is left to the individual; the State took the former, society the latter.

Stirner, then, tends towards individualist anarchy and this always follows from his premise whether he is urging the individual to realize his value in relation to others, or the proletariat not to respect the property of the rich and to destroy the State, but not to create a communist society. He is against collective property, which is sacred and inviolable, and against individual property conceived as a right with the corresponding duty to respect it on the part of the destitute. He defends the egoistic property of the individual who has conquered and keeps it, and who no longer remains the owner when he allows others to take what he has gained.

Before Nietzsche announced the death of God, Stirner declared the end of the Sacred:

In crime the egoist has hitherto asserted himself and mocked at the sacred: the break with the sacred, or rather of the sacred, may become general. A revolution never returns, but a mighty, reckless, shameless, conscienceless, proud crime—does it not rumble in distant thunders, and do you not see how the sky grows presciently silent and gloomy?

The individual has to destroy in himself the ghosts which dominate him—god, Morality, Humanity, Society, etc.—and which impose duties, renunciations, and chains. He must understand that these ghosts do not represent any Superior Beings or Objective Entities, but are his own thoughts and creations projected outside and above him which he regards with timid reverence. But when he becomes aware of the real origin of these presumed supreme beings, and of the damage they cause—oppressing his spirit and impeding his actions—then he will repudiate them and, since they were his creations, destroy them. He becomes a self-owning individual. This self-owner, who, in Zoccoli's opinion:

acts with the aim of considering others as means, is faced with the actions—not associated and therefore not multiplied, it is true, but numerically additional—of all those others who invert the role obliterated by the absolute autonomy of all others.

This is not true. It would be if all the other self-owners simultaneously acted against me. But since they would not be organized this could not happen. They could only attack me singly or in small groups. Therefore I could defend myself, possibly with success. In more dangerous situations, I could resort to free alliances with others who, at that time, would benefit from supporting me, or in fighting my enemies. In brief, the struggle would not develop out of proportion and if I were overpowered today I could compete again tomorrow. And if I should die I would do so with the satisfaction of having tried to conquer a full and free life for myself. I would not have cowardly resigned myself to the chains of slavery and been content with the little others would allow me to have.

Today, in the civilized society Zoccoli so admires, if I do not want to adapt myself to a maimed and faded existence and rebel against it, I have all of organized mankind (a force far superior to mine and with far more formidable means) against me and, in spite of my heroism, would soon be crushed as were Jules Bonnet, Renzo Novatore, and Severino di Giovanni (Illegalist anarchists who were killed by the State in France, Italy and Argentina).

I agree with Zoccoli about one thing only and that is where he recognized the perennial topicality of Stirnerian philosophy. In fact, after having established an ideological point of contact between Stirner and Hobbes, Zoccoli writes:

While the doctrine of Hobbes is now recognized by scholars as evidence that cannot be ignored, so the doctrine of Stirner, while constructed on an erroneous and transcendental egoistic antinomy,

as has been pointed out, still preserves a current importance and gives birth to many advocates.

3

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 judgments 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 incoercible 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 neighbor 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 suffering 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 sensuality 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 that 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 times preferable to the asphalt jungle.

However, the question between anarchists and archists has been badly stated from the beginning. In fact, we are not concerned with 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 offer 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.

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.

To the anti-Stirnerism of the bourgeoisie, the Marxists and the libertarian socialist (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 neighbors 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 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 your 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 in 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 neighbors. 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 your 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".

E. 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 Marletta in 1967

Historical Note: The Zoccoli referenced repeatedly by Martucci in this article is the Italian scholar Ettore Zoccoli, who wrote a well-known general account of anarchism titled *L'Anarchia*, published in Turin in 1907. Ettore Zoccoli also translated the first Italian edition of *The Ego and His Own*, published as *L'Unico* in Turin in 1902.

Enzo Martucci: Italian Lightbearer

Anarchy is not a religion, a morality, or a social system, but a need of life. It teaches life to the free and is only realized by breaking all theological, ethical, and juridical restraints—including those so-called anarchists would impose.

I live for today and leave others to analyze tomorrow.

Enzo Martucci

Enzo Martucci (Enzo da Villafore) was born in Caserta, Naples on March 20, 1904. During his lifetime he was referred to as one of the last remaining torchbearers of individualist anarchist ideas in Italy, and indeed, he was that—and considerably more besides. Many anarchists have progressed and come to understand individualism via Benjamin Tucker, John Henry Mackay, and E. Armand, eventually culminating in an explosive encounter with Max Stirner, but Martucci got off to an even better start it would seem. At an early age, through reading Plato's "Dialogues", he was impressed and influenced by the Greek sophists (Protagoras, Archilachus, Callicles) and later by Nietzsche, de Sade, Byron, and most importantly, Renzo Novatore. Novatore was a poet, writer, and individualist anarchist and (until he was killed by Carabinieri in 1922) Martucci's closest friend.

Like many rebels Martucci was born into a bourgeois family, but ran away from his repressive home at the age of 16 to plunge himself into anarchist activities, and was soon crossingswords with Malatesta in the columns of *Unamita Nova* in 1920.

Malatesta [he said later] was a good man, a sincere revolutionist, but not an anarchist. He believed in the natural goodness of man and that with a change in social and economic conditions man would co-operate for the benefit of all.

Martucci wrote at the time:

Man (in Nature) is neither 'I' homo homini lupus' nor 'I' homo homini angus' but a mixture of both. The so-called good and the so-called bad are not only determined by social causes, but also by biological and

psychological causes. Malatesta believes in a future harmonious society. I have never done so.

Martucci accepted Stimer's critique with its

rejection of all political and moral ties and its attacks on all general concepts such as 'Right', 'virtue', 'duty', etc. The individual finds himself in the only reality, these other concepts being mere ghosts. He rises above them by mastering himself. All relations entered into by him are freely chosen and exist only for his ego.

Holding such ideas the clash between Martucci and a collectivist thinker like Malatesta was inevitable.

Early on in the course of his anarchist activities Martucci was severely wounded in a fight with fascists in Caserta. In his book *La Pelle* he describes this fateful encounter:

One day I met and was surrounded by a gang of fascist toughs. They tried to force me to say "Down with Anarchy and long live Mussolini!" Instead I cried "Long live Anarchy and down with Mussolini!" I was taken to the hospital with a broken head. In telling this incident to a lawyer acquaintance of mine, he told me how he was approached one day by a fascist thug who threw shit at him. He did not strike back. Instead he walked quickly home to clean himself. The lawyer, to save his skin, knew how to adapt to the world of today. But I don't know how to adapt. As for my skin, I don't give a damn.

After this incident, Martucci was summoned to appear at the Court of Assisi, but he escaped to France and remained there until 1923 when the Italian government proclaimed a political amnesty. He went home, but for him, as he was soon to discover, there would be no release. The Fascist government sentenced him to eight years penal confinement (five of these he spent on the island of Lampedusa), five years in jail and three years suspended release. He returned to Naples in 1942 and started a clandestine group of anti-fascists called The Cavaliers of Liberty. An assault was planned on the offices of

the Federation of Fascist Parties, but because of betrayal it did not materialize and Martucci found himself in prison once more. He was liberated in 1943.

Martucci was certainly fearless, and he paid for it with a terrible history of imprisonment. Reflecting on this later in life Martucci wrote:

The Germans have a saying 'many enemies, much honor'. If the judgment is true, then I am rich in honors. Because for forty six years everyone has been against me: fascists, the Holy Church, socialists, anarchist communists. Persecuted and imprisoned under fascism, the persecution continues under democracy, only more insidious and hypocritical in form.

But Martucci didn't spend his entire life in prison, and it's his contributions to individualist thought—and his unique conception of anarchy—that he'll be most remembered for. The possessor of an active and formidable pen, Martucci's literary and theoretical output was extensive. His major works were *Piu Oltre* (a philosophical essay published in 1947), *La Bandiera Dell'Antichristo* (The Banner of the Antichrist, 1950), *La Setta Rossa* (The Red Sect, a critique of Marxism from 1953), and his last, unpublished book *Il Diavolo Ha Vinto* (The Devil has Won). Martucci also wrote regularly for E. Annand's reviews *L'en dehors* and *L'Unique*: As was the case with Malatesta and Merlino, Martucci polemicized quite a bit over the years with his lifelong friend and collaborator Armand "whom I have always esteemed for his serenity and intelligence".

The issues between Armand and Martucci, however, were many—particularly the disagreement pertaining to "contract", with Armand piously maintaining that one should not break a promise. This sanctimonious view is easy to understand to anyone familiar with Armand's early Christian-puritan-Tolstoyan influences, which he never seemed to completely rid himself of. As Martucci put it:

Armand firmly claimed that the individual could not break his pact and leave an association without the consent of his associates, in which case he would be their slave, the very opposite of what Stirner said.

Martucci and Armand remained friends, but when *L'Unique* ceased publication, Martucci took matters into his own hands and began to publish his own paper, usually printing over 12,000 copies which he freely distributed throughout Italy and the world. Not being a rich man, this was no mean feat, especially considering printing costs and the fact that Martucci wrote almost all of the material himself. Yet he seemed to have fun with it, writing once that:

I publish my paper for the personal satisfaction it gives me. And because I like to express my ideas and lash out at the sheep and the shepherds.

In an effort to evade the Italian printing laws, Martucci had the novel idea of giving each issue of his journal a different name (in thick one and a half inch letters). Here's a sample of some of the more colorful and challenging titles, each pertaining to the subject matter being discussed: *Turbine* (Hurricane), *L'Anto di Satana* (Satan's Cavern), *No Al Gregge* (No To The Herd), *La Sferza* (The Scourge), *Bandiera Nera* (Black Flag) and *Prometeo*—Prometheus, the rebel who defied Zeus, suited Martucci's creative publishing efforts well!

Martucci's writings, never obscure, are brilliantly clear and interesting extensions of Stimer, Nietzsche, and Renzo Novatore; he was a master at marshalling his arguments, his critical aim was true and his thrust clean. But Martucci had a strong and impetuous temperament and was said by those who knew him to be a difficult person to get along with. At times his writings digressed into attacks on people he believed to have wronged him and, like many individuals who have suffered real persecution, he tended to have a paranoid attitude towards life. Endowed with vast learning—a profound and critical thinker—he could not but be against each and every one, and rebel against all the conditions that would dwarf him and hinder the growth of his individuality.

The final years of Enzo Martucci's life were tragic ones. His days were always irregular, restless, and assailed by the material needs of daily existence. Seeking to profit from Martucci's failing health and frequently desperate condition the Spider of the Church of Rome attempted by every means to catch him in its trap. He was invited to Assisi where, in the presence of upper echelon priests, the Church sought to negotiate his

conversion to Christianity in exchange for a comfortable living. There Martucci had a moment of bewilderment and weakness. At the Church's so-called request he wrote a book entitled *Out of the Abyss*. Recovering himself, he didn't publish it. But later a Jesuit who had lent him money took the manuscript as a pledge for the restitution of the loan. Martucci was unable to repay the loan in any other way, and the manuscript was kept by the vile man of god who had truly demonstrated his Christianity. From that time on Martucci, though continuing to struggle, could not free himself and remained in the priest's domain until his death by an undisclosed illness. And so the proud Martucci, the irreducible critic of authority, appallingly finished his life as a victim of Christian charity!

Martucci died on July 17, 1975, at the age of seventy one. News of his death was announced to the anarchist press by Renzo Ferrari, the son of Martucci's close friend and mentor, Renzo Novatore.

Brief Statements

by Renzo Ferrari

Obedience is the mother of command. Like a degenerate she has many children and gives her affection to the worst of them.

Do you claim that all men are equal? Suppose you met someone who agreed to be your equal: how would you distinguish between yourself and him?

It is by being that one lives. It is by being that one gives a meaning to life. That is why the poet and the metaphysician never meet.

Altruism is a false sentiment of piety which tends to perpetuate suffering and humiliation – its symbol is the cross. **Egoism** is an exile from conventions, an expression of sincerity which is life.

Imagine a flower on the nose of a pig, then think of liberty in the mouth of a politician.

One speaks to me of “good” and “evil” – to tell the truth these words are incomprehensible to me. This may be due to my thick head.

We are in the century of collective hallucination the sheep and the shepherds look the same.

Sin is the salt of life – without it everything would be colorless.

To govern is the art of the mediocre. Great hearts and great spirits have always detested authority.

Falsehood, crime and corruption constitute the order legalizing **society** and perpetuated by **morality**. That is why a superior spirit is always a rebel.

(Translated from the French)

Biographical Note: Renzo Ferrari is the son of Renzo Novatore, Italian individualist, illegalist and poet, who was killed by the police in 1922. Ferrari has produced several books of poetry—all of a high lyrical standard—one of which, *Ombre Crepuscolari*, won the Silver Award of the International Academy of Pontzen.

Malfew Seklew: The Jester Philosopher of Egoism

by S. E. Parker

In the days before World War One, when open-air oratory flourished in Britain, one of its most outstanding and flamboyant exemplars was Malfew Seklew. What his real name was no one appears to know, but this was the name which he mostly used, although he sometimes called himself F. M. Wilkesbarre, and I suspect had sundry other pseudonyms as well. In his *Memoirs of a Hyde Park Orator* (1934) Bonar Thompson wrote of him:

He was a unique character. Tall, stout, and handsome, he carried all before him in debate...He had read a great deal and had

been profoundly influenced by writers like Nietzsche and Max Stirner. Their doctrines, however, had been passed through the witty and original mind of a man who had certain odd qualities of his own.

Seklew described himself as “a jocular jawsmith by inclination; an uncommercial traveler by occupation; and a Napoleon of Labor by inspiration...I am an iconoclastic, atheistic, anarchistic, hedonistic individualist, with the social instinct well developed, and with syndicalistic solutions for the problem of poverty.”

During the 1890s and early 1900s, he was very active in freethought circles in the North of England. He soapboxed in many towns, often having to fight for his freedom of speech against the stupidities of local authorities. He contributed articles to *The Truthseeker*, a secularist journal published in Bradford by J. W. Gott, particularly when it was edited by W.F. Barnard, a follower of Benjamin Tucker. For a time he was also assistant editor of Erwin McCall’s *The Eagle and the Serpent* (1898-1902), which pioneered the egoism of Nietzsche, Stirner and James L. Walker in Britain with the blessings, among others, of George Bernard Shaw.

Seklew had an impressive mastery of the alliterative style which he used with devastating effect against his opponents whom he accused of being “passionless puritans on the prowl”, “brainless and bloodless bipeds”, “underdone underdogs from the underworld” and so forth.

Here are a few more of the sayings attributed to him:

“Society is an orgasm, not an organism.”

“Exploitation is the first law of industrial progress.”

“Idleness is the mother of invention and the father of easy times.”

“Altruistic socialism is a brain disease; democracy a delusion and Christianity a cancer on the conscience of humanity.”

“Socialists are slaves screaming for sympathy and

succor."

"Politics are piffle; the ballot a bauble; and the bible bunkum."

"The rich prey, while the poor pray."

"Man is not a religious animal; man is a selfish animal and all religions have their rewards."

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

"The proletariat's purgatory is the parasite's paradise"

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

He was the author of a series of pamphlets called *Halo's Hoodoo'd, or Demi-Gods, Demi-Damned*, which were devoted to a vituperative criticism of various labor leaders whom he regarded as "mis(s) messiahs of the masses". Another enterprise was the launching of a Society of Conscious Egoists and Social Aristocrats.

Towards the end of World War One he turned up in Chicago where he spoke at Jack Jones' famous Dill Pickle Club. Here, according to Edna Fine Dexter, he called himself "Sirfessor (meaning over and above professor)" Seklew. He had

worked out some strange theories, partly Nietzschean, and carried a large chart on which was illustrated the progress of a human being. He, meaning you and I, began by being a simpoleon, then a hopeoleon, a demoleon, and finally a superman. He never reached the heights of Sirfessordom, though. He then entered the kingdom marked on the chart as Leisure, Pleasure, and Treasure.

When *The Eagle and Serpent* was revived in Chicago in 1927 he contributed two items which showed him still in shape. One, under the name of Malfew Seklew, indicated that his sympathies for "labor" had now evaporated. The other, under the name of F.M. Wilkesbarre, proclaimed that:

“A race of conscious egoists would produce the highest possible type of civilization. For conscious egoists—having found themselves out from within—would know how to do the right thing at the right time in the right way. Thus they would do today that very thing which would bring more profit and power tomorrow. They would be able to understand their own motives, their actions, their prejudices, passions, and desires; they would be able to audit their own agonies, analyze anger, macerate malice, minimize misery, pulverize their own prejudices, and paralyze their own parologies. Being vivisectors of vices, virtues, vanities, vibrations, and the eternal verities—selfishness, vanity, hate and love—they would understand themselves and human nature so well that, out of sheer enlightened selfishness, they would compel themselves to that which would conduce to the greatest possible good to themselves and others of their kind.”

Just what happened to Seklew after this is unclear. I have been told that he finished his days on skid-row. I have also been told that he was still alive in Wales in the 1940s. Whatever his end, however, this “jester-philosopher” of egoism, who claimed that he was “a man without a soul”, had made his own, uproarious contribution to the history of individualism.

from *Minus One : An
Individualist Anarchist
Review #34*

Brand: An Italian Anarchist and His Dream

by Peter Lamborn Wilson

All or nothing. That
is my demand. The task
is very great. And the risk,
also, is very great
—Ibsen, *Brand*¹

1

The “Frank Brand” I knew was an *illegal*. That is, he lived in the USA as an illegal immigrant. He was also an illegalist—that is, a law-breaker by conviction and principle. He used pseudonyms (Frank Branch, Harry Arrigoni, Harry Goni) and false papers to hide his past as a militant revolutionary anarchist in Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany, Russia, Hungary, Cuba, Argentina, Mexico, and Spain. At the same time, however, he was completely open about his beliefs and even about his identity—he even wrote his books under his own real name, Enrico Arrigoni, although his friends often addressed him by his *nom de guerre*.²

When I met him in 1984 he was ninety years old, and still an active member of the Libertarian Book Club in New York. The Libertarian Book Club had just celebrated his birthday at the ILGWU Cooperative Houses on 8th Avenue in Manhattan. Frank had an apartment in the complex, as did his old friend the Sicilian anarchist Valerio Isca.³ The Libertarian Book Club

1 Henrik Ibsen, *Brand*, a new version for the stage, translated by Geoffrey Hill (Hammondsworth: Penguin 1996). The speaker is Brand himself. (p. 53)

2 He was named after the hero of Ibsen’s play by “a girlfriend in the Black Forest in 1918” (Avrich 1995).

3 Avrich (1995, 502) notes that Valerio Isca published a work called *Ida Pilat Isca: Translator, Writer, Activist, Friend* (St. Paul: Michael Coughlin, 1984).

held its monthly Anarchist Forums at the Workmens' Circle, a dreary space with the atmosphere of all church basements and leftist meeting halls. Frank and Valerio attended regularly, just as they had since they helped found the Libertarian Book Club in 1945. (Other old or founding members who made more occasional appearances included Sam and Esther Dolgoff, Sid and Clara Soloman, Jack Frager, Abe Bluestein.) From a certain point of view anarchism can be viewed as a kind of godless religion and Frank Brand was one of those long lifetime true believers once characterized as the old "saints" of the Libertarian Book Club⁴ It was a privilege to know them all, but I particularly liked Frank and Valerio.

At that time my comrade Mark Sullivan and I were active in the Libertarian Book Club but also involved with Mark's zine, *The Storm!*, and its supporting organization The John Henry Mackay Society. These activities were devoted to Individualist anarchism in the tradition of "Saint Max" Stirner, his "re-discoverer" the Scots-German poet Mackay, and Mackay's friend the American publisher Benjamin Tucker. Mark and I were especially interested in Brand because he was a Stirnerite anarchist—in fact the last of the old Italian left-wing Stirnerites.⁵ In the summer of 1986 we organized an anarchist picnic in Central Park at the Belvedere Castle, with champagne

4 by Paul Berman, in *The Village Voice*

5 "I am probably the only individualist left among the Italian anarchists today." (Avrich 1995, 175). In 1963 Brand worked on the publication of the Libertarian Book Club's edition of Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* (with an introduction by James J. Martin) in the translation by Steven T. Byington originally published by Tucker in 1907. This edition was later reprinted by Dover (NY 1973). The cover design was by Fermin Rocker, the son of Rudolf Rocker. Unlike Brand's other publishing ventures it was well done, and succeeded in drawing attention to Stirner's historical influence on the extreme left. (Stirner has often been viewed as a "precursor" of the radical right, a correct but incomplete view of his historical role.) The Libertarian Book Club has always included anarchists of all schools, from individualists to anarchist communists, anarchist socialists (the school of Gustav Landauer, represented in the Libertarian Book Club by Jack Frager, who died in Feb. 1998 as this article was being written), anarcho-syndicalists, anarcho-without-adjectives, left libertarians, spiritual anarchists, "type-3" anarchists, punks, etc.

and black balloons. Brand was the guest of honor, and older by at least fifty years than anyone else present. As a lifelong teetotaler (also a non-smoker and vegetarian) Brand skipped the champagne but sat happily on a sunny park bench in his old black suit, with young anarchists literally at his feet.

Later that year, on December 7th, Brand died, aged 92.

His body was found on the floor near the bed [in his apartment] by his old comrades Valerio Isca and Pasquale Buono... He left his books and collection of opera records to the Libertarian Book Club. His body was cremated on December 11, 1986 (Avrich, 1995).

Naturally the Libertarian Book Club held a memorial. Brand's last companion, Hanna, made a mysterious appearance and then vanished again. Brand had always been very close-mouthed about his lovers—and his two daughters; I have failed to trace their present whereabouts. But I intend to respect Brand's desire for privacy, and to write about him not as his biographer but as an admirer. I have no desire to blow his cover. What he chose to share is fascinating enough.

2

The absolute I? A fantasy. Stirner doesn't claim an absolute I, because that would be another spook, a creature born from the thought of an individual, pretending afterwards to be a body above him, something 'sacred,' a divinity. There exists only the transitory I of me, of you—not two, not various. But if they are not absolute, they are unique.

Brand, "The Afflictions
of the Critics of the Ego"⁶

6 In *Minus One* (no. 36, 1975, pp. 12-14). *Minus One* was edited by S. E. 276

According to Brand himself—who was born in a village near Milan (February 20, 1894)—workers in the north of Italy in the early 20th Century were more influenced by anarchist individualism than those of the south, who tended more toward anarchist communism. Brand was born into the Individualist movement at its most vibrant moment. “The printer of the main anarchist journal was an individualist, and the first Italian translation of Stirner’s *The Ego and His Own* was published in Milan.”⁷ In France the individualist tendency in anarchism attracted intellectuals like the journalist E. Armand⁸ (whom Brand later met and admired) and the young writer Victor Serge, as well as the advocates of *attentat* and propaganda of the deed, such as those notorious Nietzschean bank robbers, the Bonnot Gang. In Italy the individualists were no less numerous nor less colorful. When G. D’Annunzio, the Nietzschean poet, black magician and aviator, founded his Republic of Fiume after World War I, a number of sailors from the anarchist Mariners’ Union of Milan joined him and formed a navy dedicated quite literally to piracy—with spectacular success. It must be said that even Mussolini went through a brief period of Individualist anarchism, before drifting on to socialism and eventually to fascism. This same route was followed by other Italian anarchists, such as some of the D’Annunzians, as well as Marinetti and the Futurists. Brand himself, however, remained both an individualist and a resolute anti-fascist.

Probably the most interesting of all the Italian Stirnerites was Renzo Novatore (1890-1922), a near contemporary of Brand’s (they both evaded the draft during World War I). Novatore edited some fugitive anarchist journals and left behind some pamphlets (including one called *Verso il Nulla*

Parker in London and devoted to Individualism and Stirner studies.

7 Avrich (1995) 170-171. Avrich notes that although Brand was probably referring to an edition published in Milan in 1911, when the young Enrico Arrigoni was just beginning to read anarchist literature, an even earlier edition appeared in Turin in 1902 (ibid., 504 n. 315).

8 Real name Ernst-Lucien Juin (1872-1962), editor of *L’Endehors*, and best known of the French individualists.

Creatore, "Toward the Creative Nothing"). Novatore began as an anarcho-communist, but soon fell under the influence of Stirner, Nietzsche, and Baudelaire. He believed that the truly realized individual would conflict with any organized society, even an anarchist utopia; he was a complete immoralist, in fact a practicing bandit. The anarcho-communist scholar Camillo Berneri attacked Novatore and his disciple Enzo Martucci as "paranoid megalomaniacs, exalters of a mad philosophy and a decadent literature, feeble imitators of the artists of opium and hashish, sirens at so much an hour."⁹ Novatore's philosophy is expressed in such passages as these:

I want all that I have the power to conquer. Every society seeks to confine me to the august limits of the permitted and the prohibited. But I do not acknowledge these limits, for nothing is forbidden and all is permitted to those who have the force and valor. Consequently, anarchy ... is the eternal struggle of a small minority of aristocratic outsiders against all the societies that follow one another on the stage of history.¹⁰

"There exists only Beauty and Force, but to hold themselves in equilibrium the brutal and the weak invented 'justice.'" (Rafaele Valente).

The hour for the end has come. We must break out of the deadly circle and escape... It is not our fault if the symbolic wounds of Christ have given birth to the social infection that proclaimed the rights of man. If men want to stagnate in systematized dens of social putrefaction, then they must put up with them. We others love the sun, and we want to give ourselves freely to the violent ardour of its kiss...

⁹ See E. Martucci, "Renzo Novatore," in *Minus One* (no. 21, February 1968) p. 8. (Berneri's remarks appeared in the October 1920 issue of *L'Iconoclaste*.)

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 7.

O apostolic apes of humanity and social progress, do you not hear that which sounds above your spooks?

Listen, o listen! It is my laughter which rises and echoes furiously in the heights!¹¹

The over-heated rhetoric seems typical of the time and place—but Novatore was no mere philosopher. He died as violently as he lived, gunned down by Carabinieri in 1922.

Brand was not such an extremist as Novatore. For one thing, he believed in the possibility of an anarchist society, and eventually came to consider that education would further this goal more effectively than revolution. But he shared Novatore's view that the anarchist life could and must be lived *now*, not postponed to some ideal future. As much as oppression is suffered, the individual can still attain realization in the struggle against it, as also in work, pleasure and creativity. Since any outbreak of the Social Revolution may help to further the ultimate goal of anarchy (as well as the individual goal of self-realization in struggle) the individualist joins freely in all such insurrections, no matter what ideology of the social inspires them. Thus Brand took part in the Spartakist uprising in Berlin even though he did not agree with its Marxist tenets. Like Novatore, however, he came to despise the authoritarianism of the left as much as (or even more than) that of the right. And—also like Novatore—he was completely comfortable with the idea that nothing at all could be achieved, either for the individual or the group, without breaking laws. Unlike Novatore, however, he put great emphasis on Stirner's concept of the "Union of Egoists," on the possibility of shared goals and the validity (at least on a temporary basis) of organized groups. (There exists some disagreement among Brand's friends as to his position on labor unions. Mark Sullivan recalls that Brand

11 Renzo Novatore, "In the Kingdom of the Spooks," *Minus One* (no. 11, Nov./Dec. 1965), translated by J. R. and S.E.P. from the French version by E. Armand in *L'Unique*, Nov.-Dec. 1954. See also *The Storm!* (no. 7, 1978) for more Novatore quotes.

accepted the usefulness of unions, and calls him a “Stirnerite syndicalist.” Steve Rabinowitz, however, believes that Brand was highly critical of unions and recalls several debates on the subject between him and Valerio Isca.)

Above all I think Brand lacked the “doomed” quality of his namesake, Ibsen’s hero, or of Renzo Novatore. Despite his courage in the face of death, which he proved on several occasions, Brand was ultimately *for life*—and for love. But he came out of the same displaced-peasant background as Novatore, the same self-educated enthusiasm for romantic individualism, the same world of strikes, street violence, and fugitive anarchist journals—the world of the left-wing Italian Stirnerites. This milieu is now almost forgotten, even by most anarchist historians. Paying homage to Brand is—among other things—a way of rescuing it from oblivion.

3

*...that man who had the courage to kill a king...
well, that Gaetano Bresci, who had even come from
America, that fantastic country beyond the ocean,
seemed, in my child's imagination not a monster,
but a great hero!*

— E. Arrigoni, *Freedom: My Dream*¹²

Brand was good at languages. As a true internationalist he made a point of immersing himself in the language of whatever revolution he happened to be participating in (usually “in bed” as the French say), and thus managed to learn German, French, Spanish and Russian besides Italian and English. As far as I know he wrote only in Italian and English and a bit of Spanish. In his later years he published a number of his own works at his own expense and under his own direction. Without exception

¹² No date, no place of publication [New York]: Libertarian Book Club. The Library of Congress gives the date as “(?) 1980/1989.” Avrich gives the date as 1986, the year of Brand’s death (Avrich 1995); I believe this is correct. Breschi, an Italian emigrant who returned from America to Italy in 1900 to assassinate King Umberto, had been a member of the Anarchist Circle in Patterson, New Jersey, including Gori, Galeani and Malatesta. See Avrich (1988).

or exaggeration these are all extremely poorly produced, consisting of photo-offset typescripts, badly bound in thin wrappers of uncertain colors, and altogether quite unattractive. He donated these to the Libertarian Book Club, which still holds numerous cardboard cartons full of them. Below, you will find brief descriptions of these books—although it must be admitted that very few anarchists have ever bothered to read them (even Libertarian Book Club members), and that most of them are in fact as unrewarding to read as they are to look at.

There is one glaring exception to this rule, however: *Freedom: My Dream*, an autobiography by Enrico Arrigoni, looks even worse than the others (especially the bilious green cover), but it happens to be a minor masterpiece of anarchist literature. Common wisdom holds that everyone has one good book in them, but that most people never write it. Brand wrote it, but Brand also had an amazing and adventurous life to write about. His run-on style of composition exactly captures his spoken voice, warm, humorous and sharp, using a language that can only be called Italian-American, cadenced like Italian, full of grammatical, lexical and stylistic errors and malapropisms, but strong, slangy, breezy and poetic.¹³ The book deserves to be ranked with some of Victor Serge's memoirs, or with the work of B. Traven (who also wrote a kind of immigrant English). They were better writers, but I'm not certain they produced any one book more readable than *Freedom: My Dream*. This is the only one of Brand's books no longer in print, since the few members of the Libertarian Book Club who love it used to force it on browsers at anarchist book tables, insisting that they initiate themselves into this unknown underground classic. *Freedom* is the first-person narrative of someone who could have been a B. Traven hero, written in a kind of stream-of-consciousness style (it opens with the heading "Introduction," and then goes on without a break for 267 pages), "naïve" in texture but brilliantly subjective and self-aware, funny, tragic and profound. It is not about the anarchist as existentialist hero, it is by the anarchist

¹³ Maria Gil, who typed the manuscript for publication, edited out the worst flaws in Brand's English, but kept the verve and sparkle. [Personal communication]

as existentialist hero. It deserves a new edition that preserves his colorful language but cleans up the typos, completely re-set in readable type, with a biographical preface and notes, a few pictures, and an attractive cover. It is a book that ought to live.

Brand considered himself “born” anarchist rather than made. His first job—aged six—as an acolyte for the village priest of Pozzuolo Martesana launched a lifetime of resistance to authority and disrespect for religion (the latter culminating in his atheist animal-fable, *That Character Called God*). At nine he was sent to Milan by his impoverished father (a peasant who took up tailoring when crippled by a childhood accident). Young Enricomethis firstanarchistsandatfourteenwasarrested for the first time, for selling anarchist newspapers. Milan was seething with radical agitation; Errico Malatesta¹⁴ addressed huge crowds of strikers; there were riots and demonstrations and street-fights. Mussolini had by now betrayed the socialist cause and launched the Fascist movement with his Milan newspaper *Popolo d’Italia*. By 1914 he was preaching war, and all the leftist factions were supporting non-intervention and social revolution. Brand was in the thick of anti-fascist struggles and pranks—often carried out in an atmosphere of sinister comic opera generated by Mussolini’s bombast and cowardice.

Despite enormous and violent anti-war demonstrations in Milan’s Duomo square (where Brand was wounded in action), Italy began drafting soldiers and he was swept up into the army. He decided to desert and flee to neutral Switzerland. For the next four years he worked there and in Germany, often without proper documentation, often on the run, in and out of jails, and involved in harebrained schemes for a General Strike against the War.

The end of the War in 1918 found him in Germany (he learned German from a girlfriend) and drawn to the Spartakist

14 (1853-1932) Italy’s leading anarchist agitator. After the anti-war “Red Week” riots in Milan in 1913 he fled to England. After the War he returned to Italy, where he edited *Umanita Nova*. Mussolini kept him under house arrest till his death in July 1932, when his corpse was “thrown into a common grave.” (See E. Malatesta, *Anarchy*, with a Biographical Note, London; Freedom Press [n.d.].

struggle in Berlin. He admired Rosa Luxemburg (1870-1919) and Karl Liebknecht (1871-1919) but disagreed with their authoritarian tendencies as well as their strategic mishandling of the Berlin uprising. Nevertheless he played an active role in the actual events of early 1919 (for a moment he even served as Liebknecht's bodyguard) and after the total failure of the insurrection he managed a hair's-breadth escape to Russia.

Nowhere in *Freedom: My Dream* does Brand mention the other major revolt in post-War Germany, which culminated in the Munich Soviet. Although it also ended in bloody failure it might well have attracted Brand in its brief spasm of glory, since its government was strongly influenced by the anarchism of poet Gustav Landauer (Minister of Education), playwright Ernst Toller (Red Army commander), poet Erich Mühsam and journalist Ret Marut (the latter were both individualists). Ret Marut published a fiery magazine called *The Brickburner* which Brand the bricklayer would have enjoyed. After the fall of the Soviet, Marut escaped to Mexico where he became B. Traven.¹⁵ But somehow Brand missed all this, and now found himself on the way to Moscow.

Like Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, who had also ended up in Russia, Brand soon came to realize that the Communists had betrayed the other radical groups involved in the Soviets, and that the anarchists in particular had been declared enemies of the Revolution. As Russia slumped into Civil War and famine, Brand and his Italian comrade Mario Montevanni decided to escape. It took months of danger and weary wandering through zones of chaos, but eventually with the help of Angelica Balabanoff¹⁶ they succeeded. Apparently

¹⁵ See my article in *Drunken Boat*: no. 2.

¹⁶ Born in Ukraine 1877, lived in Italy and edited *Avanti* with Mussolini during his socialist period. Represented the Italian Socialist Party at the Second International. Broke with Mussolini, went to Russia in 1917 and joined the Bolsheviks, helped found Comintern. Expelled from Soviet Union in 1922, lived in USA till 1935 and returned to her beloved Italy in 1946. Active in Socialist International. Died in Rome November, 1965. See *My Life as a Rebel*, 1938; also *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern*, ed. B. Lazitch with M. M. Drachovitch, Stanford: Hoover Inst. Press, Stanford University, 1986. Balabanova also published a few

she loved Italy and took a shine to Brand—she was attractive and romantic, and Brand may well have admired her. She appointed him a sort of plenipotentiary or secret messenger to the precursors of the Italian Communist Party, and arranged documentation for him. On the way home he stumbled into the middle of the Hungarian soviet revolution and met its leader, Bela Kun.¹⁷

Sought by police in Italy as a deserter, Brand now escaped back to Berlin, where he met Rudolf Rocker¹⁸ and to Paris, where he met E. Armand; and finally to Spain, where he managed to get himself deeply involved in anarchist circles and met a woman named Maria Rascon, who would become the great love of his life. Always on the lam, he next shipped out for Argentina, where he met Diego Abad de Santillán¹⁹; then to Mexico, where he wetbacked himself to Texas—and straight to jail. Deported back to Italy, to face a certain prison term, he jumped ship in Sicily and made his way to Rome, where Malatesta helped him continue on his clandestine way to France, where he found Maria Rascon again.

Together they managed to get into more hot water in Paris and fled to Cuba (where he first used the name “Brand” when writing for a local anarchist journal), then to New Orleans, and finally (in 1924) to New York. Here he lived happily for a while with Maria, working, and raising enough money to found his journal *Eresia* in 1928. Revolutionary agitation involved another visit to Cuba, and then New York—where Maria died

poems (translated?) in English as *Tears* (Chicago: Jay Bass, n.d., Tamamint Archive collection.)

17 1886-1939. Head of Hungarian Communist Party. Soviet Republic proclaimed Mar 21, 1919, lasted 133 days. Kun later held high positions in the Comintern and survived under Stalin till 1937. Shot or tortured to death November 30, 1939, “rehabilitated” by Pravda in 1956. (See Lazitch, op. cit.)

18 Rocker, 1873-1958, famous for organizing amongst the poor Jews of London’s East End.

19 Born in Spain in 1897, active in Argentine anarcho-syndicalism in the 1920s, accused of complicity in bank robberies, in Spain during Civil War, returned to Argentina in 1939. I cannot find a death date for him. (See *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War* ed. J. Cortada, Westport, CT; Greenwood Press, 1982.)

of pneumonia in 1930—“the most tragic part of my life.”

With this the first part of *Freedom: My Dream* comes to a halt, after a 267-page rollercoaster ride of constant agitation, excitement, illegal actions, close scrapes, escapes, prisons, wars, love affairs and tall tales, all recounted with gusto and even a touch of bravado. Clearly Brand enjoyed every minute of it—at least in retrospect!—until Maria’s death (really caused by poverty) brought him up short and ended his youth abruptly.

Six years later, however, he was ready for a new adventure. At last the real anarchist revolution had begun, in Maria’s own beloved city of Barcelona. Brand had to go; he appointed himself war correspondent for an obscure Italian journal, *Cultura Proletaria*. The pieces he wrote in Spain he subsequently translated into English and included in *Freedom: My Dream* where they constitute a sort of Part Two of 167 pages. Although produced under difficult conditions (censorship, Communist suppression, constant visits to the most active war fronts, and eventually arrest and imprisonment) these texts constitute a valuable footnote to our knowledge of anarchism in the Spanish Civil War. Brand was present for the May Days in Barcelona in 1937. He was aware that the Communists were sabotaging the social revolution (and the war) and lost no chance to attack them for it; too bad no one paid any attention to him except the police. *Freedom: My Dream* nears its end with Brand in prison in Barcelona along with hundreds of other anarchists. And like many of those others, he might well have died there.

The full story of Brand’s last great escape, from prison in Spain, was one of the mysteries of his life. We all knew that his miraculous release had somehow been engineered by Emma Goldman, who was also in Spain at that time, but the details of the story were never revealed. In his interview with Avrich, Brand mentions the incident: “I was imprisoned in Barcelona, and it was Emma Goldman who got me out. But this is another story, which I’ll save for another occasion.” Even in his autobiography he gives an abbreviated account (p 436), which raises more questions than it answers. I don’t believe he deliberately suppressed the tale; he simply never got around to writing down the complete version. Luckily,

however, he taped it. (For the story of this “posthumous tape” see section 7.) Speaking from beyond the grave, Brand finally finished this long-postponed anecdote. In his own words:

Two Polish comrades, two girls – one was my girlfriend – both anarchists – they wanted to come to Spain. When they reached Paris, not knowing how to proceed, they contacted me in Barcelona, so I crossed the border, by foot, over the mountains, and went to Paris to pick them up. But meanwhile one of the comrades had tripped and fallen and twisted her leg. So she could not walk – not over the mountains! So I took them to Marseilles, and looked for a boat bound for Spain. In Marseilles they stayed in the hotel and I went alone to the port; I didn’t want the three of us to be seen together because I knew the police was watching every boat, even the Communists and the Fascists were watching! That afternoon I found a boat that was due to sail at midnight for Barcelona. I spoke with the Captain, I told him I am a correspondent there in Spain. And here are two girls who came from the United States to see the Revolution. Can I bring them aboard? It was not a passenger ship, it was a transport, you see, they carried some arms in the black market. So I brought them along and they came to Barcelona.

(Oral History, I)

Brand had an apartment in Barcelona (“expropriated” by the Anarchists), which he rarely used, since he was so often away at the front covering the war. The young women took up residence there. But Brand happened to be there one night when the city was bombarded, and in the morning when he ventured out to buy a newspaper, he was arrested. “They

jumped at me, four of them, sons of bitches, they brought me to jail. They would've killed me!" Decades later Brand was still incoherent with rage.

The Castello Modelo Prison was already crowded with prisoners, "half of them anarchists." Brand and some four hundred other anarchist prisoners were therefore held in an abandoned shop until cells would be found. Brand was able to call out the window to passersby — "Are you CNT? Are you FAI?" — until he found someone willing to take a note to the two girls. Believing that they could somehow secure his release, the girls made the big mistake of showing the police Brand's passport. The authorities therefore learned that he was an American journalist; even worse, the Americans learned that he was in jail. And there he stayed — for two months.

*Not knowing what to do, the two girls now visited the International section at CNT-FAI headquarters ("a big building expropriated from the biggest bankers in Barcelona") where they met and spoke with Augustin Souchy and the American anarchist Abe Bluestein.²⁰ They of course knew Emma Goldman — and they also knew that she had recently received a strange dinner invitation. The American Consul, moved by curiosity (or an impulse to spy) had asked her to attend a soirée at the Consulate. Augustin and Abe urged her to intercede for Brand over the roast beef and mashed potatoes. A few days later the Consul's secretary (or vice-consul) showed up unannounced at the prison to interview the incarcerated "American journalist." In *Freedom: My Dream* he describes this "surprise visit":*

A representative of our government came to see me at the Modelo, and informed me that at

²⁰ Souchy died in Munich in 1984. See the Afterword by Sam Dolgoff in Souchy's *Beware! Anarchist! A Life for Freedom* trans. Theodore Waldinger, Chicago: Chas. H. Kerr, 1992. Abe Bluestein, an idealistic young anarchist from New York translated *With the Peasants of Aragon* by Augustin Souchy Bauer (with a cover by Selma Bluestein), Sanday-over-the-water (Orkney, UK) and Minneapolis (MN); Cienfuegos Press/Soil of Liberty, 1982. Abe remained a loyal member of the Libertarian Book Club in New York till his death on December 3, 1997, at the age of 88 — another old comrade of Brand's who died while I was writing this essay. (See *New York Times* obituary, December 12, 1997.)

the consulate they were working to get me out of jail, in spite of the fact that I was not allowed to come to Spain. And why was I there? To do what? I had to improvise an innocent excuse, like many other Americans must have done, that I came to Spain because I loved agrarian communes, which is a fact, and when I came to Paris someone in a café told me that in Spain they had created many communes, which seemed to be functioning very well. And if I wanted to see them it would be very cheap for me to live there, as in the black market in Paris I could get so many pesetas for a dollar to live well for two or three days. And so I came, and after a few days I was arrested here in Barcelona accidentally. After I wrote this down at the request of the consul, he told me, laughing: "I don't believe a word of what you write here, but I will mail it just the same to Washington."

Whatever the American authorities believed or disbelieved, a few days later Brand was released from a prison famous for torture and murder and shipped off to Marseilles without his passport. Thus began a new series of troubles for Brand—but at least he was still alive to suffer them. At the time he had no notion that Emma Goldman had played a role in his release. He only learned the story much later, after his return to America.

4

"The governments are all repulsive!"
from "A Saint, Perhaps Yes, Perhaps No"
in *The Lunacy of the Superman and other plays*
by E. Arrigoni

Other Works by Arrigoni

Readers who enjoy *Freedom: My Dream* may wish to seek

out other works by Enrico Arrigoni, hoping for more of the same... but I fear they may be disappointed. Brand was a man of multiple identities or masks, and moreover so reticent and secretive that even in his autobiography he left out the whole second half of his life in America. *Freedom* was apparently his last work, although it may have been written earlier and held from publication till he felt near death. In any case it is the only book in which Brand begins to reveal himself, and the tension between mask and self gives the book its urgent authentic style. All his other work is fiction. In it he often constructs characters who represent his ideas and experiences, and these characters can be considered as so many authorial masks. But unfortunately Brand was no Ibsen (although he was obviously influenced by Ibsen, especially in his playwriting). Unlike other anarchist individualist authors like B. Traven or John Henry Mackay, Arrigoni was simply not good enough to turn propaganda into art. Only when he dropped the masks and spoke as himself did he find his real "voice" as a writer and produce a real book. *Freedom* is "artless" compared to the other works—that is, it lacks artifice or artificiality. Only here does Arrigoni escape the unfortunate influences of operatic melodrama and socialist realism that shaped his fiction and plays—and even his non-fiction journalism.

Apparently Brand's first book in English was *That Character Called God*, which must have appeared around 1975. Paul Avrich (1995) does not list it with Brand's other works, and the volume itself is undated. This work also appeared in Italian as *Zuluito*, published by Edizioni Gruppo Anarchico L'Iconoclasta, apparently in Ragusa, with a preface by Carmelo R. Viola. It was favorably reviewed in November 1975 by Stephen Marletta in *Minus One* (no. 35, 1975) as "Zuluito: The Mini-Missionary" by Enrico Arrigoni. The hero Zuluito is an African *enfant sauvage* brought up like Mowgli or Tarzan by the jungle beasts. Still a child, he is discovered by Belgian missionary nuns and converted to Christianity. He returns to the jungle with a Bible to save the souls of his animal comrades by translating it for them. They try hard to understand it but fail, and the story ends badly. Between the beasts' natural

goodness and simplicity and the boy's ridiculous attempts to explain the Bible's numerous contradictions and absurdities, the dialogue constitutes a satire of Christian hypocrisy, moralism, superstition, etc.

Brand's collection of short stories *The Totalitarian Nightmare* was also published without a date, but Avrigh (who wrote a forward for it) dates it 1975. An afterword notes that the first printing consisted of 150 copies, and I have no evidence of a second printing. In the Forward Avrigh writes,

Emerging from this volume is a cry of rebellion and protest ... (For) more than sixty years [the author] has been a staunch opponent of despotism, hypocrisy, and obscurantism wherever they have reared their heads. His principal target, however, remains the Soviet Union...

Indeed all nine stories are set in Russia, and no doubt reflect to some degree Brand's actual experiences there (as recounted in *Freedom*), although the works depend more on broad satire and fantasy than on realism. (Orwell's *1984* is mentioned in the book's dedication and its influence is palpable.) The humor is rather spoiled by the author's anger, which leads to heavy sarcasm rather than wit—although the sketch of the Peace Movement in post-war London (pacifists duped by cynical Communists and taken on a Potemkin-village tour of the USSR) has a few amusing pages. Most of the themes touched on in these pieces will appear again later in the novel *Adventures in the Country of the Monoliths*.

The Lunacy of the Superman and Other Plays is actually dated (1977). It includes ten long plays, separately paginated but amounting in all to 600 pages printed on thin yellow stock. Like all Brand's works it appears without copyright and dramatic groups are invited to make free use of the scripts. I wonder if any of these odd works were ever produced on a stage. The title play is a thinly-disguised dramatization of Mussolini's early days as a newspaper editor, his betrayal of the Socialists, and his rise to power. The Mussolini character

(Tibone) appears as a Nietzschean übermensch in the negative sense, a monster who mistakes greed for individualism, cruelty for courage, and self-aggrandizement for will-to-power. Brand's individualism by contrast (oddly represented here by Tibone's old mother, whom he eventually murders) implies a recognition of the other and hence an ethics based on solidarity. The anti-fascist theme appears also in "The Great Patriot," in which a *buffo* servant is elevated to the position of dictator by a Machiavellian schemer; and again in "Accursed Souls," a one-act expressionistic piece in which a dictator called Musso is confronted by his conscience (he murders it), and once again betrays the "Male Workers" and "Female Workers" into the clutches of a vile character known only as "The Capitalist." "The Redemptor Who Failed" depicts Jesus Christ according to anarchist atheist principles as a well-meaning reformer (and actually something of an anarchist Himself) betrayed into the hands of power by gullible miracle-mongering disciples. "The Joys of the Imbeciles, or Amusement of the Troglodytes" is an anti-war comedy which ends with the whole cast annihilated by an atomic bomb! "A Saint, Perhaps Yes, Perhaps No" (subtitled "Boccacciesque Scenes in Two Acts") is a bad play but has an interesting hero, a heretical Catholic priest who advises old maids to sin joyfully and helps them attain this goal. He enjoys wine and food and protests against the tyrannies of State, Religion, Marriage, etc. In this pastiche of Boccaccio the Priest expresses some curious ideas about religion: he loves God because God "does not order him with the whip in hand." Heaven may be an illusion, but a harmless one compared with the imbecility of Communism (which has apparently seized power in Renaissance Italy!), and so on. It seems Brand harbored a soft spot for certain aspects of the Church. "The Eagle and the Swan," written in collaboration with Virgilio Gozzoli, is a vast Hollywood filmscript based on the life of Michaelangelo and Rafael and starring every famous name in the Renaissance (the Popes are always addressed by number as well as name.)

Adventures in the Country of the Monoliths, or The Country Where Liberty Has Been Buried was published by the Libertarian

Book Club in 1981. This was Brand's only novel, and concerns the escapades of an Italian-American anarchist who smuggles himself into the USSR to discover the truth. In order to leave himself free to invent scenes, however, Brand fictionalized Russia as the "Country of the Monoliths" rather than naming it openly, and this masking device only serves to blur the distinction between satire and fantasy. Individual scenes and sketches attain flashes of humor or depth but the book as a whole remains out of focus.

5

Brand's Journalism

Most of Arrigoni's journalism was written in Italian. As already noted, the texts he wrote for *Cultura Proletaria* during the Spanish Civil War were later translated into English and included in *Freedom: My Dream*. In his interview with Avrich, Brand relates:

In New York in 1924 I had gotten a job as a lathe operator in a small factory in Harlem, then became a house painter, and then finally a bricklayer. I immediately became active in the anarchist movement, in the Spanish and Road to Freedom Groups on Twenty-Third Street and in an Italian group in Brooklyn, the Circolo Volontà. I wrote occasionally for *L'Adunata*²¹ and also for *Cultura Opera*, edited after Esteve's death by Roberto Muller from Argentina, who later contributed to my journal *Eresia*. Perhaps, in addition, I wrote some short pieces in English for *The Road to Freedom*.²²

21 *L'Adunata dei refrattari* (or "The Refractaries' Adunation" as it was somewhat mysteriously translated) appeared in New York from 1922 to 1953.

22 *The Road to Freedom* was the voice of the Stelton (NJ) anarchist group and was published there from 1924-1932. It was founded by the aesthetic-anarchist (and ex-lover of Emma Goldman) Hippolyte Havel, and was later superseded by *Freedom*. Stelton was best-known for its experimental Modern School, which finally closed in 1953 after some four decades of anarchist education (See Avr-

As I said, I mixed mostly with the Road to Freedom Group (I wanted to learn English as quickly as possible) and with the Spanish Group (I knew Spanish from Spain, Argentina and Cuba, and my then companion, who died soon after, was Spanish). I was never actually a member of the Italian group; the Italian anarchists here were mostly southerners, and northerners like me didn't mix very well with them, while I felt quite at home with the Spaniards.

I founded *Eresia* in 1928, an eclectic journal with a strong individualist bias, though the contributors included anarchist-communists like Ugo Fedeli, my old comrade in Milan. Joe Conti, our treasurer from Brooklyn, taught me the bricklaying trade. I was the editor and wrote both as "Brand" and "Harry Goni." The drawings were done by another bricklayer, from New Jersey. We printed two thousand copies of the journal. Ghezzi, another old comrade from Italy and a fellow individualist, sent articles from Russia, from which we tried desperately but unsuccessfully to get him out.²³

I later wrote regularly for *Controcorrente*²⁴, edited in Boston by Aldino Felicani, and helped found *Intesta Libertaria* during the late 1930s, which lasted only a year or two. It tried to bring

ich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States*, Princeton University Press, 1980.)

23 Francesco Ghezzi, after being detained for sixteen months in Switzerland, returned to Italy and was implicated in a bomb plot in Milan (the "Diana" affair of 1921). He took refuge in Soviet Russia but was arrested in 1929, during Stalin's consolidation of power. In spite of an international campaign for his release, he died in 1941 in a Siberian labor camp, a victim of the Great Purge.

24 *Controcorrente, rivista di critica e di battaglia*, Boston, ed. by A. Paolini (1938-45) and A. Felicani (1945-57). Felicani, who died in 1967, founded the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee and edited its publication *L'Agitazione* from 1920-25. (Avrich, 1995. p. 497 n. 212)

together all anarchist tendencies but it failed. L'Adunata refused to cooperate, though a few L'Adunata people helped us as individuals. Carlo Tresca cooperated at first, but soon backed out. Finally the Tresca group in Philadelphia captured the journal, but it folded soon after.

Among the "fugitive" texts by Brand, i.e. those that appeared in journals other than the ones mentioned above, the most interesting discovery for me was a short piece in English in *Minus One* (no. 36, 1975) called "The Afflictions of the Critics of the Ego." Since it constitutes an admirable summation of Brand's Individualist position, and since it appeared only in this obscure journal, I think it worth republishing here:

The Afflictions of the Critics of the Ego

"What is a self?" asks Karl Marx. "Is it not an abstraction from a whole complex of social relations, of selves in relations?"

Would there be relations without the selves? If the self is an abstraction, what does Karl Marx use to build his State? The relations or the selves? Which is the concrete, and which the abstraction? Without the selves there are no relations, no State, no... nothing.

"The I is a we, a colony of cells, an orchestra of inherited instincts," says Victor Basch. "The particular I has no value... It exists only by and in other I's with whom it forms a nation, a society, a State."

The individual doesn't claim to be the I of the cell, but the I formed by a colony of cells. That an I is formed by hereditary instincts doesn't change it one iota.

It is still my *I*, formed by all the instincts that go into it.

It is still unique, and transitory, as no other *I* is like mine.

I am a world in myself, a unique world, in differing circumstances.

As I am my exclusive *I*, under any circumstances

and at any time, therefore let us ask:

Do the cells exist on account of the body? The musicians on account of the orchestra? The bricks on account of the house? The eggs on account of the omelette? Individuals on account of the State?

Who was there first?

The individual, being a body, cannot be split up, added to, or subtracted from, because then he would no longer be a whole individual.

The State and society can be split up, added to, and subtracted from, because they are not bodies—they are only artificial compositions, abstractions.

Try to fuse together many I's in order to form a super I, a State, a society. It can't be done. The individual cannot be dissolved.

Chain together millions of individuals to form a State, or a society. They still remain different worlds, a conglomerate of enslaved, crushed individuals, perhaps alike, but still whole worlds in themselves.

Destroy the individual and there is no more State or society.

Destroy the State, dissolve society, and the individual survives, because individuals are the irreplaceable ingredients that go to form a State or a society.

A collection of obedient, tyrannized individuals is only a flock of sheep.

"The individual," says Bakunin (And what is he doing here among the enemies of the individual? Giving comfort to the authoritarians?) "is a product of society, and without society man is nothing."

Let's see... And without individuals society would be something? It would not exist, nor would the State. According to anthropological discoveries made in Abssinnia only a few months ago, man seems to be more than 3,000,000 years old. He originally lived without an organized society during most of these years and practically in isolation since there were so few human beings. And these primitive relations—

how old are they? 20,000, 50,000, 100,000 years? Again the individual is the real thing.

"Society has been first," says Kropotkin (Has he, too, got lost among the enemies of the individual?)

Let's make it clear that Stirner is not against society, nor does he preach isolation, since the "union of egoists" is also a society. He is only against certain kinds of societies, the forced, the codified, the authoritarian societies. To these he opposes the free, voluntary which is the union of egoists.

"The society of animals preceded that of man," adds Kropotkin.

Of course, since many animals were in existence hundreds of millions of years before man developed. And since animals must have looked for protection under trees or in caves against bad weather (joined afterward by primitive man) there they found themselves in company. In a word, for physical and psychological comfort they found themselves in society with other animals.

But did such a "society" have morals? Did it have laws to tyrannize them? Did it have sanctions? Were there police forces, collectors of taxes, military service, jails, the curse of capitalists, commissars, priests, gods, states, churches?

No, they were simply societies of free egoists, meeting mostly accidentally, since they had to wander around looking for food, and in most cases, perhaps, the same animals never met a second time.

Stirner is not against altruism. Who thinks he is an altruist, let him be. It doesn't bother Stirner. He thinks, first, that in most human actions real altruism is rarely met, because unconscious egoism is always discovered under it; second, that to appeal to altruism is the wrong way to try to achieve the emancipation of all individuals; third, that conscious self-interest based on free contracts is really the best and surest way for building a free, harmonious, and just society

for everyone.

"The I of today," says Sidney Hook, "is different from the I of yesterday... because the I is a different I in different conditions... The I is an abstraction, because there is not an absolute I... In one I there are concentrated many I's."

What a discovery!...And so my body of today is no more my body of yesterday? And whose body is it? Who represents my I of yesterday, represents it today, or will represent it tomorrow?

Am I no more I because every minute a few million cells die in me, and are replaced by new millions of cells?

An I in me, in you, dies every instant, and still we are me and you and nobody else. And it can never be otherwise.

We are ever dying, yet ever living, as I and you until our bodies disintegrate and vanish into nothingness. The nothingness of a dead I, a dead individual.

There are only transitory I's, each one born with each individual, and disappearing with each individual.

The absolute I? A fantasy! Stirner doesn't claim an absolute I, because that would be another spook, a creature born from the thought of an individual, pretending afterwards to be a body above him, something "sacred," a divinity.

There exists only the transitory I of me, of you – not two, not various. But if they are not absolute, they are unique.

And in spite of all the hatred the authoritarians feel towards the rebellious and iconoclastic individual, nobody can exterminate him or her... and survive.

The individual is here to stay. And so is (the) individualism.

No individualism, no anarchy. Because then there would be no real freedom—only a flock of tamed, enslaved individuals, no matter what you called it.

Many of the points made by Brand in this manifesto-like article were undoubtedly points that he made when speaking in public, and made over and over again. For example on May 5, 1978 he addressed a meeting at the New York Freespace Alternate U[niversity] on Max Stirner.²⁵ Here, however, he was careful to position himself in relation to the anarchists he was addressing. "Stirner's individualist anarchism is in no way incompatible with anarcho-communism – nor even with anarcho-syndicalism... If people would come together... in a voluntary way in a union of egoists to produce goods and services they need, would this not be anarcho-communism? And if they came together in a labor union, would this not be anarcho-syndicalism?... Stirner's philosophy is not that of the Nietzschean superman or the fascist in that Stirner's egoists do not set themselves above other people, but emphasize an equality of egoists."

Brand's biggest achievement in journalism, however, was his very own Italian-language journal, *Eresia* ("Heresy"), which survived for only nine numbers (April 1928 to March 1929). It was published in New York, the first seven issues by Joe Conti in the Bronx, the last two by Amadeo Fulvi (at a box number in West Farm Station, NY). It sold for 20 cents. The bricklayer who contributed several pieces of cover art signed himself "Grandi" on his final appearance, a linoleum-block print of a heroic worker smashing the tablets of the Law, a stirring subject for the cover of the last issue. (Issue no. 6, Oct. 1928, showed a black-and-white photograph entitled "Psicologia di Masse" by Lee Siminon; and no. 7, Dec. 1928, a drawing by Otto Soglow.)

The *primo numero* of *Eresia*, per *l'affrancamento dell' individuo di oggi e di domani* contains texts signed by the following: Brand, Malatesta, "Brutius," E. Armand, "Diogene," P. Gori, Renzo Novatore, Han Ryner, "Harry Goni" (*Anarchici ma... individualisti*), Sir Arthur Keith (on Darwinism), G.A. Perez, G.

²⁵ As reported by Bob Palmer in *The Storm!* (no. 7, Summer 1978), a special issue on anarcho-individualism, which opens with a long quotation from Renzo Novatore.

de Lacaze-Duthiers, the Argentine Roberto Muller, "Muriel," "Beobatcher," Ibsen, and "il gruppo di eresia." Some of the pseudonyms hide E. Arrigoni, as we know... perhaps all of them! (In subsequent issues a writer named "Alba Satterthwaite" also appeared, as well as a "Count B." and other mysterious characters.) Several groups and publications are mentioned: *The Road to Freedom*, *Cultura Proletaria*, *Circolo Operario di Cultura Sociale*, *Circolo Volunta di Brooklyn*, etc.

Subsequent issues offered more of the same authors, especially the various Arrigoni's, Renzo Novatore, Benjamin de Caseres, Han Ryner on Nietzsche, Rudolf Rocker on Strindberg, Federica Montseny on Cervantes, Emma Goldman on the Russian Revolution, Thoreau, and Severino di Giovanni, the Argentine anarchist bank robber. Obviously the journal had a bias toward culture or "education and propaganda," not so much an activist emphasis. But several articles are devoted to anti-fascist issues of the day, and an Anarchist Committee for Italian Political Prisoners solicits funds from *Eresia*'s readers. A picnic held for *Eresia* on September 2, 1928 is deemed a great success, and is followed up by a theatrical production, "La Donna del Popolo," a "powerful drama analyzing social psychology in four acts, with musical selections, Ladies 50 cents, men 75 cents." Could this have been an Italian version of one of Brand's plays? (He mentions a few plays published in Italy after the Second World War, but I have not been able to trace them.)

During its brief career *Eresia* kept and published an account of expenses, donations, and deficits. The final issue showed that printing expenses had been met with contributions and subscriptions amounting to \$254.98, and that the journal was in the hole for \$207.34—surely not a disastrous deficit. In fact as we know *Eresia* ceased publication not because it failed but because the editor's life was thrown into turmoil by the events in Paris, and then by the death of his Spanish companion Maria. But someone thought to send a complete run of *Eresia* to the New York Public Library, a unique set as far as I know, which remains book-bound (not on microfilm), yellowing, flaking, and smelling of seventy years of neglect, in that amazing collection even today.

A Few Posthumous Clarifications

*Don't ask me for example from which country
I come... that I'm Italian is the thing I must hide,
because I'm here as a South American...*

Oral History I, II

In 1982 a company of independent radical filmmakers, Pacific Street Films, made a documentary called "Anarchism in America." It is an impressive memorial of the period, and (among its other virtues) it contains the only film ever taken of Brand.²⁶ We see him at his typewriter and "on location" (at the Statue of Liberty!). Somehow, however, we never really get a good look at his face. The typewriter footage is made up of long shots with a voice-over. And his answers to the filmmakers' questions seem equally distant: good anarchist propaganda, but nothing too personal, nothing too revealing. Brand, as usual, is veiling and unveiling himself at the same time, and playing with identity in a manner that B. Traven would have understood perfectly. To some of us this kind of behavior may seem paranoid, even a bit schizophrenic. But even paranoiacs have real enemies. In Brand's case (as also with B. Traven) the real enemies included some truly formidable forces, such as governments and police. If Brand was secretive he had his reasons, real reasons. But like Traven he could never resist scattering clues. One senses that both of them enjoyed being mysterious, and that each of them found their voices as writers precisely by concealing themselves in the open, like Poe's purloined letter.

The filmmakers naturally found this reticence fascinating. Although they respected Brand's cranky conditions and agreed to question him only about general anarchist principles, on camera anyway, they wanted more. And Brand agreed to

²⁶ Produced and directed by Steven Fischler and Joel Sucher (NY, Cinema Guild, 1982). Thanks to them, to Erika Godfried, the Tamiment Archive, and Maria Gil. Pacific Street Films, 579 Broadway, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706.

speak off camera (but on audio tape) for as long as they cared to listen. But only on condition that the tapes not be released till after his death. Steve Fischler and Joel Sucher then proceeded to question Brand for two days straight. They filled ten tapes. Brand spoke freely... well, almost freely... about every aspect of his life. He repeated a great many anecdotes and "set pieces" that also occur (in slightly more polished form) in *Freedom: My Dream*. He still revealed nothing about his private life (Hanna and his daughters, for instance, are missing) but he was quite forthcoming with some of his political secrets. In the event that a serious new edition of *Freedom: My Dream* should ever appear, Brand's "Oral History"²⁷ will serve to annotate and expand on the text in some interesting ways. Here, however, I only want to explore one point in detail—the question of Brand's "papers" and his illegal status in the United States—because it has a bearing on his writing and its paradoxical mix of secrecy and self-revelation.

Brand's illegal status was an open secret among his friends, although some of them wondered about it. Clara Solomon, one of Brand's last surviving comrades, told me²⁸ that his status was never clear to her. "People said he was an illegal—but he traveled wherever he wanted—even to

27 The ten tapes were transcribed and typed by Maria Gil; all references are to her pagination.

28 At a Libertarian Book Club memorial (March 10, 1998) for Abe Bluestein, another old friend of the Spanish Civil War, who had just died after a long illness. Bluestein had helped Brand escape from prison in Spain, along with Emma Goldman [see above].

The Death Ship: The Story of an American Sailor (1934), pp. 22, 216, 271
Brand admitted to the filmmakers that he had intended to use the passport to reach Canada and then sneak back into the US. The fascist sympathizer foiled him.

Thus in about 1947 Brand finally acquired the means to travel freely and openly whenever he liked. Travel was one of his great pleasures, like opera, and he made full use of his hard-won passport to enjoy it. However, he left no memoirs of his post-World War travels. In the "Oral History" he mentions trips to Paris, "more than twenty." (Oral History" 1, 6) *ibid.*, 1, 11

Russia!" Paul Avrich (who was also present at Bluestein's memorial) stated in the introduction to his 1972 interview with Brand (published 1995) that "Arrigoni... lived illegally in the United States from 1924 until his death in 1986." (p.169) The implication is that somewhere in his adventures he must have acquired a magnificent set of fake documents.

As usual, Avrich is both precise and correct. In the "Oral History" sessions Brand spoke quite openly about his illegal status. That is to say, *almost* openly. As we shall see, Brand was determined to keep a few key secrets even unto the grave.

Brand's problem with documentation began the moment he deserted the Italian army in World War I. In the chaos and confusion of war – and thanks to the neutrality of the Swiss – he managed to survive without proper documentation. His post-War entry into Germany was achieved without a passport. After the failure of the Berlin uprising he escaped to Russia, where his "personal documentation" (presumably issued by the now-fallen Spartikist regime) was seized at the border by Russian officials (*Freedom: My Dream*, 122).

When Angelica Balabanoff decided to help Brand escape from Russia, she provided him with secret documentation from the Third International, and false I.D. as a Hungarian prisoner of war (*ibid.*, 133-4). In Hungary, Bela Kun himself asked Brand to carry 30,000 Italian lira (seized from the banks) to the Communists in Italy. "Naturally we accepted, since the risk was the same, and they [i.e., the Hungarians] were helping me with new documents" (*ibid.*, 155).

Brand managed to sneak into Italy without using any papers, "good or false" (*ibid.*, 162)—and likewise managed to leave his homeland again on the sly. From Germany to France to Spain he traveled in the same manner (he doesn't tell us how he actually managed it)—but in Barcelona he made a big mistake. He had acquired some French "work certificates," and loaned them to a French comrade who wanted to "visit his family in France." The comrade attempted to use these papers to cross the border, but failed and was arrested. Brand had to go underground in Barcelona, and eventually fled Europe on a tramp steamer bound for Argentina (*ibid.*, 177-8).

At this point one is reminded irresistibly of B. Traven and his post-War peregrinations. In the first novel Traven wrote in Mexico, *The Death Ship*, he offered a thinly-fictionalized account of the desperate and documentless escape trajectory that took him from Munich across Europe to London, where he shipped out for the New World:

I shook off the hands which were upon my shoulder, and I yelled: "I'm not going. I'll resist. I'm an American. I'm an American citizen. I'm going to complain to my ambassador and to my consul. I haven't done anything wrong."

Said the interpreter: "You are going to complain? You? And just who are you? You are no American. Prove it. Come, come show us your passport. Or your sailor's card. We'll even be satisfied with a letter from your consul. See we are generous. Even a letter from your skipper will do. You have no passport. In a civilized country he who has no passport is nobody. He does not exist for us or for anybody else. We can do whatever we want to. And exactly what we're going to do right now. If we want to, we can even hang you or shoot you or kill you like a louse. Just like that; chip, and off you are." He snipped [sic] his fingers and rubbed the nails of his thumbs one against the other. "Out with him," he commanded.

... Where is the true country of men? There where nobody molests me, where nobody wants to know who I am, where I come from, where I wish to go, what my opinion is about war, about the Episcopalians, and about the communists, where I am free to do and to believe what I damn please as long as I do not harm the life, the health, and the honestly earned property of anybody else. There and there alone is the country of men that is worth

living for, and sweet to die for.

I laughed and said: "Don't you worry, Stanislav, you and me, we won't get in there [i.e. Heaven]. In the first place, we have no papers, no passports. You may depend on that all right; they ask for papers from you when you come to the gate, stamped by consuls and passport-office clerks with the okay of an Episcopalian deacon. Or else they bang the door right in your face. And don't be short of papers that make a modern citizen, such as birth-certificate, vaccination-certificate, certificate of baptism, certificate of confirmation, marriage license, income-tax receipts, receipts that you have paid your light-bills and for the telephone, an affidavit that you have no connections with criminal syndicalism or Moscow, and a certificate from police headquarters that there are no charges against you still pending.

Brand's first attempt to reach America was made by stowing away on a boat from Argentina to Mexico, then making a nocturnal crossing of the Rio Grande River. He was arrested instantly and deported. His second attempt was slightly better organized. Somewhere in Europe—he doesn't say where or how—he acquired some sort of dubious passport. He went to Cuba and attempted to acquire a U.S. visa by bribing an official. The official simply stole his money! So he found a German cargo ship bound for New Orleans and again stowed away. This time he succeeded in reaching New York. Brand's lover Maria Rascon now decided to join him. She, too, made her way to Cuba. After several hilarious hair-raising adventures she succeeded in acquiring Cuban I.D. from fellow anarchists there. At that time Cubans could enter the U.S. without passports. Apparently these "papers" were good enough to get Maria to New York and later back to France without a hitch. After some years in New York (1924-28) and the launching of *Eresia*, Brand and Maria attempted to

return to Paris and settle down there, but Brand's inadequate documentation led to another brush with the French police, and another midnight flit. They returned again to Cuba. Maria used her Cuban I.D. to reach New York again. But Brand was stuck in Havana.

In *Freedom: My Dream* we learn nothing about how our hero solved this crisis of identity. But in his "Oral History" he reveals the gist of the solution, if not its fine details. Maria wired him some money from New York, and after several failures he finally managed to find a crooked official in a South American embassy who, for \$150, sold him a birth certificate. He fails to mention which South American country proved so useful, but does reveal that the certificate provided him with a birthplace in Colombia ("Oral History," IX, 11-12). I suspect that the unnamed embassy was in fact the Colombian Embassy. In any case, according to Brand, "That's all what I needed." Another crooked official in the U.S. Embassy provided a visa, and Brand joined Maria in New York.

In 1936 Brand acquired U.S. citizenship, using his Colombian certificate. He now also acquired a valid passport—although of course it was based on false documents. When he decided to go to Spain to report on the Civil War he used this passport to reach France; but the passport was invalid "to go to Spain and I think for another place that I don't remember, I think was Albania or something like that..." (ibid., X, 11). So Brand entered Spain illegally, with nothing but a pass from the anarchist border guards in Catalonia.

When Brand was arrested in Barcelona his passport ended up in the hands of the U.S. consul in that city. Luckily for Brand, this consul seems to have been a reasonable fellow and perhaps even something of an admirer of Emma Goldman. At her request he deported Brand to Marseilles, and sent the passport to the U.S. Consul in that city. This man, however, turned out to be a fascist sympathizer. He refused to give the passport back to Brand. Instead he issued a letter permitting only return to New York, and sent the passport by diplomatic pouch to America. The precious document ended up in the hands of the FBI, complete with a deportation notice stamped in Spain. The

FBI grilled Brand at length upon his arrival in New York, but eventually let him go. However... they kept the passport.

Brand: ... For ten years I could not get the passport.

Steve Fischler: Did you finally get it back?

Brand: Finally, after ten years, when they put a woman... who was liberal, you see, in Immigration... so they send me a new passport and they send me also the old one.

Joel Sucher: Yeah? So you have the old one?

Brand: Sure, I have the old one. But the FBI let me... they uh... they didn't want to let me... they wanted to send me back.

Joel Sucher: Send you back? To Spain?

Brand: To France... to France, because I was not supposed to be back ...unless I had the permission from the State Department... you see, because I didn't have the passport... So...

Obviously Brand was stuck in a real pre-Cold War Catch-twenty two. He needed a State Department stamp in his passport absolving him of illegal travel, but he couldn't get it because the FBI had seized his passport, and were trying to deport him *because he had no passport*. They knew he was an anarchist because his Spanish journalism had fallen into the hands of the consuls in Barcelona and Marseilles, and they were out to get him. A ten year nightmare. No wonder Brand seemed at times a bit paranoid about his identity. He was actually quite rational. As he patiently explained to the filmmakers: "You see... I'm here illegally... with false papers... I want you to keep this in mind... that's why I can't be specific, because I don't want them to trace me. Do you understand?"

7

One Love Lyric and the Three Revolutionary songs by Brand

(translated by Syd Migx)

Enrico Arrigoni wrote song lyrics, and sang them himself.

Unfortunately the tunes are lost, but the typed lyrics were saved by Maria Gil, who copied them for me. I sent them to my friend (and translator of my works into Italian), Syd Migx, who by chance happens to be an anarchist who lives in Milan. Brand's poetry is not very good, but it throws some light on his life and ideas. Of the poems left with Maria, twenty-one are love lyrics (inspired by opera) and thirteen are rousing revolutionary hymns. I have included one sample from the first category and three from the second, giving both the Italian original and Syd's translations.

Recommended Reading:

For a captivating interview with Arrigoni (aka "Frank Brand") we strongly suggest checking out *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* by Paul Avrich (pages 169-175)

Acknowledgments: This work would not have been possible without the generosity of the Institute for Anarchist Studies, and of the following: The Tamiment Archive, Paul Avrich, Mark Sullivan, John Petrovato, Pacifica Street Films (Joel Sucher, Steve Fischler, Erika Godfried), Maria Gil, Michael Bacon (for photos of Brand), Bob Ehrler, Anne Marie Hendrickson, The New York Public Library, The Libertarian Book Club, Syd Migx, Ed Weber (Labadie Collection, University of Michigan), and all friends of Brand.

La Sfinge

*Oh Sfinge! qui nel deserto medito
Sul triste destin dell'umana sorte
L'oscurità della notte notte
l'avvolge
Mentre l'infelice uom piange
piange.*

*Ai tuoi piedi io siedo estasiato
Guardando le tue labbra mai
bacciate,*

*Il corpo di leon, gli occhi strani
Oh emigme di una vita vans.*

*Oh maliosa tu stai incognita
Inscrutabile e recondoti*

*Forse di me ridendo ridendo
Che perplesso sto davanti al tue
mistero.*

tu assomigli all'amata mia

*Un'altra inscrutabile Sfinge
Della quale io sempre mi domando
Se davvero mi ama oppure finge.*

*Oh Sfinge! qui nel deserto medito
Sul triste cestin dell'umana sorte
L'oscurità della notte l'avvolge
Mentre l'infelice uomo piange
piange.*

The Sphinx

Oh Sphinx! Here in the desert I
meditate
On the sad destiny of human fate
The dark of night enfolds you
While unhappy man weeps,
weeps.

At your feet I sit ecstatic
Watching your never kissed lips
The lion's body, the weird eyes
Oh enigma of a vain life

Oh alluring one, you are
unknown

Inscrutable and recondite
Laughing, perhaps, laughing at
me

Who stand perplexed before your
mystery.

You resemble my loved one
Another inscrutable sphinx
About whom I always wonder
Whether she really loves me or
just pretends.

Oh Sphinx! Here in the desert I
meditate
On the sad destiny of human fate
The dark of night enfolds you
While the unhappy man weeps,
weeps.

Viene L'aurora

*Ma quel dì che spunterà
Che gli schiavi sorgeranno
Le catene romperanno
E giustizia essi faranno,
Quel dì la lor vendetta
Tremenda scoppierà
Gli Dei tutti demolirà
E la libertà trionferà.
Quel dì la lor vendetta
Tremenda scoppierà
Gli Dei tutti demolirà
E la libertà trionferà.
Un uomo esser non puole
Se ancora egli vile
Tremante ognor vive
Baciando lo staffile,
Duci e re e commissari
Col bavaglio e la fame
Col lor terrore in fame
Sempre schiave essi lo fanno.
Duci e re e commissari
Col bavaglio e la fame
Col lor terrore in fame
Sempre schiave essi lo fanno.
Ma quel dì che spunterà
Che gli schiavi sorgeranno
Le catene romperanno
E giustizia essi faranno,
Quel dì la lor vendetta
Tremenda scoppierà
Gli Dei tutti demolirà
E la libertà trionferà.
Quel dì la lor vendetta
Tremenda scoppierà
Gli Dei tutti demolirà
E la libertà trionferà*

Dawn is Coming

But that day will dawn
When the slaves shall arise
Their chains they'll break And
justice they'll make, That day
their vengeance So terrible will
explode
The Gods will demolish every-
thing
And Freedom shall triumph.
[Repeat.]
A man cannot exist If he, still
coward, trembling every hour
lives kissing the whip. Duci,
kings and commissars With
their gags and famine With their
verminous terror Will always
enchain and enslave him.
But that day will dawn
When the slaves shall arise
Their chains they'll break And
justice they'll make, That day
their vengeance
So terrible will explode
The Gods will demolish every-
thing
And Freedom shall triumph.
[Repeat.]

I Fratelli Caini

*Con mille e mille infide trame I
fratelli caini creder farni vogliono
Che per il mio ben sacrificarsi lor
sogliono*

*Mentre solo pensano alla lor pan-
cia infame.*

*Ed io, da lor, ognor intontolato
Non ho mai, proprio mai indovi-
nato*

*Che la commedia dei caini giocata
È di sempre tenermi affamato.*

Io sono il popolo

L'eterno sacrificato

Son mille I redentori

Che sempre mi han fregato,

Raggirato mi hanno I vili

Per la mia ingenuità,

Inggrassati si sono I Giuda

Sulla mia generosità.

Coi loro ragiri purtroppo io temo

Che mi lasceranno sempre pelato,

Confuso, deriso, ognora sfruttato,

Ahimè! ahimè! grandissimo scemo.

È così che in tutti I tempi

Turlupinato mi hanno gli empi,

Ora come potrei trovare vendetta

Su questa razza vil e maledetta.

Io sono il popolo

L'eterno sacrificato

Son mille I redentori

Che sempre mi han fregato,

Raggirato mi hanno I vili

Per la mia ingenuità,

*Inggrassati si sono I Giuda Sulla
mia generosità.*

Cain's Brothers

With thousands upon thou-
sands of sneaky schemes
Cain's brothers would make
me believe

That they sacrifice themselves
for my benefit

While they only think of their
infamous bellies.

But I am always bamboozled
by them

Never, ever do I guess

That the comedy (Cain's joke)
Is forever to keep me hungry I

am the people

Eternal sacrificed one

Thousands are the saviors That
always end up fooling me.

I was tricked by the vile ones
By my naivete

and Judas got fat on my gener-
osity.

With their swindles I fear
They'll always leave me skint

Confused, derided, always ex-
ploited,

Oh my! Oh my! What a total
fool.

Cheated by the impious

How may I now take revenge
On this vile and cursed race. I

am the people

Eternal sacrificed one

Thousands are the saviors That
always end up fooling me.

I was tricked by the vile ones
By my naivete and Judas got
fat on my generosity.

I Canti del Liberi

Fin dai più antichi tempi
Il popolo fu martoriato,
Fustigato, affamato,
Da ogni varietà di empi.
I suoi padroni pullulano
Come vespe sul miele
Che il dolce essi succhiano
Ed al popolo danno il fiele.
Poi vennero re, preti e tiranni
Che causa son dei nostri malanni
Guerre e pestilenze e distruzione E
fame e ogni maledizione.
Poi ecco I falsi redentori
Con falsi cieli e false deità
Col lor sol dei commissari
Che mai per noi arriverà.
Ogni padron vuol potere
Gloria e ricchezza godere
Al popolo forgian nuove catene Colla
burla di togliergli le pene Ma noi an-
archici liberi siamo,
Mai più padroni noi vogliamo
Che sempre nuova schiavitù forgian
È per la libertà che noi lottiam.

Songs of the Free

Ever since the most ancient of
days
The people have been martyr-
ized,
Whipped, starved,
By every variety of crook. The
masters pullulate
Like hornets on honey
They suck out all the sweetness
And leave the people only bile.
Then came the kings, priests
and tyrants
The cause of our illnesses Wars
and plagues and destruction
Hunger and every malediction.
Then come the false saviors
With false heavens and false
deities
With their commissars' sun That
never shines for us.
Every master wants power To
enjoy glory and riches For the
people they forge new chains
And to boot with the hoax of re-
lieving their pains.
But we're free anarchists, We
want no more masters To forge
our slavery anew.
It is for freedom we struggle.

Down with Civilization

By Enrico Arrigoni
aka Frank Brand

They say: humanity progresses; continuous new conquests confirm its rise toward greater destinies; It chains up the lightning, tames the water, rules the air; all the elements obey humanity, to its greater satisfaction. And mechanical civilization really accomplishes marvels. What are the pyramids, the Coliseum, the Sphinx, before the colossal works of the 20th century? But the progress of mechanics is also what makes the mechanization of the individual progress.

If civilization means the sacrifice of individuality before the totality, human automation for the benefit of the abstraction that is society—that would today like to be identified with humanity—the annihilation of individual initiative and will through obedience and discipline that formalize everything for the colossal successes of society, then I cry *down with civilization!* As I have cried down with society!

These too are heresies, but civilization means nothing else and the sacrifice of the individual for the triumph of civilization goes against nature.

In nature, classifications, genuses, species, races and families are abstractions that don't matter or matter only for the ease of scholars. What is really of value is the individual. The individual is the source of movements for the great variety of genuses, species, races. At least according to the unitary concept of natural formations. The scientist experiments only on the particular, in order to go back, through statistics, to generalities that will be superb syntheses of keen and laborious deductions and will open the way to broad and daring inductions, to new discoveries that will open new problems and new paths, but the reality upon which its investigations are based will always be the particular, the individual. Only the domination of the one over the many

demands the annihilation of the individual, or rather, of what the individual has that is most...individual: will.

Power has been developing on this concept, to the point of State over-development, facilitated by the fine war.. revolutionary and exacerbated by the dangerous, reckless intemperance of the plebeians, who had threatened the supermen of the closed oligarchy of Croesus with the end of the world.

I recall: in 1914, praises were sung, even by poets of the revolution, to the high, visionary foresight of Henry Ford, who caressed the slaves with large, surprising wage raises, accompanied by all those provisions that serve so magnificently to find ready-made pap and prevent any intelligent effort stimulated by one's own need for devising means and remedies. And some saw a huge step toward socialism in the automobile magnate's movements, while others saw an enlightened act for distancing the slaves from union rabble-rousers. And if we pass over the original significance of socialist thought and reduce socialism to a solution to the economic problem, locating this all in the belly and adjoining organs, so that the whole essence of the social question is reduced to the presence of steak and butter on every worker's table and more trips to the theatre, football games and boxing matches, then the former are not wrong. But they stand hand-in-hand with the latter, while still pretending or actually believing that they are soldiers in opposing camps. It is absolutely true that the extremes touch.

But the isolated and revolutionary act of Henry Ford in 1914 became a common manifestation in the post-war period.

The war forced industry's hand to adopt the system of production by *standardization* (allow me to get past this mile-long and barbarous word), and from what had been a temporary necessity, the men of the post-war period drew the intelligent conclusion to bring the same system used in the specific field of production into the social question.

In this, at least, Uncle Sam had a lot to teach. Yesterday, education, especially of the scholastic sort, meant cramming historical and scientific notions with a sprinkling of moral salt into the minds of the youth. One came out of school with a

bit less moral coercion and a bit more physical and historical knowledge. Today, it is the rule of ignorance, enlightened by a lot of discipline and obedience, fortified by a religious upsurge and by the shrewdest moral teachings. And over all this a great dissemination of physical culture that dominates *sports*. So that once the brains of the young are stuffed to the liking of the rulers, they have no time to concentrate in order to formulate doubts and solutions that might get beyond these meticulous teachings. Under autocracies, when some halberds, flintlock rifles and cannons were enough to keep malcontents in check, rulers dominated most specifically through physical violence. In democracies and in the personal tyrannies that have descended from democracies (Mussolini, for example) under the reign of dynamite, physical violence is not enough, because if this was enough for the short-lived triumph of some Mexican General Hidalgo¹, it also easily leads to the insurrections that overwhelm, rotating men and parties of men in power, Madero and Huerta and Carranza and Obregon. So it is necessary to create general approval, unanimous consent. The fascists express this with exquisitely Italian genius (or so Barzini² and Balbo³ would elegantly call it).

And the State is reinforced by and intervenes in all the activities of its subjects. If Henry Ford can post notices on the walls of his office declaring that anyone who smells of liquor or has liquor in their home will be fired without recourse, Mussolini and his henchmen can, with an equally clear conscience, commit atrocities against anyone, no matter how devoted to the cause, whose activity diminishes the awareness of the high destinies of the *duce* and of fascism.⁴

1 This reference is to the leader of the Mexican independence movement of the early 19th century, and may reflect a mistake on Arrigoni's part since the other four figures were involved in the Mexican revolution of the early 20th century which first took president Porfirio Diaz out of power and then, indeed, took the form Arrigoni describes.

2 An Italian journalist and later a senator under the fascist regime.

3 A fascist activist and leader involved in organizing the March on Rome that brought the fascists to power in Italy in 1922.

4 The last part of this sentence is a very approximate translation, because it

Henry Ford has brought his iron industrial organization and his uncontrolled and indisputable domination over the human element to victorious competition on the global market. Mussolini, or the State that is permeated with his criminal will, is going to lead the subjugated people toward imperialism and the problematic triumph of the Italian race that, along the way, may run up against a difficult chasm leading to a sudden fall.

However, through a trade, the former has shown how to splendidly deflect any individual needs and remedies that people might have thought up. The latter has stopped—pardon my phrase for linguistic ease—the development of Italian plebeians, forcing them back into the 14th century with the fresh upsurge of religious demonstrations, with reforms or revolutions or involutions of state institutions.

If you investigate official democracies, you find this State supremacy equally obvious. It was here already, in embryo before the war and became powerful everywhere after the rebirth of the paradoxical hopes and appetites of the masters, so thoroughly starved during the war and after.

All to the detriment of the individual.

Nations can identify themselves, for ephemeral glory and for the convenience of excess of power, in the triumphs of Lindbergh and Chamberlin⁵, in the failures of Nobile⁶ who triumphantly planted Christ's cross on the "summit of the world" and triumphantly abandoned his companions to a terrible fate. But what do men and women matter in this terrible rotation of conquest and domination? What does individuality matter? What is the fate of individuals?

Misery, brutalization, physical and moral degeneration. You get the picture.

used several words that I could not find in any dictionary I had access to and that seemed to be neologisms taken from other words, but this seemed to be the gist of it.

⁵ The second person to make a solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean, after Lindbergh.

⁶ An Italian arctic explorer.

Yes, eagles are eagles; poultry are content with the birdseed the master's hand chooses to give.

And they all dress up as castrati and brutes. Not as iconoclasts, not as proud individuals who have not renounced life. You find the insurgents on different paths, those who launched themselves into every adventure in the name of a vast ideal that touches everything as the social question, in their own name, in the name of their personal need for a broad life, vibrant with every joy. And Lucetti's bomb⁷, the anonymous bomb in Buenos Aires, the frequent explosions of restless malcontents and the revolver shots of bandits all over the world show that they rebel against enslavement, against the mechanization of the individual, and their attacks are bold, aware, audacious, spontaneous and unexpected. The only ones who assert human progress.

Because there can be no progress where the individual doesn't loom large, where there is no freedom for the expansion of everyone born of woman.

Mechanical civilization that, with the hateful industrial system of production, ends up as the labor of blind force without intelligent cooperation of the arms and the brain, can only be the death of human progress, which is the elevation from brute force to the highest degree of intellectual needs and sensations of beauty that only a practiced mind can know and enjoy.

Between social civilization, understood in this way, and human progress, there is conflict. This conflict will not end unless the individual triumphs through the eradication of the state and of society as the organization of exploitation and robbery.

Down with society and with civilization, which affirms and reinforces domination!

From Eresia di oggi e di domain
(Heresy of today and tomorrow),
Agricola, 1928

⁷ Gino Lucetti is an anarchist who on September 11, 1926 attempted to assassinate Mussolini with a bomb.

My Anarchism

by S. E. Parker

In 1947, at 17 years of age, I began to call myself an anarchist. Having spent some three years in the socialist movement I naturally conceived of anarchism as a form of communism. I exchanged Bukharin for Bakunin, Kautsky for Kropotkin and Marx for Malatesta, but the goal of common ownership remained the same, even if the route was now a different one. And this was the goal to which I held for about the next ten years, despite changes in emphasis and tactics.

Towards the end of the 1950s I began to have serious doubts about the compatibility of anarchism and communism. At first my criticisms of anarchism as communism were mild and were mainly concerned to point out that there were other ways of viewing anarchism than the communist one. Then, in 1961, I read Max Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* and became convinced that anarchism was not a communism, but an individualism. The conclusion I then reached, and to which I still hold, was that individualism, in the words of John Beverley Robinson, is "the recognition by the individual that he is above all institutions and formulas; that they exist only so far as he chooses to make them his own by accepting them", and further, it is "the realization by the individual that he is an individual; that, as far as he is concerned, he is the only individual." This is not a claim for Solipsism. Robinson goes on to recognize that there are "other individuals".

But none of these is himself. He stands apart.
His consciousness, and the desires and gratifications that enter into it, is a thing unique, no other can enter into it.

It followed from this that, because they recognized no institution or formula as having authority over them,

individualists were logically anarchists. And, because they denied the validity of any authority over the individual, anarchists were logically individualists, since this denial affirmed the primacy of the individual. My anarchism then became freed from the last vestiges of that altruistic idealism which casts out service to God and the State only to replace it with service to Society and Humanity. Not only this, but anarchism as I now saw it, drove authority out of its final hiding place in such spooks as "duty" and "moral obligation" and became firmly grounded in **conscious** egoism.

My former goal of a stateless communist society became repellent to me. Jealous of preserving my individuality I had no wish to have my ego dissolved into the amorphousness of an egalitarian herd. Communism would render me powerless before the economic collectivity. The common ownership of the means of production would confront me with the choice: integrate or perish. Any group, or federation of groups, can be as powerful as any State if it monopolizes in any given area the possibilities of action and realization. The result would be social totalitarianism, even if it were done in the name of "anarchism". In practice stateless communism would vest all executive power in the hands of mass assemblies or elected delegates. Either way it would be expressed as *de facto* government of the individual by the majority. What power could I exercise for example if I were stuck at the base of the pyramid of workers' councils proposed as the administrative structure for industries in the communist society? At best, and in its purest form, such a system might produce an "anarchism" of groups. It would not produce **an anarchism of individuals**.

But this rejection of the communist utopia did not end my formulation of anarchism as an individualism. Communism was certainly incompatible with anarchism, but was anarchism compatible with any normative social order? In other words, was it possible to realize anarchism as a form of society?

In *Man versus The State* Herbert Spencer remarks that "social organization has laws over-riding individual wills; and laws disregard of which must be fraught with disaster." Leaving aside the pertinent question—"disaster for whom?"—I

can see what Spencer is driving at. Most people who call themselves anarchists assume that the disappearance of the State will mean the disappearance of authority. Indeed, a favorite answer to those who argue against the possibility of a society existing without a government is to give examples of primitive societies which are or were stateless and ask, if they can function like this, why can't we? For example, Hubert Deschamps in his book *The Political Institutions of Black Africa* describes tribes in which "There is no coercive necessity for command, nor coercive institutions; conflicts are reduced to a minimum by the absence of social differences, making it impossible for one to rise above another, and above all, by *the natural obedience to ancestral customs*" (My emphasis). In such societies, then, there is no *vertical* authority exercised by a State, but there is a *horizontal* exercised by "society" in the form of "ancestral customs"—customs that are often more ubiquitous and despotic than modern governments! That such a model of social control is in the minds of some professed anarchists is shown by Nicolas Waiter in his pamphlet *About Anarchism*. Here he states that in "the most libertarian society" the "proper treatment of delinquency would be part of the educational and health system, and would not become an institutionalized system of punishment. The last resort would not be imprisonment or death, but boycott or expulsion." The same "last resort" of many primitive societies against those who violate its customs is thus envisaged as a mechanism of an anarchist society, presumably on the grounds that we have a fine future in our past.

From what I know of history there does not seem to have been any organized collectivity which has been without authority, whether that of custom or of law. This is because all collectives need norms to which their members must conform if they are to function. And these norms need sanctions to ensure that they are obeyed by any recalcitrant individual. These sanctions may be customary, religious, political, economic or moral, but they all add up to authority over the individual. Anarchism has never existed as a form of society, nor is it ever likely to. Indeed, I consider it a grave mistake to conceive of

anarchism as a social theory; I do not expect any type of society to guarantee or to respect my individuality, for all societies seek to undermine the self-ownership which is its basis. All seek to principle my being and behavior by ideals of co-operation, or competition, or brotherhood, or mutual benefit, or love as the dominant group in each society defines them.

In all societies, therefore, the individual who is supposed to be the focal point of benefit gets lost in the welter of generalities which stand over and above his particularity and concreteness. Thus the war between the individual and society will go on as long as both exist. Anarchism is not a form of society. It is the cutting edge of individualism, the negative side of an egoist philosophy. The anarchist is not a peddler of schemes of social salvation, but a permanent resister of all attempts to subordinate the uniqueness of the individual to the authority of the collective. The anarchist is someone who refuses to be seduced even by the most glittering or most rational visions of a society in which diverse egoisms have been harnessed into harmonizing one with another.

In the above mentioned pamphlet by Nicolas Waiter, the kind of anarchism I have outlined is rather scornfully dismissed as suitable for "poets and tramps", as "anarchy here and now, if not in the world, then in one's own life"

Indeed, and where and when else can one expect it?

Originally published in
Free Life, #2



Appendix A

Archists, Anarchists and Egoists

by Sidney Parker

Is conscious egoism, therefore, compatible with anarchism? There is no doubt that it is possible to formulate a concept of anarchism that is ostensibly egoistic. For many years I tried to do this and I know of several individuals who still claim to be anarchists because they are egoists. The problem, however, is that anarchism as a theory of non-domination demands that individuals refrain from dominating others even if they could gain greater satisfaction from dominating than from not dominating. To allow domination would be to deny anarchism. In other words, the "freedom" of the anarchist is yet another yoke placed around the neck of the individual in the name of yet another conceptual imperative.

The question was answered at some length by Dora Marsden in two essays that appeared in her review for *THE EGOIST* September 12, 1914 and February 1, 1915. The first was entitled *THE ILLUSION OF ANARCHISM*; the second *SOME CRITICS ANSWERED*.

Somemonthsbeforetheappearanceofherfirstessayon anarchism Marsden had been engaged in a controversy with the redoubtable Benjamin Tucker in which she had defended what she called "egoist anarchism" against what she saw as the "clerico-libertarianism" of Tucker. At the premature end of the controversy Tucker denounced her as an "egoist and archist," to which she replied that she was quite willing to "not - according to Mr. Tucker - be called 'Anarchist'" but responded readily to "Egoist".

In the interval between the end of the controversy and the publication of her first essay she had evidently given considerable thought to the relation of egoism to anarchism and had decided that the latter was something in which she could no longer believe. The gist of her new position was as follows:

Every form of life is *archistic*. "An archist is one who seeks to establish, maintain, and protect by the strongest weapons at his disposal, the law of his own interest." All growing life-forms are aggressive: "aggressive is what growing means. Each fights for its own place, and to enlarge it, and enlarging it is a growth. And

because life-forms are gregarious there are myriads of claims to lay exclusive hold on any place. The claimants are myriad: bird, beast, plant, insect, vermin—each will assert its sole claim to any place as long as it is permitted: as witness the pugnacity of gnat, weed, and flea, the scant ceremony of the housewife's broom, the axe which makes a clearing, the scythe, the fisherman's net, the slaughterhouse bludgeon: all assertions of aggressive interest promptly countered by more powerful interests! The world falls to him who can take it, if instinctive action can tell us anything."

It is this aggressive 'territoriality' that motivates domination. "The living unit is an organism of embodied wants; and a want is a term which indicates an apprehension of the existence of barriers - conditions easy or hard - which lie between the 'setting onwards' and the 'arrival', i.e. the satisfaction. Thus every want has two sides, obverse and reverse, of which the one would read the 'not yet dominated', and the other 'progressive domination'. The two sides grow at the expense of each other. The co-existence of the consciousness of a lacking satisfaction, with the corresponding and inevitable 'instinct to dominate', that which prolongs the lack, are features which characterize 'life'. Bridging the interval between the want and its satisfaction is the exercising of the 'instinct to dominate' obstructing conditions. The distinction between the lifeless and the living is comprised under an inability to be other than a victim to conditions. That of which the latter can be said, possesses life; that of which the former, is inanimate. It is this doministic instinct to which we have applied the label archistic."

Of course, this exercising of the doministic instinct does not result in every life-form becoming dominant. Power being naturally unequal the struggle for predominance usually settles down into a condition in which the less powerful end up being dominated by the more powerful. Indeed, many of the less powerful satisfy the instinct to dominate by identifying themselves with those who actually do dominate: "the great lord can always count on having doorkeepers in abundance."

Marsden argues that anarchists are among those who, like Christians, seek to muzzle the doministic tendency by urging us to renounce our desires to dominate. Their purpose "is to make men willing to assert that though they are born and inclined archists they "ought" to be anarchists." Faced with "this colossal encounter of interest, i.e. of lives, the anarchist breaks in with his 'Thus far and no further'" and "introduces his 'law' of 'the inviolability of individual liberty'." The anarchist is thus a principled *embargoist*

who sees in domination the evil of evils. "It is the first article of my faith that archistic encroachments upon the 'free' activity of Man are not compatible with the respect due to the dignity of Man as Man. The ideal of Humanity forbids the domination of one man by his fellow" This humanitarian embargo is an *Absolute*: a procedure of which the observance is Good-in-itself. The government of Man by Man is wrong: the respect of an embargo constitutes Right."

The irony is, that in the process of seeking to establish this condition of non-domination called anarchy, the anarchist would be compelled to turn to a sanction that is but another form of domination. In the theoretical society of the anarchist they would have to resort to the intra-individual domination of conscience in order to prevent the inter-individual domination that characterizes political government. In the end, therefore, anarchism boils down to a species of "clerico-libertarianism" and is the gloss covering the wishes of "a unit possessed of the instinct to dominate—even his fellow-men." Not only this, but faced with the practical problems of achieving the "Free Society", the anarchist fantasy would melt away before the realities of power. "The State is fallen, long live the State" —the furthest going revolutionary anarchist cannot get away from this. On the morrow of his successful revolution he would need to set about finding means to protect his 'anarchistic' notions: and would find himself protecting his own interests with all the powers he could command, like an archist: formulating his laws and maintaining his State, until some franker archist arrived to displace and supersede him."

Nonetheless, having abandoned anarchism Marsden has no intention of returning to an acceptance of the authority of the State and its laws for this would be to confuse "an attitude which refused to hold laws and interests sacred (i.e. whole, unquestioned, untouched) and that which refuses to respect the existence of forces, of which Laws are merely the outward visible index. It is a very general error, but the anarchist is especially the victim of it: the greater intelligence of the archist will understand that though laws considered as sacred are foolishness, respect for any and every law is due for just the amount of retaliatory force there may be involved in it, if it be flouted. Respect for 'sanctity' and respect for 'power' stand at opposite poles; the respecter of the one is the verbalist, of the other - the archist: the egoist."

When, therefore, Marsden writes that "anarchists are not separated in any way from kinship with the devout. They belong to the Christian Church and should be recognized as Christianity's

picked children" she is not being merely frivolous. Anarchism as a theory of an ideal society—whether communist, mutualist, or individualist, matters little in this respect—of necessity must demand renunciation of domination both in means and ends. That in practice it would necessitate another form of domination for its operation is a contradiction not unknown in other religions—which in no way alter their essence.

The conscious egoist, in contrast, is not bound by any demand for renunciation of domination and if it is within his competence he will dominate others if this is in his interest. That anarchism and egoism are not equivalent is admitted, albeit unwillingly, by the well-known American anarchist John Beverley Robinson—who depicted an anarchist society in the most lachrymous terms in his *REBUILDING THE WORLD*—and in his succinct essay *EGOISM*. Throwing anarchist principles overboard he writes of the egoist that "if the State does things that benefit him, he will support it; if it attacks him and encroaches on his liberty, he will evade it by any means in his power, if he is not strong enough to withstand it." Again, "if the law happens to be to his advantage, he will avail himself of it; if it invades his liberty he will transgress it as far as he thinks it wise to do so. But he has no regard for it as a thing supernal."

Robinson thus denies the validity of the anarchist principle of non-domination, since the existence of the State and its laws necessitates the existence of a permanent apparatus of repression. If I make use of them for my advantage, then I invoke their repressive power against anyone who stands opposed to what I want. In other words, I make use of an archistic action to gain my end.

Egoism, conscious egoism, seen for what it is...is not based upon any fantasy for its champions are well aware of the vital difference between "if I want something I ought to get it" and "being competent to achieve what I want". The egoist lives among the realities of power in the world of *archists*, not among the myths of the renouncers in the dream world of anarchists.

...The theories of Benjamin Tucker regarding what anarchism would be like in practice, like those of the anarchist conununist, are not based on any empirical evidence. This is shown in Tucker's essay "Why I Am An Anarchist"...Here the reader is regaled with such claims as "no prospect can be positively alluring that does not promise both requisites of happiness—liberty and wealth. Now, Anarchism does promise both. In fact, it promises the second as the result of the first, and happiness as the result of both... Abolish the tariffs, issue no patents, take down the bars from unoccupied land,

and labor will straightway rush in and take possession of its own. Then mankind will live in freedom and in comfort." Having made these rosy promises, however, Tucker has to admit that he cannot *prove* his case, yet he *seeks* to wriggle out of the problems this poses by claiming that it "cannot be dismissed by plain denial" in plain disregard of the fact that it is up to him to prove his affirmations, not for the denier to "disprove" them.

At the bottom of Tucker's doctrine lies the democratic delusion that each and every individual (the insane excepted) can and should take an equal part in determining human affairs. He believed that everyone was potentially capable of exercising "the sovereignty of the individual" and that, furthermore, their self-interest would lead them to accept his particular brand of social salvation. Despite his admiration for Max Stirner he was a possessed man— possessed by the fixed idea that he had *the* answer to the "social question". His egoism was pressed into the service of an ideal which neutered it.. Tucker's ideological blinkers prevented him from seeing that the logic of conscious ego(ism) bursts the strait jacket of anarchism.

Flaming Resurrections of a Charred Alphabet! A Glossary of Basic Terms

State servitudes are only a weak part of the chains that weigh on the individual. The State is only an aspect of society. Social tyranny - I mean those of morals, opinions, clan spirit, group spirit, class spirit, etc, exercise a moral influence over the individual more oppressive and debilitating than State constraint properly speaking.

Georges Palante

There are times when the whole history of the world seems to me just one long shipwreck; all that matters is to save oneself.

Henrik Ibsen

Individual: The independent, indivisible rebel; the starting point of all anarchist yearnings and activity.

Individualist Anarchist: The individualist anarchist position can be summed up as follows: the individual and not society is the prime locus of anarchy. It is the individual consciousness, the human ego, that accepts or rejects patterns of thought and behavior that tend to stifle the will to be one's own sovereign. Pressure to conform to standardized and conventional patterns aimed at the creation of a docile, obedient citizenry pervade far beyond the visible borders of State power -- they also include the myriad forces of Society that work hand-in-hand when it comes to inculcating subservience to authority. To the individualist anarchist, the individual pole takes precedence over the social pole: to s/he, a social struggle might be necessary at times to settle certain material matters (access to land, shelter, food, etc), but only so that they can move on to the question that truly matters to them--the transformation of the individual world. Their rebellion is against any kind of obstacle that blocks their path to autonomy, to independence, to their most authentic activity, and they strive individually to reach an optimum of favorable conditions

enabling them to expend their strength and achieve their supreme feeling of self-creation. Their revolution is a triumphant affirmation of self and does not necessarily involve a belief in the possibility of a non-governmental society (the traditional anarchist Ideal).

Anarchist theory has become so bound up with the Socialized Mind that few can think of anarchism apart from some concept of social transformation. Confronted with any economic or social problem, most anarchists tend to look for a solution that will improve society or which will best enable society to go on functioning, smoothly and efficiently, according to some ideal plan. As a result anarchists tend to be thought of, not as those who negate authority for themselves, but as those who have a duty to negate authority for everybody, and therefore have to postulate the blueprints for a future state of affairs in which this universal negation will be realized by all. (Today, that means seven billion of us!) But an individualist anarchist doesn't depend on a generalization of his/her ideas before they start living their lives in an anarchistic manner. To the extent of their power and opportunities they make their own insurrection against the State and Society—and their individual revolt isn't tailored or tamed to fit into the efforts of All to reach the common goal of some unrealizable utopian life. Their lives are not predicated on a theory of world betterment and their ideas take anarchism away from both evangelical utopianism and radical social engineering and place it back where it serves the most practical purpose: as an individual aspiration and activity.

While usually those who rebel against the social system invoke some higher authority to justify their cause (the People, political justice, the dialectic, the Constitution, morality, the Revolution, etc), the anarchist individualist invokes only the desire and ability to be one's own sovereign. If they have a larger social goal at all it's the dissolution of Society into the open condition of inter-individualism.

Egoism: Egoism is a philosophical perspective that offers a powerful defense of individuality within an authoritarian society and herd-like populace, a philosophical perspective that places subjectivity at the center of any serious discussion of freedom, right where it belongs. The concept of the individual—the Unique One—is cardinal to egoist philosophy, encouraging every individual to pursue and actualize their own interests as the unique beings that they are—what we'd call "interest" or "desire" when not viewed through the tinted spectacles of idealism. Egoism properly understood is to be identified with what Max Stirner calls ownness, a type of autonomy that is incompatible

with any suspension, whether voluntary or forced, of individual judgment. Stirner's method of self-liberation is opposed to faith or belief; he envisions a life free from dogmatic presuppositions, the tyranny of ideas, and from any "fixed standpoint". What Stirner proposes is not that concepts should rule people, but that people should rule concepts. In other words, when the theory by which I live becomes unlivable, I throw out the theory, not myself. Ideas are the creation of human minds and if they "grow over my head" the egoist has given his/her self the power to cut them back down to size. As sacred ideas, as absolutes before which the individual is "powerless and humble," God, Man, State, Nation, Family, Morality, Justice, etc, must be sought out and exposed for what they are—high-order abstractions for which there are no self-evident operational tests. The conscious egoist has taken due thought on these matters, and has jettisoned all those phantoms, those abstract principles which haunted him/her when they floated back and forth on the tides of conventional thought. And having discarded all preconceived ideas (spooks), the conscious egoist ultimately recognizes as a motive nothing outside themselves.

Egoism is somehow akin to anarchism, but the differences overshadow the commonalities. As one would expect of anarchists, egoists wholly reject alleged duties of citizenship, requirements of law, loyalties of patriotism and every other imposition which attends the State. But whereas anarchism involves advocacy of social reform, egoists are just as scornful of any duty to reform society as they are scornful of duties to the State. To the egoist, the State calls for each to set aside personal interest in favor of the good of society (as dictated by law or patriotism), and anarchists also call for each to set aside personal interest in favor of the good of society (as dictated by anarchist theory or morality).

In this rejection of moralism there is a remarkable consistency to the egoist position. The total amorality that results by taking this idea to its extreme is similar to the anti-authoritarianism produced by pressing to the anarchist extreme, and indeed includes that as a subset. The individualist biases in anarchism are enormous, but egoism goes much further: All questions are resolved by consideration of the will of the individual alone.

So it is that egoism is simultaneously inside and outside the anarchist milieu. Some threads of anarchist theory are a perfect fit with egoism, particularly those that make no retreat from the radical vision of anarchism as an absence of any authoritative prohibition. Yet most are in stark conflict with egoism, especially where cooperation, non-

aggression, or individual *rights* are ranked as moral imperatives.

Even as egoists reject the *shoulds and oughts* by which anarchist social forms are promoted, egoists will favor whatever they like in the way of interpersonal interaction. Not surprisingly, egoists are often very comfortable with anarchistic relationships, especially those of the most spontaneous, existential, immediate, and non-utopian forms. But because egoism is formulated in terms of the attitude of the egoist, and not in terms of social structures or political conjecture, there is no limit on what an egoist might choose. The egoist is a self-owner, who is liberated from all ideologies, and intent on protecting him/herself from their blandishments. It is therefore impossible to characterize or constrain what actions might come out of fully egoistic motivation.

Obviously, such a completely self-interested outlook does not automatically lead one to anti-statist conclusions, but there has always been a small minority of anarcho-egoists in our ranks who seek to merrily gratify their appetites and smash the State! Their marginalized ideas could function as a continuous warning against left-leaning, Mass-model and moralistic forms of anarchist thought, but they've been relegated to near-invisibility at the periphery of the anarchist canon (at least in the U.S.) by the ideologically threatened anti-state leftists and anarcho-liberals who want their own milquetoast views on the matter to prevail. This anthology is a small attempt to draw attention to these suppressed voices and to help recover anarchism's original impetus—the unqualified negation of authority. For it's not only the vigor of anarchist resistance that's at stake, but the vigor of anarchist thought in general, its very basis and its functioning.

Anarchism: The oppressive nature of the State lies at the core of anarchist theory. But this rejection of the State is far from being a simplistic ascription of all evil to a single source, and is in fact a more subtle and wholesale rejection of the notion of representation. Anarchists maintain that no individual can legitimately represent another, and this extends to any idea of a universal consent given to a body of laws or rules on the basis of elections or constitutions. Likewise the rejection of hierarchy in anarchism goes beyond the obvious and extends into looking past a top-down, centralized understanding of power. This rejection widens the critique of authority. The picture of domination and struggle that ultimately emerges when anarchist thought applies its full demolishing powers to the present social order is one of intersecting networks of power

rather than simply hierarchy, in the traditional use of the word.

Anarchism is too vast and versatile to be pinned down to a single formula, too fiery to be frozen into doctrine, and as a result, anarchist thought has blossomed into a staggering number of separate, but intricately related varieties: some mechanical, some visionary; some materialist, some mystical; some utopian and some misanthropic; some insurrectionary, some tame and gradualist; some that attempt to reduce anarchy to an ideal set of economic conditions, and others that seek to blow up the concept of "reality" itself. But the central idea unifying all these schools of thought is *no authority*. The diverse ways of interpreting what this means and in the methods of "making the ideal real" are where anarchist thought gets interesting, and at times, convoluted.

Anarchism has never gotten good press (for obvious reasons) but anarchist influence has been on the rise again since the 1960's and continues to foment rebellion and ignite desire amongst the small minority who dream of a qualitatively different world. In this sense, Anarchism is a stubborn vision that refuses to lie down and die, despite some major historical defeats. It's no surprise at all that capitalist governments have been hostile to it, but anarchist movements have also been savagely suppressed by Marxist political parties; George Orwell's excellent account of the elimination of the anarchist militia POUM in the Spanish Civil War provides a brutal example of a state-financed campaign (by the Soviet Union) to crush anarchism. Ironically, there has been a convergence with anarchist thinking in recent years on the part of many disillusioned Leftists following the nightmarish experiments in state socialism in Russia and China; Anarchist critique from Bakunin onwards warned that new forms of authoritarianism would arise from the Statist tactics of Marxism. That anarchists were able to predict this when other radicals were not, is testimony to the strength of anarchists' core theoretical foundations. Furthermore, anarchism's rich history and the re-emergence of its thinking and methods of struggle make it arguably the one radical tradition that seems to be experiencing a mini-renaissance in the 21st century. This is largely an encouraging phenomenon, as the vision of Anarchy remains an extremely attractive one to individuals who wish to create their own self-determined lives. But nothing worth a damn can come into existence where there is immunity from critical onslaught, and traditional anarchist theory contains many self-defeating preconceptions that retard its full unfolding. The most glaring example of this is the belief that many anarchists have in the divinity of human nature.

The chief error of anarchism as a social reform movement is that it's based on naïve conceptions of an inflated Humanity and an a priori belief in the increasing perfectibility of Mankind as a whole. The humor of it all is that close observation of individual humans would never have led to the idealistic hypotheses upon which this utopian edifice is founded, such as justice, equality, peace, fraternity, harmony, order. These are based not on the traits of living humans but upon schemes for the aggrandizement of mere thought-creations, like Humanity and Mankind. Indeed, the known, observable characteristics of humans reveal just the opposite: that the majority of people don't crave freedom, but instead seek the seductive warmth of one or another governed herd. Not content with seizing freedom for themselves, Anarchists instead devote considerable, misdirected, energy trying to compel others to be free who would rather be governed—arrogantly presuming to act in the interests of Humanity as a whole and formulating so-called libertarian moral codes by which their New Society will operate.

Fortunately, individualist and egoist perspectives have always been present as something of a submerged discourse within anarchist intellectual currents, and neither tendency flinches in drawing all possible consequences from the refusal of authority—including moral authority. Rising from the spot where most anarchist thought turns faint and is immobilized by humanistic reasoning, thinkers like Libertad, Zo D'Axa, Renzo Novatore, Bruno Fillipi, and Enzo Martucci dispense with grandiose fantasies of saving Humanity and exempt themselves from self-sacrificial service to the Grand Ideals and causes that history continually throws up. Their call to self-liberation is no mealy-mouthed carping at this or that restriction placed on the individual by authority; it's a call to throw off submission to all authority and to affirm one's self-sovereignty to the fullest extent of one's strength. Possessing no belief in the liberating power of politics, and unwilling to follow social change movements in their slow, incremental course, these iconoclastic thinkers instead jump straight to the finale: self-determination, or life outside the laws of the Herd. Inevitably, the putting in practice of such concepts will lead individuals to engage in a struggle with a variety of social forces. An unlimited field of action is open before such efforts, from anonymous, low-visibility secession and personal egoistic conquests to more flamboyant acts of public tyrannicide (and everything in between). The point being that Individual revolt provides almost as many ways of dealing with authority as there are individuals who decide that this is the thing for them to do—and it doesn't wait

around for a dull, uncomprehending Mass to get in on the fun! To those who wish to remain members of a Herd, who feel the need for allegiance to something or someone—be it Social Justice, Humanity, Society, Collectives—the ideas of these arch-individualists, all of whom exhibit a profound distrust of collectivist enterprises (and the ideologies that underpin them), probably appear as the ultimate menace to their equalizing utopian designs. Yet, the aforementioned individualists (and others like them) have always existed as an underground counter-tradition within the body of ideas known as anarchism. This counter-tradition, paradoxically, preserves the essence of the anarchist vision: life without authority. Individualist anarchy differs from social anarchism in its refusal to wait for a change in material conditions, or in the Masses for its realization. This here-and-now orientation accounts for the aristocratic rhetoric of a Renzo Novatore, an Oscar Wilde, or an Emma Goldman, and embraces Anarchy as a context in which no authority, including that of ideology, is created by the ego over its self.

In surveying history one can view the anarchist rebellion as a particularly brilliant episode in what might be called “the ‘libertarian spirit’, that perennial ‘return of the repressed’, that age-old refusal of all the alienation and restrictions that fetter the individual in his or her struggle for autonomy and personal expression. Its trajectory has mingled with that of other rebels, techniques, and ideas: Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, Diogenes the Cynic, medieval heresies, the many revolts of slaves, peasants, and forced laborers, and with complementary liberatory currents like Dada and Surrealism. Anarchism, by its very nature, has always been resistant to tight definition, and it is this mutability and resiliency that accounts for its staying power, and the lasting relevance of its most radical propositions.

In its most blazing and incandescent moments anarchist thought screams and discharges something antithetical to politics, succeeding to an incredible degree at putting the TNT to the whole fragile, shallow racket of left-wing/right-wing worldviews. And as a basic operational premise it offers a decisive break from prevailing death-shit politics. But when anarchism becomes panacea as well as critique, it descends to the level of ideology. At its best, anarchism provides a critical tool of unequalled scope in the perpetual struggle of the individual against authority. At its worst, it is a new religion, a new morality, a new set of rules and regulations, a new conformity.

Anarchy: Anarchy is a condition of existence characterized by the absence of government—the absence of all authority. It is the full

and complete liberty of the individual who, freely and driven only by his/her needs, by their tastes and sympathies, unites with others in voluntary groupings, joining forces and pooling resources as they see fit, according to their affinities and without compulsion.

The will to Anarchy or the will to submission is *the* dividing question, it is where the philosophical line of cleavage is marked, and it furnishes no neutral ground. Those who are not for Anarchy are against it. Anarchy is not an idealized, utopian state of society that has yet to come to pass: Anarchy exists in the mind and lives of individuals who deny the authority (or deciding power) of other persons with their ideas and ideals (no matter how universally accepted) over their lives—individuals with neither god nor law apart from that of their own desires.

The word Anarchy expresses something variable, individual, impossible to fix in a collective and immutable ideal. Anarchy is a lived experience, not a programme. Anarchy—and how you experience it— is something that must be developed personally, it must be something wholly of your own making, reflecting your own uniqueness, desires, and experiences. And that vision must be fiercely personal, not the dictate of ideologues and law-makers. All we can offer is encouragement, not instructions or rules to obey. We leave that to the authoritarians, the ones who seek to generate uniformity of thought, and who strive to create a passive and compliant populace thinking along rigid and controlled lines, unable to take responsibility for their own lives and actions.

Society: The cultural, political, and economic forces that seek to integrate/assimilate individuals into the dominant modes of existence.

Society is an abstraction that has got itself organized. It's always depicted as something great, eternal, an absolute WHOLE that dwells above and reigns over every individual, but on closer scrutiny Society is discovered to be one of those all inclusive generalizations that mean nothing because they aspire to mean everything, a deified chimera that relies for its impressiveness upon its comprehensive sound. Society is a fictive reality and its alleged cohesion is propped up only by the fact that large numbers of people are collectively imagining it at the same time.

The ideologists of Society would have us believe that humans are inherently "social beings", that all separations between people, of whatever sort, are contrary to the law of nature, and that Society, an evolving illusion (which brings together to one group ev-

erybody within its reach, whether they like it or not), is a great step towards perfection, and its sphere ought to be continually enlarged. When people make schemes for perfecting Society (the myth), actual human beings (the realities) are forced into moulds, like clay into bricks, to become building-material for someone else's purpose. Intrinsically, Society is a device for regimenting people and the most "socialized" person is simply the one who has been most successful in caging and harnessing his or her honest and natural instincts—that is, the person who has done the cruelest violence to their own ego in the interest of the commonweal.

Fundamentally, capitalism, communism, fascism, theocracy, and liberalism are of one piece—they all consider society an organism, with the individual as but a spore within the social body. All of these collectivist ideologies view Society as inviolable, to be revered and served, not as an abstraction. But society is not an organism and there is no corporate life. There are only individuals, geographically situated near to, or at a distance from, each other. Properly conceived, society is a collection of individuals—that and no more.

The individual is a particularity, society is a generality, and conflict between the two is inevitable.

Mass Society: A giant silent conspiracy of mediocrity whose purpose is to create an average person who is well surrounded and perfectly adapted to the group—all sorts of groups (corporations, townships, counties, states, nations, administrations, clubs, the armed forces, etc)—so that he/she remains contentedly united with others. And this is because in vast herds there are no individuals: there are only types. It's true that these types are called by varied names, but this no more signifies variety than the branding of numbers on cows signifies differences of intelligence. The uniformity of Mass Society is nothing but uniformity of brain-structure.

Mass Society is essentially a tyranny of blandness, devoted to producing statistically normal, xerox-copy consumers, who have only enough potential to continue to be able to perpetuate the status quo. It operates as a monolithic assimilation machine in which individuals are all to be systematized, subjugated, classed, grooved, wired, stuffed, squeezed and frozen into a limited range of pre-packaged identities (not so different from freeze-dried peas). The aim of this mass socializing process is simply to reduce as many individuals as possible to the same safe level, to breed and train a standardized citizenry, to put down dissent and originality—to produce more and more devalued human stock, with less and less wild spark. What

we are referring to is the continual, systematic development of the populace towards the similar, the ordinary, the commonplace, the stupid – in short, the bovinizing of human beings.

Viewing the Masses as domesticated cows, our rulers have always sought to produce a vast herd of homogenized subjects, individually expendable, docile, and (beyond basic job skills), not too smart—two-legged cows that can be easily milked and, when necessary, guiltlessly slaughtered. The larger population is seen by our political and economic Masters as merely another naturally occurring resource, like oil, coal, or water, that can be drawn upon to fuel their totalistic social enterprise, which is well on its way to becoming one Global System now, with local variants, but no basic divergences.

There is generally little resistance to this incorporation process due to the natural suggestibility to communal indoctrination that Nietzsche called the “herd instinct”. Underlying this herd instinct (and the manipulation of it) is the pathological need to belong, somewhere, anywhere: “our” religion, “our” party, “our” town, “our” school, “our” race, “our” nation. Believe, Belong, Behave, or Be Damned. Mass democracy, mass morality, mass media, and Mass Society all thrive at the expense of the independent individual, who accepts these institutions at a cost of—at minimum—a partial perversion of his/her instincts and insights. They pay for their social ease with what used to be called their uniqueness, their psychic energy, their *self*.

In this mass civilization, humankind has struck a miserable bargain: it has exchanged autonomy and the mind’s freedom for a higher standard of living, for an impression of safety, for frivolous gadgetry and for the consumption of reified experiences. But to individualists, such a bargain is pitiful, and we oppose it with unflinching refusal. For us there is no other choice but individual rebellion, or revolt in concert with the few co-conspirators who share our contempt for standardization.

Outsiders: Those who will not, or cannot, enter a social contract.

Anarchist Society: Classical anarchist writers used to refer to “The Triumph of the Idea”, ie, the idea that Society has no need of coercive and authoritarian forms of organization. The trouble with the anarchist dream of universal fraternity – and with similar utopian schemes – is that it assumes that each individual is capable of being self-determining, an assumption for which there is no evidence whatsoever. Not only this, but it assumes that when all individuals

reach this “capacity” they will all want to pursue the same goal. In other words, out of the diversity of individual revolutions will arise the unanimity needed to achieve the anarchist ideal. This nonsensical conclusion can only be reached by a process of reading one’s own wishes into other individuals, rather like the Christian or the Marxist reading their own interests into the Universe.

Anarcho-individualism is opposed to this type of all-encompassing solidarity as a species of totalitarianism and views the idea of the Anarchist Society as a manifestation of the ideological and quasi-religious tendencies within the anarchist movement. Society is a community of imposed, not shared, values. All societies are based on conformity—on ideology, authority, and control—which anarchists ostensibly defy. Anarchy can only mean individuals, alone or in association, creating their own lives, values, and freedom. The idea—the fixed idea—that we are obligated to toil to produce a society that we want (but others may or may not) presses anarchism into the service of a utopian ideology—a redemptionist secular religion—and leads to a great deal of delusional martyrdom and wasted energy.

It’s time for anarchists to free themselves from the constraints of humanitarian and philanthropic paradigms as they have done from those of other social creeds. Let us expand our own self-determination in the here and now. Let’s begin fighting for our own liberty—not the IDEA of liberty. Anarchy is the end of the sacrifice of real liberty to abstract liberty; it’s the end of the sacrifice of the individual to altruistic dream-concepts.

There’s absolutely no need for anarchists to compete with the peddlers of social and political panaceas—we are not in the same line of business. Anarchism is a philosophy of negation and it lays down no dogmatic rules for the reconstruction of Society and the guidance of those who come after us. This method of utilizing the anarchist critique relieves anarchists of the burden of furnishing a cure for every conceivable ill that may or may not afflict the hypothetical concept called society—and spares us the embarrassment and futility of promulgating stupid social doctrines like equality and justice that have no basis in the world humans actually inhabit. In the end, we can expect as little from Society as from the State. Salvation lies in the individual.

The Revolution: Another calcified myth brittle enough to shatter with a few playful blows. Anarchists who wait for the coming of The Free Society or The Revolution waste their precious lives hoping for a false Messiah. The struggle against authority is here in the present—

not in some improbable, storybook future to which we subordinate our existence. If self-liberation is the goal, then all possible strategies should be presented for individual consideration, but any realistic strategy must be premised on the real world—and explicit anti-authoritarians are a very small fraction of the population of that world. The Masses that revolutionary prophecies are so dependent on have the minds of serfs: for thousands of years they have been bullied, trained, suppressed, and censored into subservience and self-restriction, and while many don't desire slavery as such, their mentalities, customs, and social conditioning constitute a milieu in which governments and other coercive power structures can—and will—arise. Political reform/revolution/re-education has been attempted thousands of times in hundreds of situations over hundreds of centuries, but at most only changes faces and rhetoric. So long as most people can be easily manipulated, they will be manipulated for the aggrandizement of the manipulators. History provides overwhelming empirical evidence for this.

So any talk about continent-sized free societies or globally-linked anarchist federations are just compensatory fantasies born out of a desire to escape the resented meagerness of one's own existence. Too much has happened in human history for us to hold on to the idea that everyone (or even the majority) yearns for freedom. Just drive down your nearest freeway past the endless grotesque tracts of suburbia to observe the values of the Herd exposed in their truest form, directly reflected in the environment—an interminable zone of chain stores, strip malls, and restaurants that has escalated into a monstrous plague, a smothering of the Earth's surface by a culture whose gross national product is garbage. This is widespread mediocrity in its most terminal context, eliminating even the human dignity of a slave. This is how the bulk of Western civilization lives, this is what The People aspire to, and this is what The People, by and large, want.

The Herd is sick and cannot draw sane conclusions; they have been too long poisoned by lies, by flags, by slogans, by price tags, by counterfeit nourishment. Sluggish and benumbed by their own technologically-facilitated comfort, their mental synapses deadened by inaction, rendered both intellectually feeble and physically unfit by domestication, the Masses are not the least bit interested in utopian speculations and cries for "Revolution"! But to the individualist anarchist this is not grounds for despair or defeatism. We can forget about the Herd and become free in our own lives, once we exorcise the collectivist spooks from our heads.

The conscious egoist is even more cynical about large-scale social

change, and while activists and revolutionaries sacrifice themselves for The Cause the conscious egoist might just choose to smile, content to let the ideals-fetishists provide cheap entertainment. Conscious egoists are not revolutionaries, since they are without ideals of social organization and unwilling to sacrifice themselves to any degree to prevent Society from going in the direction of Maoism, plutocracy, or even the Muslim caliphate—unless they decide it to be in their own self-interest. While some political environments are more pleasant than others, the egoist generally sees energy devoted to social transformation as a cup of pure water lost in a salty ocean and applies herself instead to creating the conditions that will maximize the advantage of her ego. He has no need to present himself as a foe or reformer of any social system: his own measure is enough for him. Freedom is not her goal; it is her property. The conscious egoist recognizes that life is too short and too beautiful to sacrifice for ideas, particularly ridiculous ones like governmental restructuring, the dictatorship of the proletariat, or global unity. But hats off to the martyrs!

The State: Mystification is the process by which the mundane is elevated to the divine by those who have a vested interest in its unassailability. Government is a perfect example of mystification at work. The State is a group of individuals organized as a power cartel for the purpose of extracting wealth and exerting political/social control over people and resources in a given geographical area. Ordinarily, most people would violently resist robbers, murderers, and extortionist protection rackets, but in the case of government, most don't because of the mystique of legitimacy the State has created around its activities. Ever since humans became discernibly organized—politically—they have invented entirely theoretical constructs, or myths, that attempt to examine the origins of the State with little or no attention to its historic record, and then try to justify and fortify it in the face of criticism or objection.

Past governments used the divine right of kings, by which monarchs claimed that they were appointed to rule by god as a means of instilling respect—rebellion against the king became rebellion against god. It's clear that the divine-right argument has seen its best days and will never again be a convincing argument, so modern governments have replaced this with the supposed legitimacy derived from such concepts as democracy, patriotism and society. Democracy is a particularly comical case of ideological mystification: by allowing people to choose (either in illusion or in fact) the masters who are to lord over them, the explicit reality of naked force

and military violence is disguised, and the fiction of freedom disseminated—and this is considered by its victims to be highly advanced and just about the last word in social organization. But democracy is merely rule by the State under a new name and whatever may be the trappings with which any regime clothes itself, the fundamental design remains the same—any differences between governments are mostly semantic and formal. Government is a suction-pump on life, and all through human history invasion, conquest, subjugation, and enslavement have been the name of its game. The State, every State, as an institution, is intrinsically the enemy of the people over which it can maintain jurisdiction. In the master-slave relationship that exists between them, the slaves become the pawns in the power moves between governments, which always have and always will institutionalize robbery, coercion, parasitism, and murder as a method for conducting societies.

Once implanted as the controlling agency over circumscribed areas, and the inhabitants thereof, the eradication of these murderous power establishments called States appears to be virtually impossible. Whether the State is considered a necessary evil or a positive good, it is usually thought to be a thing of permanence, like the law of gravitation. It becomes ingrained in the common belief that no society could exist without government (and indeed, what government would allow anything else to be taught in its schools?). The Masses are prepared from infancy to believe and obey and to regard certain concepts—like government—as sacred, beyond access or question. And the most astounding feature of the general political phenomenon is how effective this training has been, how of the several billion people populating the earth, so very few have the wit to see through the governmental hoax in its entirety—to comprehend government not as a committee of citizens chosen to carry on the communal business of the whole population, but as a separate and autonomous corporation, devoted to exploiting the population for the benefit of its own members. By now, if humans actually learned from experience, they would talk about the State in the same tones in which Holocaust survivors discuss the Nazis. Instead, the vast majority continue to imagine the State as their savior and protector, and as the logical solution to all social problems. The measure of the State's public relations success is that the word Anarchy frightens people, while the word State does not.

Yet the State is itself, at the deepest level, an ideological abstraction, much like god—and it exists primarily because we allow it to exist, because we abdicate to it our own authority in the same way we

create god by surrendering our own authority and placing it outside ourselves. What's ultimately more important than the institution of the State is the ruling principle—it's the idea of the State that dominates us, and that holds the Masses in almost inextricable thralldom.

No State can function exclusively through top-down repression (not indefinitely, at least), for this would expose its despotism in all its undressed brutality. It gains most of its power from the superstition of its subjects, and is able to exercise tyranny over them in proportion to the depth of this superstition. In other words, the State relies on people allowing it to dominate them. Anarchist thought differs from other (anti)political philosophies in that it's willing to explore the notion of voluntary servitude; that is, it's interested in the motives for why people allow themselves to be dominated. For this reason, the more lucid anarchists argue that the State must be overcome as an idea before it can be overcome in reality. That is to say, the apparatuses of domination are not limited to economic or political questions—they are also deeply rooted in psychological needs: what must also be attacked is the desire for authority, this slave-spirit inherited from the past, this superstitious reverence for government that is a survival of the respect for the monarch personally, and which is still strong after centuries of collective indoctrination.

One of the distinguishing roles that anarchists play in the human drama (farce or comedy—call it what you will) is to help remove from people's minds reverence for this intangible figment of the imagination called government. As government rests upon the fixed idea of people who believe in the necessity of governance, it is essentially dependent upon the continuance of this fixed idea. Anarchist thought seeks to undermine and dissolve, not merely the fixed idea of government, but the very habits of faith and fixity, and furnishes the condition for the eventual eradication of all political domination. If the various States of the world prey upon the Masses, they do so because the Masses are exploitable material, easily beguiled, filled with culturally-implanted ideas, and distracted with nonsensical moral and political doctrines. And so the battle against statism is not a battle against any particular politician or administration, it's a battle against a way of thinking, a way of viewing the State.

In summation, the only beneficial service a State ever performs is to breed its own enemies—great dissenting individuals like Nietzsche, Palante, Stirner, and Renzo Novatore, whose ideas continue to encourage those who are temperamentally predisposed to exit the Herd.

Statolatry: Statolatry is literally worship of the State, analogous to idolatry as worship of idols. It asserts that the glorification and aggrandizement of State or Nation is the object of all legitimate human aspiration at the expense of all else, including personal welfare and independent thought.

Philosophical Nihilism: A philosophical nihilist is one who refuses to recognize inherited, hand-me-down conventional so-called truths as their own, but on the contrary has a will to one's own critical thinking—to empirical investigation. Critical thinking refers to an attitude where nothing is sacred—in other words, a reevaluation of all existing values and truths.

It seems obvious that Nihilism's (and anarchism's) cognitive basis is a radical individualism. Its very point of departure is thinking, the critical thought which revalues, ie annihilates, all given facts. It is a process in which all outward truths, all ideology, theory, abstraction, is peeled away. This mental procedure can be seen as an act of individuation—that is, a dialectic of rebirth which, through decimation of the outward and inauthentic, brings something new to life: A perception of reality that develops on a plane of inner cognition—not on the plane of external significance.

In this sense, certain strains of anarchist thought (particularly egoism) bear a strong relation to philosophical nihilism. In fact, the German anarchist philosopher Max Stirner's worldview seems to come into being *ex nihilo*. With wonderful consistency Stirner developed a system of thought that mercilessly annihilates the ghosts or spooks of existence: the Divine, humanity, society, patriotism, morality, and all the myriad forms of self-deception. Pursuing this thought process, Stirner ultimately declines to recognize anything outside the single individual ego—the Unique One. This is a form of cognitive alchemy in which the ego exalts itself to the Godhead of its own existence. And with this background one can with some justification assert that Stirner was approaching philosophical nihilism, or at least, solipsistic nihilism.

This is how the anarchist and the philosophical nihilist stand close together in many ways because both, in their radical emphasis on the individual, sooner or later arrive at the "creative nothing" or nothingness. Where it all comes out is, as it were, independent of what this nothingness is, what substance it has. The question is whether the critical thinking in the cognitive process finally encounters a horror vacui—or if at some point arrives at a *core of cores* which makes possible a movement out of this nothingness.

Both egoism and philosophical nihilism, as tools of inner transformation, involve processes of individual perception leading toward freedom. Neither perspective ever has the collective, the people, the nation, the movement, or dogma as its point of departure – but always the individual.

Absolute Deviation: Most minds are merely part of the interwoven ideological fabric of their time and cultural conditions; they are wrapped in a dense mesh of interests, customs, traditions, and preconceived views/social biases which bind them hard to the cheapest commonplace, their thoughts incorporated into the mental whole which constitutes their society; they cannot escape from these psychic bonds because they know not that they are bound.

But every so often an energetic minority appears that is in rebellion against the ossified institutions, social practices, and paradigms of their culture—and who engage in absolute deviation from the thought processes that hold the Herd in thrall. Absolute deviation begins with a suspicion: that the predominant modes of intellectual and political critique in Mass Society don't serve the needs and interests of individual rebels, and that all the ancient axioms regarding authority and political institutions—all the musty, stale theories of freedom and social change—are shallow relics of bygone periods and stumbling blocks to the activities of the present. In order to develop ideas and praxis relevant to the actualization of self-rule one needs to step outside of socialized mentalities entirely and remain in constant opposition to the intellectual currents championed by the System's academic lapdogs. This is no easy task—it requires a Nietzschean "re-evaluation of all values" and a heretical break from the humanistic and post-enlightenment worldview that informs all aspects of the present popular discourse; it requires the banishment of all stereotypical thought, and a total refusal of the fundamental rot pervasive throughout Western civilization's most precious values.

Absolute deviation entails a disdain for all known theories (all existing philosophical, scientific and epistemological systems) and can be viewed as a method for clearing the slate, banishing the spooks, of sweeping aside the heritages that thwart and limit growth, and of severing oneself from the Herd Mind in order to make way for innovative strategies against authority—strategies unheard of, unread of, and undreamed of before.

Morality: Morality is the theory that every human act must be either right or wrong. The purpose of all moral systems is to fix human

behavior through the imposition of absolute standards, which are designed in such a manner as to remain beyond examination and critique. All moral systems are presented as the superior norm, the absolute law, the peremptory order that imposes on everyone, at all times, that which they must do and that which they must not do—applicable to all human beings without exception.

To fully understand how morality functions as a mechanism of Control, it's helpful to examine the psychological functions underpinning moral codes and the justifications used for demanding universal obedience to them. Until recently one of the most common of these justifications was an appeal to god and, indeed, this has not completely disappeared. This god tells us what is right or wrong—or so runs the belief. This metaphysical dream-concept issues rules for us to obey, and if we refuse to do so, this god will punish us, horribly. By threatening other people in such a manner, however, the moralist has changed the question from one of morality to one of expediency, to one of avoiding the painful results of not submitting to someone or something more powerful than ourselves.

Of course, there are those who don't believe in a god who are nonetheless believers in morality. These humanistic moralists seek a sanction for their moral codes in some other fixed idea: the Common Good; a teleological conception of human evolution; the needs of humanity or society; natural rights, and so forth. A critical analysis of this type of moral justification shows that there is no more behind it than there is behind "the will of god". Concepts such as the "common good" or "social welfare" are merely high-sounding pieces of rhetoric used to disguise the particular interests of those making use of them.

It is exactly this dressing up of particular interests as moral laws that lies behind the ideological masquerade of morality. Moral systems function as a concealment of real purpose and motive and are almost always a disguised "will to power". Soak the luminous blueprints of the Moral Saviors of Humanity in the acid of brutal analysis and see the pattern hidden in the scroll: a desire to force a certain line of action upon everyone, a desire to rule and repress. It is only when, at certain times and places, by means of physical force or of superior cunning, some succeed in imposing their particular moral interpretation on others, that a single morality triumphs, understood and followed by all in the same fashion—as in the Middle Ages, when the Catholic Church had dissolved all variety into unity, or as we see today in certain portions of the Islamic world.

One of the most popular uses of the moral myth is to add a garnish to the already unsavory dish of politics. By turning even the

most trivial of political pursuits into a moral crusade one can be assured of the support of the credulous, the vindictive, and the envious, as well as giving a pseudo-strength to the weak and the wavering. While it is to be expected that those who desire to rule others will invoke moral reprimands in an attempt to convert (or purge) the ideological deviationist or critical iconoclast, it's profoundly disheartening to observe self-professed anarchists acting out the same farce, in the form of politically-correct speech codes, dietary restrictions, consumer choices, dogmatic social ethics, and self-righteous slave-moralities like pacifism. It's hard to imagine anything more threadbare, more hopelessly platitudinous, to found an anti-authoritarian rebellion on than morality, yet anarchists do it all the time, to the detriment of their own struggle and credibility.

Egoism—conscious egoism—is neither moral nor immoral. It stands beyond “good and evil”. It is amoral. An egoist may be truthful or untruthful, considerate or inconsiderate, generous or cruel, according to his nature, tastes, or circumstances, and at his own risk, but she is under no obligation to be any of these. She may behave in a way that the moral call “good” or in a way that they call “evil”, but he does so because he judges his interest to lie in one direction or the other, not because she is possessed by the spook of moralism or that of immorality.

While the moralist tends to see conflicts between individuals (and groups and institutions) in terms of “right” and “wrong”, the egoist never considers either adversary right or wrong in any moral sense. Each is simply pursuing the fulfillment of his or her own agenda, and if the conflict cannot be resolved otherwise, it must be settled by force. For, make no mistake, in repudiating the idea of morality egoists make no exception for “violence”. Nor do they draw any pious distinction between the initiation of force or retaliatory force. Either form is used if it is an expedient way of pursuing a given end, and to the egoist there is no moral law prohibiting violence to which they must subordinate their will to personal sovereignty.

To the conscious egoist, the inexistence of morality is as certain as two and two make four, and in this respect, egoism exceeds the bounds of anarchism's most audacious speculations regarding individual sovereignty, acting as a powerful dissolvent for an imagination clogged by theories of “right” and “wrong”. Only after scanning the full horizon of amorality—the nothingness left in the absence of good and evil or any other metaphysical authority—does the individual come face to face with an exhilarating and terrible freedom in which Nothing is True and Everything is Permitted.

Laws: A body of Master/Slave codes.

Rights: The cry that our civil rights are in danger sounds as though it ought to be impressive, but now, as ever, it isn't for the simple reason that *there are no rights*. The belief in natural or inalienable rights is no more than an act akin to the old belief that the moon was made of green cheese. An "inalienable right to life" will not save me from drowning if I cannot swim. An "inalienable right to free speech" will not save me from a dictator's prison or firing squad if I try to exercise it against his decree. Such rights are delusions, which crumble at the first contact with reality.

"Man has the right to subsistence," wrote Thomas Paine. 'Yes,' replied an observant reader, 'He has a right to live 1000 years, if he can.'" It is not a question of right, but of ability: If I don't have the competence to obtain or do something then, no matter how I might huff and puff, I have no right to have or do that thing. In point of fact, to redefine "right" so that it makes sense in the world, the right which always prevails is the one with the most might behind it. To think and act otherwise is to completely misapprehend the nature of power relations in this world.

All anarchists talk of personal empowerment, but tend to demonize and fear power itself, and this has usually been the instrument of their own undoing—from Spain to the Ukraine—and a stumbling block in their line of comprehension. The reality is that rights are won and held through force, through the development and amassing of personal power. That power determines the degree of freedom and autonomy each individual is able to create in their lives is a primary fact, and can't be blown away with windy words on paper.

Power is always the first requisite no matter what they want. Even to lead a quiet non-aggressive retired life in the country, one must have power to insist on these conditions coming into being. Unless an individual—even the most peaceful—has power to resist, one kind of authoritarian or another (with an armed force to support them) will invade his/her privacy—the tax-collector, the sanitary inspector, the school attendance officer, the police squad, the snooping neighbor—and so on from little to more. The necessity for power can never be laid aside, if there are to be any personal rights left to enjoy. Furthermore, privileges are never permanently won: they are easily stamped out by superior force, or lost to complacency and slack efforts of attention. So the price of freedom is to produce individuals with the power to risk, repel, and fight—to assert and reassert—which is not a price at all, but a simple sequence of cause and effect. Any freedoms

that an individual is able to seize will pivot about the strength of his or her individual vitality, their will to power, their fighting spirit—which will be continuously tested by other forces, other wills.

In their wholesale rejection of power (as evidenced by simplistic formulations like “Destroy Power!”), a great many anarchists publically advertize that they aren’t seriously concerned about their own interests in the way that our rulers are about theirs, that they don’t really understand what the possession of power means or entails, nor do they particularly desire to. This is because many of them still adhere to a slave-morality that views power as sinful or wrong, a categorical evil

But to the conscious egoist, the only end that it is worthwhile for the individual to give his/her attention to, is the increase of their own power. They see clearly that what is right is what I prefer and what you and the rest prefer. Where these freedoms overlap, different wills fight it out; their power becomes umpire, their might is their right. All else is a mask.

Spook: A term coined in Max Stirner’s book *The Ego and His Own*. In Stirner’s analysis and critique of western civilization’s development, specifically its political, societal, and religious development, the spook (alternately ghost, spirit, essence,) represents what the Christian’s pursue as the highest essence of man, ostensibly the “holy spirit,” as the truth of the world. Out of the ancient belief in ghosts and gods arose domination by abstractions. By making the reality of the world into spirit and the spirit realm, the actual world becomes a deceitful semblance; the spook becomes a corporeal ghost, in actuality Man himself.

Possession by “spooks” is tantamount to blindness; they’re a lampshade placed over our actual and potential perceptual field, and to accept the validity of such abstractions as god, Society, Nation, and Class is to condemn oneself to wandering in a perpetual fog haunted by the ghosts of what are no more than human inventions. Only when one realizes that law, right, morality, religion, etc are nothing other than artificial concepts, or spooks, and not holy authorities to be obeyed, can one act freely and authentically.

Iconoclast: Iconoclast means breaker of images (the name image in antiquity applied to all religious figures, either painted or sculpted). Its official definition designates those persons or sects opposed to the adoration of images and pursuing their destruction.

Extending the use of the word, giving it a fuller meaning, most anarchists regard themselves as iconoclasts. For anarchists attempt to annihilate not only the images of saints, but those of all gods, of all idols, of all abstractions ruling in an alien interest from without. Bowing before no moral or material authority, anarchists strive to demolish from top to bottom the old authoritarian structures that rule over us. This is why with their innate disrespect for established precepts and institutions they're committed to smashing all images (state, religion, politics, flags, property, bosses, fatherlands, etc) with which people are still today infected and fooled, and which make slavery last.

Nothing is easier, once you are set that way, than to smash popular idols. But the greatest sport, and the rarest, is to smash the idols we have constructed in our own minds, to root out the structures of domination within ourselves, which are "authority that has penetrated to the interior". That sweet joy is given to the ironic nihilists who, with their Diogenes lamps glowing, lay siege to the citadels of fixed ideas that they have erected in their own consciousness.

Iconoclasm is the solid basis of Anarchism and of atheism, for it destroys the awe, reverence, and obedience upon which all despotisms thrive. To the critical iconoclast, reverence is the enemy of thought, and the equivalent of stupidity and psychic laziness. Their delight is in dethroning the serious, deflating the pompous, in breaking and dissolving the dominion of ideas (images), and setting to flames the rotting ramparts of the House of Certainties. For every time an idol, or sacred idea, is razed, the clatter of its fall has the potential of breaking the spell of hypnotism that the architects of Society and Culture (the moralists) have laid upon the minds of their host subjects—the billions of human flies caught in the thought strands of programmed beliefs. The iconoclastic spirit is a cathartic force that burns all bridges, cuts all bonds, and shows no philosophic quarter towards modes of unthinking acceptance and faith.

In the battlefield of ideas that is life in the modern world, this unending clash between contesting illusions, the iconoclast will, in the long run, outlive the Idealist because they carry no useless baggage and keep their eyes open; they come to know in a flash how purely arbitrary are affirmative ideas about anything, and concepts that are sacred to others collapse in foam and bubbles, before their laughing insolence.

Iconoclasts operate by the principle that the final test of truth is ridicule, since very few dogmas have ever faced it and survived. H. L. Mencken put it well when he said:

The iconoclast proves enough when he proves by his blasphemy that this or that idol is defectively convincing - that at least one visitor to the shrine is left full of doubts. The liberation of the human mind has been best furthered by gay fellows who heaved dead cats into sanctuaries and then went roistering down the highways of the world, proving to all men that doubt, after all, was safe - that the god in the sanctuary was a fraud. One horse-laugh is worth ten-thousand syllogisms.

Every true iconoclast is accused of being an enemy of society—and should be.

Iconoclasm: Perpetual warfare on standardized thinking.

Belief System: An ensemble of beliefs, codified in a system of religious, moral, or political ideology and including rules for behavior and speech, taboos, and often a dress code. Belief systems are almost always tools for social conditioning, rather than expressions of inner realization or Universal Truth, and are most often utilized as a wall of defense against the prying questions of intelligence. They act primarily as crutches or places of refuge for the insecure, modes of thought that keep the weak-willed anchored in a frequently bewildering and frightening world by inhibiting thought and protecting faith from analysis: They are the grass upon which the sheep spend their short lives grazing—safe, satisfied and stagnant.

Everywhere, from all sides, belief systems press thick on us, suffocating life, competing for our allegiance, alienating the mind from its own thoughts and precluding any creative spontaneous relationship with that which the belief system attempts to explain. Freedom from this perceptual tyranny is only possible when ideas are seen as the creations and tools of the individual. Self-determination, individual sovereignty, the realization of anarchy, is not possible to those enslaved to belief systems. On the contrary, it is by the destruction of all credos, of all beliefs, that the individual begins the journey towards self-ownership.

Belief: Political and religious ideologues will argue endlessly about the superiority of one belief system over another, but very few people possess the intelligence or courage to consider giving up belief

altogether. We see the process of belief as a process of self-deception. Basically, it's a vehicle by which ideas can gain control over people's minds and therefore their lives. Beliefs dictate the precise parameters of people's consciousness of their behavior and perceptions. A belief paints the world in its own color and doesn't have to be valid to shape thought. In fact, the chief function of belief is to shape thought, and belief is mainly used to set up a pattern of expectations in a person's brain that causes them to ignore all aspects of reality that don't fit in. Then, all the conflicting realities in the world are subtracted until it all fits their pattern of belief, thought, and outlook (a good example would be the persistent Marxist hallucination that proletarian revolution is just around the corner!).

Since most people's thought is shaped from without, by outside influences—tied into various belief patterns that also come from the outside—they're locked into processes over which they have no control. Freedom from domination begins with psychological liberation from the fixed ideas that can run and ruin one's life: whatever is held sacred or above question is an authority that limits individual sovereignty.

Ludic Belief: A belief that can be modified by playing with it. The word delusion comes from the Latin suffix *de*, meaning "away" and the Latin verb *ludere*, "to play". Going strictly with the etymology, delusion means "what leads away from play". From this one might draw a general conclusion: any belief or belief system you cannot play with is probably delusional!

Ideologue:

- 1) a mesmerized subject that seems to act as an individual, but who is actually under the foreign control of an idea or belief system.
- 2) A mentally paralyzed human imprisoned in a net of conceptual imperatives.
- 3) A fanatic who knows what they believe and doesn't want to be confused by the facts.

Ideology:

- 1) beliefs going bald
- 2) A large net used to capture unorthodox and enchanted thoughts
- 3) Rigid forms of thought that seek to reduce the complexity of life's landscape to inflexible and sacred formulas
- 4) The self-deluded security of dead thought in a world of flux

Anarchists and other free thinkers would do well to remain guarded and skeptical towards all ideologies, anarchism included. Anarchism, as an anti-political philosophy, has been an instrument of liberation, but is not necessarily bound to remain such an instrument. There is nothing inherent in anarchism or any other ideology that makes it essentially liberating. Ideologies all too often deteriorate and become stupid religions (just look at Marxism!) and anarchist thought is perhaps best approached as a starting point, not something fixed or finished, not a conclusion, but rather a continual becoming, a protean, deconstructing, inquiring force that restlessly reinvents itself in new shapes and wages unremitting war against all dogma, codes, conventions, systems, and authority.

Political Ideologies: Generally speaking, political ideologies are nothing but a thin veil for a purely theoretical fanaticism bearing all the ear-marks of a new religion – a fetishistic cult woven around some intellectual’s notion of new (and invariably, universalistic) social values. Political dogmatists would like you to swallow their narrow-minded, neat, and tidy ideological packages whole, without the structural fragmentation that occurs with critical thought. There will be no talk of contradiction, no mention of paradoxes, no space for subjectivity or the development of ideas. Mixing ideas/information from different sources is forbidden. You either have all the apples from one tree or all the apples from another, regardless of the condition of said apples. Never shall thou pick the best of the whole orchard – if you play by the rules, that is.

It is here that the confining and asphyxiating nature of political ideologies starts to reveal itself: to be a respected member of the club/cult you need to obey the club/cult’s rules (of thought). If you voice an original idea that does not fit in with the (divine) manifesto – out you go! The political ideologue has become so intoxicated by the force of the idea that they’ve embraced – be it socialism, communism, feminism, ethnic nationalism, or anarchism – that the idea itself has obtained an ascendancy incompatible with the practice of free thought. The political ideologue has fallen under the domination of a fixed idea and in that respect is like a fanatic, impelled to all sorts of senseless interference with other people’s conduct.

The critical thinker, on the other hand, is not someone who has merely seen through the slavery of ideology – political or otherwise – but someone who has outgrown its habitual sway, broken its scepter, and who refuses to serve an abstraction, no matter how captivating that abstraction might appear.

The Herd: "Be hard, and live dangerously!" is the continual auto-suggestion of the Nietzschean individualist. This is merely the crystallization into formula of all those who have instinctively and temperamentally viewed life as an adventure, an adventure both in self-reliance and the unforeseen. If they sleep at times it's only as strength-recruiting periods for further hazards, to breed more potently anarchic dreams and to gather their forces for a more savage descent on life.

"Be soft, and live in security!" is the slogan of the social, huddling animal. Like sheep, they are kept alive by the friction of friendly ass-rubbing, habitual repetition of social scripts, and Mutually Observable Banality. The one dominant emotion of the herd human is fear—fear of the unknown, the complex, the inexplicable. Their instincts incline them towards a womb society so organized that it will protect them from all hazards, and not only perils against their hides, but also assaults upon their minds—against the need to grapple with unaccustomed problems, to weigh ideas, to think things out for themselves, to scrutinize the platitudes upon which their everyday thinking is based. They are the political and social animals of perfect breed, for, having no thinking apparatus, they can't decompose their illusions. In exchange for security against starvation and the vexations of thought the herd human becomes an automatic saluter, a loyal citizen, a copybook thinker, cannon-fodder for the ideals of Mass Society, and the battery that energizes the larger social hologram. They worship at the godhead of Authority—the embalmed historic lies—and stand solidly arrayed against variation from the Mass.

The truth is that the average person's love of liberty, like their love of free thought and personal sovereignty, is almost wholly imaginary. The Herd human is not actually happy when free; they are uncomfortable, a bit alarmed, and intolerably lonely. They long for the warm, reassuring smell of the Herd and are willing to take the Herdsman with it. What the human Herd animal longs for in this world, before and above all other longings, is the simplest and most humiliating sort of peace—the peace of a trustee in a well-managed penitentiary. They are willing to sacrifice everything else to it. They put it above their dignity and they put it above their self-respect. The average Herd animal doesn't want to be free: they simply want to be safe.

People can usefully be separated into two psychological categories: the Collectivist-Conformist being (the Herd human)

and the Individualistic-Self Reliant being. There are degrees of each, fine shadings and interlappings and overlappings, but as a perfect equilibrium between the two tendencies is inconceivable, one or the other psychological characteristic will dominate every human being. Society is structured to suppress the natural instincts of the individualist-being to acquire power and freedom—ie sovereignty—in an effort to keep everyone at the compliant level of the herd. And the real battle will always be fought along these lines—whether or not the individual is to submerge his/her individuality into the mass and be amalgamated into the totality of the civilized social order.

The anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre once advanced the notion that if you kept going down to the bottom, in an attempt to search out the reason for the existence of individual attitudes toward political, philosophical, and related questions, you got back down to a biological basis—what she called temperament—which was not capable of being understood or measured by any kind of rational approach; and that was basically a genetic factor. In other words, no amount of persuasion by way of literature, conversation, preaching, peer pressure, or propaganda has ever been able to produce anarchists or individualists in any larger volume than exists in ratio to the total population, and attempts to convert are therefore futile. Individuals who arrive at anarchist consciousness do so because they are psychically conducive to those ideas to begin with, as a matter of temperament, and don't go through any bona fide conversion at all—all they do is come to an awareness of what they really are.

The stupidity, servility, and submission of the Herd is one of the earliest recorded and longest-enduring facts of history, and it would seem sensible to calculate on it being part of the real world until our race dies out. The sheep who crave the comforts and security of subordination have always outnumbered the free spirits and there is no credible evidence that this relationship is likely to change in any appreciable degree now or at any foreseeable time. It would therefore behoove anarchists to come to terms with reality here, and admit that their ranks are not going to expand to any significant extent, and readjust their main efforts towards seeking out those who are congenially disposed to the ideas of self-rule, instead of hoping to make such ideas acceptable on a vast scale among those who are constitutionally incapable of sympathizing with, much less adopting, them. Anarchy would be to the Mass what the most beautiful colors are to the blind and the most beautiful harmonies to the deaf. People not already gifted with a rebellious temperament rarely respond to anti-authoritarian appeals of any kind, and one may bury

someone with servile tendencies in copies of *The Ego and His Own* and produce nothing except suffocation. The sad, bitter truth is that freedom (self-ownership) is not of the slightest interest to the Herd human. They are incapable of enjoying it themselves and can think of it in others only as something to be taken away from them.

Self-rule, or individual sovereignty, when it becomes a reality, is always the exclusive possession of a small and disreputable minority of social heretics, for the realization of total liberty must above all be the work of the individual, and the fruit of his or her own efforts. A special sort of person is needed to understand it, let alone wield it, and they inevitably become outlaws in most societies. These individuals—*anarchists* in the original and most meaningful sense of the term—hold by the instinct that emergence from the herd is the proof positive that they not of the herd; that to be conscious of their emergence is their distinction and master achievement, and to maintain and accentuate it is their supreme business; consequently, they strive to make their individual conquests impregnable; incapable of being broken into or broken down. Their insurrection has one simple and attainable goal: to see to it that they shall not be compelled to kneel.

Civilization: The last refinement of the herding instinct.

Rewilding: Centuries of the civilizing process have erected boundaries and psychic inhibitors in humans; boundaries that restrict and curtail their behavior. To get beyond these boundaries requires the simple practice of violating them, and violating them is as simple as stepping over a line drawn in the sand, because they are, in fact, every bit as imaginary. Yet at the same time these boundaries constitute the ice that negates the fire of wildness; they must be burned away and overcome before the instinctive component of humans can re-attain its rightful stature. Transgressing socially constructed boundaries isn't just about the act itself, it's more about erasing internal limitations by violating external ones. It's about a process of self-overcoming: Real acts carried out in the external world that result in a demonstrable transformation of the internal world.

Wild: Wild means "not tamed or domesticated...being one of a kind not ordinarily subjected to domestication." It means "growing or produced without the aid and care of man: not cultivated: brought forth by unassisted nature." Wild means "not amenable to control, restraint, or domestication: UNRULY, UNGOVERNABLE."

It means (of a ship) "hard to steer." It means "exceeding normal or conventional bounds in thought, design, conception, or execution: EXTRAVAGANT, FANTASTIC, VISIONARY." It means "not acculturated to an advanced civilization: RUDE, UNCIVILIZED, BARBARIC." It means "not yielding to a governmental authority: SAVAGE, INTRACTABLE, REBELLIOUS."

Wild means "deviating from a natural or expected course, goal, or practice: acting, appearing, or being manifested in an unexpected, undesired, or unpredictable manner: RANDOM, ERRATIC." It means "not accounted for by any known theories." It means (of a playing card): "having a denomination determined by the will of the holder."

Max Stirner: A German intellectual heretic best known as the author of the idiosyncratic and provocative book *Der Einzige Und Sein Eigenthum* (1844), familiar to English readers as *The Ego and His Own*. In this radically disconcerting work, Stirner launches a devastating anti-authoritarian and individualist critique of modern western society as dominated by religious modes of thought and ideological abstractions. This truly subversive critique renounces all truths that are held to be sacred (such as law, morality, social convention, and government) as nothing but artificial concepts or "spooks". Liberation from these external constraints is achieved with what Stirner calls the self-discovery of mind, an act of conscious determination to become the possessor of concepts, rather than the possessed.

The Ego and His Own caused no little stir among the intellectuals of Europe after its publication. Stirner's new age, the age of the individual, demands more than just reform of the existing value structure; it calls for a new way of thinking. The individual, in order to be free, must refuse to be possessed by any of the fixed ideas, by wheels in the head, by abstractions that have no real meaning to his or her selfness. He or she must instead, possess. Under Stirner's withering scrutiny, all ideologies and "belief systems" are seen as baseless, and his furiously coherent critique clears the odor of dead dogmas from the mental atmosphere. Stirner plays a pitiless game in which the philosophical proprieties of his age are massacred, criticizing the radical Enlightenment thinkers of his time because they had *only* "murdered God," thus *only* disposing of the "other world outside us"; because they, the "pious atheists," would nevertheless have retained the basis of religious ethics, that "other world in us," and realized this in a secular form (as humanist morality).

Stirner's name appears with regularity in surveys of the history

of anarchist thought as one of the earliest and strongest exponents of individualist anarchism. Yet, after reading Stirner it's hard to avoid the conclusion that he would have no more traffic with anarchism than with any other "ism", and in fact, remains to this day far in advance of most anarchists with his insurrectionary and menacing egoism. The affinity between Stirner and the anarchist tradition lies in several things: his condemnation of the State as an illegitimate institution, his critique of ideology, and his concept of self-ownership. For Stirner, a State is never a neutral player, since there is necessary conflict between individual self-rule and the insistence on obeying the law (on which the supposed legitimacy of the State is founded). Given that individual self-determination trumps any competing consideration, Stirner concludes that the demands of the State are not binding on the individual. But unlike the fanatical anarchist, he doesn't think that individuals have, as a result, any obligation to oppose and/or eliminate the State (insofar as this is within their power). Only in cases where there is a conflict between the autonomy of the egoist and the will of the State does he recommend resisting the alleged authority of the law. That said, while individual egoists have no duty to overthrow the State, Stirner does think that the State will eventually collapse as a result of the spread of egoism—and of the ridicule, indifference, and aversion with which government are regarded by Egoists. The cumulative effect of a growing egoistic disrespect for law, he suggests, would scuttle the ship of state.

"Own will and the State", Stirner writes, "are powers in deadly hostility, between which no perpetual peace is possible". Stirner's negation of social duty and political obligation is absolute, and he follows straight ahead to the very limits of his thought, to the utmost limit of its logical consequences: Even in the hypothetical case of a direct democracy in which a collective decision has been made unanimously, Stirner denies that the egoist would be bound by the result. "My will of yesterday", he maintains, "would be to turn my 'self' into my commander; it would be to freeze my will."

As well as providing a negative account of the institutions, mind-sets, and practices that egoists must reject as incompatible with autonomy, *The Ego and His Own* also contains some brief sketches on the possible shape of relationships that don't conflict with individual self-mastery. Stirner briefly discusses what he calls the "Union of Egoists," a partnership of autonomy that enables individuals to unite without loss of sovereignty, without swearing allegiance to anyone's flag. At one point, Stirner acknowledges that few readers of *The Ego and His Own* will draw any comfort from his vision of an

egoistic future, but insists that the welfare of this audience is not of any interest to him. Instead, Stirner suggests that if he had been motivated by a concern for others, then he would have had to conceal rather than propagate his ideas!

Stirner's attacks on systematic philosophy, his denial of absolutes, and his rejection of abstractions of any kind often place him among the first philosophical nihilists. His caustic demolition of fixed ideas and uncanny sacred worlds leads him ultimately to a view of the self that is like a nameless void—a "creative nothing" from which mind and inspiration arise. In place of an existence governed and defined by belief systems, Stirner presents a detached life of non-dogmatic, open-minded engagement with the world "as it is" (unpolluted by faith of any kind, be it religious or political), coupled with the awareness that there is no fixed identity, but that each individual's uniqueness consists solely in its "creative nothingness" prior to all concepts. For Stirner, to be free is to be both one's own creature (in the sense of creation) and one's own creator (dislocating the traditional role assigned to the gods). In a sense, what Stirner is advocating is a de-civilizing procedure, whereby individuals stop placing their mental center of gravity outside themselves, and realize that they're animals, that ideas have just as much existence as language and are processes, no more, no less. The whole issue is self-possession or ownness, a method that dissolves uncanny sacred worlds for inhabitable and life-enhancing ones.

Of course, no one who has read and understood *The Ego and His Own* would ever regard Stirner's ideas as sacred or unquestionable. As much as we encourage anti-authoritarians to familiarize themselves with Stirner, *The Ego and His Own* is neither a revelation from above nor from below. It is a ruthlessly consistent exposition of individualist anarchism that can inspire or enrage (according to one's tastes), but in the end it is nothing more than a book written by an individual. To try, even in sarcasm, to label it as holy gospel is to transform Stirner himself into just another spook.

Something else entirely is wanted in this bloody twilight of a civilization whose time is over! Either Death or a new Dawn where Individuality lives above every thing.

Renzo Novatore

All truly individual acts are anti-social.

Antonin Artaud

To Sketch the Echo and To Paint the Link!

a list of recommended readings

I am an individualist by nature. Of anarchist literature, Stirner has been the main influence on me. The others—E. Armond, for instance—didn't evolve new ideas, but were Stirnerites themselves. Indeed, you cannot go beyond Stirner because Stirner rejected every form of authority. He was the only anarchist who was able to unmask all forms of authority, whether of institutions or of conception—state, religion, duty, honor, fatherland—all that tradition holds sacred. For Stirner they are all "spooks". He was the only one who did not compromise in any form, the one who wanted a complete individual, an individual who would realize his complete personality and attain full freedom.

Enrico Arrigoni

The Ego and His Own by Max Stirner

There is still only one English translation of Stirner's anti-philosophical masterwork, but it has gone through numerous printings and what distinguishes each edition are the introductory pieces and bibliographical annotations. The four editions that stand out in this regard are the 1907 edition—the first English one—which contains a preface by Benjamin Tucker and a superb introduction by James L. Walker; the 1927 version, with its inspired introduction by John Henry Mackay; the 1963 edition, published by the Libertarian Book Club in New York City, with a first-rate introduction by James J. Martin; and finally, the 1982 printing by Rebel Press—the publishers of Richard Parry's *The Bonnot Gang*—which opens with S.E. Parker's tremendous introductory essay. All of these editions are highly recommended.

Max Stirner's Dialectical Egoism by John F. Walsh

This book is by far the strongest English-language examination of Stirner's ideas that I've come across. Released in October of 2010, this exceptional study investigates Stirner's impact on four formidable thinkers: James L. Walker, Benjamin Tucker, Dora Marsden, and Nietzsche. The section on Tucker is pretty wearisome, but the essays on Walker and Dora Marsden alone make this book absolutely essential reading, in particular a fascinating essay entitled "Reciprocity and Predation in Everyday Life: The Egoist Thought of James L. Walker".

The Philosophy of Egoism by James L. Walker

Considered by many to be the most important statement originally written in the English language delineating the basic position of philosophical egoism. When taken in tandem with *The Ego and His Own* and John Badcock, Jr's *Slaves To Duty*, there remains little to add to complete the fundamentals of this philosophical impulse. What makes Walker particularly interesting is that he also identified as an anarchist and developed his egoist analysis from this position—or maybe it was vice versa. In any case, a full scale anthology of his vital contributions to Benjamin Tucker's journal *Liberty* is long overdue, and perhaps the samples of Walker's unique genius that we've reprinted here will inspire someone to make that happen.

The Anarchists: A Picture of Civilization at the Close of the Nineteenth Century by John Henry Mackay

The first of Mackay's two "Books of Freedom", *The Anarchists* is a moving account of life on the streets of London in 1887. Although presented in fictionalized form, the book details the author's experience of the poverty, hunger and discontent among the native and immigrant working and unemployed masses within the "Heart of the World-Metropolis". The various movements for social change are described in great detail, with the similarities and differences between communist and individualist anarchism highlighted in dramatic fashion. The strained friendship between two anarchists, Carrard Auban the individualist and Otto Trupp the communist, makes this account even more relevant to today's world of political duplicity.

The Freedomseeker: The Psychology of a Development
by John Henry Mackay

This follow-up to *The Anarchists* traces the psychological development of one individual, Ernst Foerster, in his quest for freedom. Drawing on his own experience, Mackay portrays Foerster's life as a search for meaning in a world suffering under the brutal and oppressive force wielded by those in authority, and embodied in the State. It is the story of an individual's struggle against—and triumph over—domination, hypocrisy and despair. And in the course of the narrative, the author's philosophy of individual sovereignty and equal freedom is drawn in fine details and broad strokes.

Max Stirner: His Life and His Work by John Henry Mackay

The path-breaking work that rescued the shadowy and elusive Stirner from oblivion. Thoroughly researched, this is still the only biography of Stirner available.

The Pathbreaker: John Henry Mackay's Life and Work by K.H.Z.

Soleneman; translated from the German by Hubert Kennedy

John Henry Mackay has been called "Germany's poet-anarchist", but he was much more than this. In his time he gained literary recognition as a talented novelist and short story writer, and his two "Books of Freedom", *The Anarchists* and *The Freedomseeker* are highly readable expositions on the principles of individualist anarchism. This book tells not only the story of his extraordinary life and career, but also gives an evaluation of his literary and intellectual accomplishments, and his contributions to egoist thought. Based on extensive research, as well as the personal acquaintance of the author with Mackay, it is the most complete biography of him you can find in English.

Germany's Poet-Anarchist John Henry Mackay by Thomas A. Riley
An engrossing read that examines Mackay's anarchism and his impact on German literature at the turn of the century.

John Henry Mackay: Anarchist of Love by Hubert Kennedy

This book itself is a "labor of love" and looks at Mackay's involvement in the struggle for queer liberation under the nom de plume of "Sagitta", author of the "Books of the Nameless Love". Hubert Kennedy is by far the best source for information regarding this aspect of Mackay's life.

Reading John Henry Mackay by Hubert Kennedy

Another book on Mackay by Hubert Kennedy; this one explores his short stories and poetry in the context of gay liberation.

Slaves To Duty by John Badcock, Jr

John Badcock, Jr was a British individualist anarchist who was actively involved in the Free Currency" and Free Love movements of the 1890s and who set himself against the prevailing altruistic and leftist currents of his time to proclaim the sovereignty of the individual. Acknowledging Nietzsche and Stirner as his inspiration, Badcock regularly contributed articles and letters to Benjamin Tucker's *Liberty*. Surprisingly, it was not his egoistic critiques that caused the most controversy amongst *Liberty's* readers, but his 1896 article called "The Money Famine", which opposed the State's monopolization of money issuance! What he'll be most remembered for, however, is this devastating essay where he mounts a sustained attack on the spook of duty, not only as a word without a referent, but also as a disguise for the domination of some people by others, and as an obstacle to the individual's self-determination. Duty, to Badcock, boils down to imposed obligation, self-sacrifice, the waste of living powers, and the thralldom of the

individual to authority—and only when this superstition is abandoned is the mind really emancipated and the individual free to rise to the highest experience of which his or her nature is capable. Self-styled revolutionaries will find Badcock's arguments mortifying, if they can even bring themselves to read them at all.

Benjamin R. Tucker and The Champions Of Liberty Edited by Michael E. Coughlin, Charles H. Hamilton and Mark A. Sullivan

In general, I find Tucker to be a confused idealist and a failed systematizer—and the economic theories formulated by him and his cohorts bore me to tears. Proudhon and mutualism are both anathema to me, but out of the numerous books available on Tucker and his circle, this is probably the one to read, as it contains three excellent essays: "Laurance Labadie: Keeper of The Flame" by Mildred J. Loomis and Mark A. Sullivan; "The New Freewoman: Dora Marsden and Benjamin R. Tucker" by S.E. Parker, and "The Non-Economic Debates in Liberty" by Wendy McElroy.

"The Place of the Individual In Society" by Emma Goldman

One of Emma Goldman's most poignant and unsung essays.

I Am Not A Man, I Am Dynamite! Friedrich Nietzsche and the Anarchist Tradition edited by John Moore and Spencer Sunshine.

(Autonomea)

When dynamite is used, it is always to blow something up—but sometimes what is being blown up is what is blockading a way forward, in order to clear the way for something else, something intended to be an improvement. Similarly, hammers—mentioned in the subtitle of Nietzsche's: *How One Philosophizes With a Hammer*—can be used to build, to smash, or, as in *Twilight*, to tap on idols to reveal that they are hollow. Nietzsche, dynamite with a hammer, can therefore write:

I am by far the most terrible human being that has existed so far; this does not preclude the possibility that I shall be the most beneficial. I know the pleasure in destroying to a degree that accords with my powers to destroy—in both respects I obey my Dionysian nature which does not know how to separate doing No from saying Yes. I am the first immoralist: that makes me the annihilator par excellence.

Nietzsche was a harsh critic of anarchists in his lifetime—he lumped them together with socialists, christians, and other altruistic "do-gooders"

who have a fundamentally diseased conception of human existence—but in my opinion, anarchist thought would be greatly strengthened by a familiarity with Nietzsche's ideas, especially with works like *On The Genealogy of Morals*. In an era dominated by stale anti-imperialist rhetoric and shallow cries for social justice, Autonomedia deserves much praise for putting together this phenomenal anthology.

From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power by Saul Newman

Worth checking out even just for the essay "Stirner and the Politics of the Ego". In recent years Saul Newman has written for various periodicals a number of other interesting pieces dealing with Stirner, such as "Spectres of Stirner: A Contemporary Critique of Ideology", "Spectres of the Uncanny: The Return of the Repressed in Politics", "Max Stirner and The Politics of Post-Humanism", "Voluntary Servitude Reconsidered: Radical Politics and the Problem of Self-Domination" and "War on the State: Stirner and Deleuze's Anarchism". While some of these are available online, they have only been collected in outrageously-priced University Press hardcover editions. *From Bakunin To Lacan* is really his only affordable book.

The Bonnot Gang: The Story of the French Illegalists by Richard Parry

This book is an excellent, highly detailed account of the legendary French anarchist gang—"auto-bandits" who were the first group to use getaway cars during the course of robberies. Don't even think about skipping the preface to the book because this is an essential part in understanding how the members of the so-called Bonnot Gang were a symptom of their highly-explosive times. The term *Bonnot Gang* by the way, was the name given by the sensationalistic French press to a loosely connected group of French individualist anarchists—some were friends and some only had the barest acquaintance with the others. The author, Richard Parry, points out that they "were not a close-knit criminal band in the classical style, but rather a union of egoists associated for a common purpose."

Tracing the ideas and influence of Max Stirner and his book *The Ego and Its Own*, Parry credits Stirner as a powerful influence on anarchist-individualism and spends the marvelous first chapter describing the anarchist scene in France and the growth of anarchist theories of illegalism. The story of the Bonnot Gang is an integral part of anarchist history and it's a story that raises some intriguing questions regarding personal insurrection—questions that certainly deserve contemporary attention. But even apart from all that, Parry's book is an excellent read. The book includes a bibliography, index, and many black and

white photos. 189 pages, published by Rebel Press.

Without A Glimmer Of Remorse

by Pino Caccuci, translated by Paul Sharkey

A fascinating dramatized fiction of the life and times of Jules Bonnot, his gang, and associates, and the individualist anarchists of the time, including the young Victor Serge. An affectionate, fast-paced, embellished but basically historically accurate account of the life of the extraordinary illegalist Bonnot—worker, soldier, egoist—a man with a long cherished dream of absolute freedom, and the first bank-robbler to use a getaway car.

La Bande á Bonnot: Robberies and Getaways by Ezra Brett Mell

Another riveting study of the Bonnot Gang, published by Short Fuse Press out of London.

Jacob: Volume by Bernard Thomas

A biography of Marius Jacob, the French Illegalist. Introduction by Alfredo M. Bonanno. Translated by Paul Sharkey and published by Short Fuse Press.

Anarchism and Violence by Oswaldo Bayer (Elephant Editions)

A biography of the Italian insurrectionary anarchist Severino di Giovanni. Like many others di Giovanni was obliged to flee Mussolini's Italy, eventually settling in the large Italian expatriate community in Argentina. There he engaged himself in anti-fascist activity, and then, stimulated by the murder of Sacco & Vanzetti, he began to "light the fuse on the dynamite of vengeance". From May 1926 to his death by firing squad on February 1st 1931 he carried on a campaign of bombings and anarchist propaganda, funded at the end by bank robberies. This included not merely publishing a paper called *Culmine* while on the run from the police, but also establishing a print shop to publish anarchist classics, producing the first volume of a collected *Élisée Reclus*. Di Giovanni is a figure of interest to anyone who's dreamed of making real their desire to strike back. However he is almost entirely unknown to English-speaking anarchists. This book is a translation of what is supposed to be the best book about Di Giovanni and gives a very interesting account of his activities.

The Buenos Aires Tragedy, 29 January-2 February 1931 : The Last Fight of Severino di Giovanni and Paulo Scarfó. Translated by Paul Sharkey (Kate Sharpley Library)

No discussion of Italian Anarchism, the movement in Argentina or

illegalism can pass over Severino di Giovanni and his comrades. With both written propaganda and acts of violence they attacked fascism, the framing of Sacco and Vanzetti, the dictatorship, and the entire capitalist order. Their uncompromising revolt led them into conflict with other anarchists—and to a final, fatal showdown with the State. This pamphlet is a tribute originally published in *L'Adunata dei refrattari*, drawing on letters from comrades in Argentina who had escaped the final repression. A letter from América Scarfó—lover of Severino, sister of Paulo, and comrade of both—is also included.

Sabate: Guerilla Extraordinary by Antonio Tellez (Elephant Editions)

This book tells of the life and actions of anarchist guerilla Francisco Sabate in the struggle against Franco's dictatorship until Sabate's was killed (in 1960). Sabate's inspiring story shows the many possible ways for individuals to strike at the enemy, no matter what form it takes—and with or without the support of others.

The Right To Be Greedy: Theses On The Practical Necessity Of Demanding Everything by For Ourselves

A provocative attempt to reconcile Stirner with Marx by a group of situationist-influenced Bay Area dissidents! First published in 1974, this underground classic proposes a "resonance of egoisms" as an alternative to the individualist versus collectivist dichotomy of class struggle anarchism and communism. Not always convincing, but important for its originality, its challenging assertions, its ideological heresies, and its entertainment value. A quick and highly recommended read.

Journey Through Utopia by Marie Louise Berneri

Marie Louise Berneri (March 1, 1918 – April 13, 1949) was born in Arezzo, Italy, the elder daughter of anarchists Camillo & Giovanna Berneri. The family went into exile in 1926 for resisting Mussolini and in 1936 her father went to Spain to fight against the fascists in the Spanish Civil War. He was assassinated by communists in 1937. After her father's death Marie engaged in anarchist activity in London and wrote this prophetic (but much neglected) anti-authoritarian study of Utopia, which takes a hard look at "the dark places of the dream" Marie-Louise Berneri died during childbirth (along with her baby) on April 13, 1949 at the age of 31.

Crowds and Power by Elias Canetti

Canetti was a Nobel Prize winning novelist and theorist most famous for this book, a wide-ranging historical and psychological study of human crowd behavior across time, religion, and geography.

Towards The Creative Nothing by Renzo Novatore

In Novatore's writing, one finds a clear contempt for the masses, not out of any aristocratic notions of inherent worth, but because they have behaved despicably and idiotically, going even against their own interests to participate in their own meaningless slaughter. Novatore will not excuse anyone who is less than great.

The Rebel's Dark Laughter by Bruno Filipi

Filipi was a Stirnerist and collaborated with Novatore on *Iconoclasta!* This is the main available collection (however small) of his translated writing.

The Theory of the Individual: Stirner's Savage Thought by Alfredo Bonanno

Willful Disobedience by Wolfi Landstreicher

For years Landstreicher has been the primary translator of historic and contemporary Italian insurrectionary and individualist-inspired thought. *Willful Disobedience* is the name of both his zine (published by Venomous Butterfly for ten years), and the book of the collected zines, published by Ardent Press.

In Spanish and French

Recently Catalan historian Xavier Diez has dedicated extensive research to Spanish individualist anarchism and has produced two books of interest:

El anarquismo individualista en España: 1923-1938 and *Utopia sexual a la premsa anarquista de Catalunya. La revista Ética-Iniciales(1927-1937)* both deal with free love thought as present in the Spanish individualist anarchist magazine *Iniciales*.

Anarquismo by Miguel Gimenez Igualada

"Stirner" by Miguel Gimenez Igualada

Siete años enterrado vivo en una de las mazmorras de Gomezuela: Horripilante relato de un resucitado by Biofilo Panclasta (1932)

Mis prisiones, mis destierros y mi vida by Biofilo Panclasta (1929)

Unfortunately, the best of E. Armand's writings on "revolutionary sexuality" have not been translated into English, but here is a partial list of what he wrote on the subject in French and Spanish:

- "Amour en liberté. Camaraderie amoureuse." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 53-55. 1934
- Amour libre et liberté sexuelle*. Paris: Groupe de Propagande par la Brochure. 1925
- "Chasteté." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 327-328. 1934
- "Cohabitation." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 360 1934
- De la liberté sexuelle*. Billancourt: L'"Ere Nouvelle". 1907
- Entretien sur la liberté de l'amour*. Orléans, France: Éditions de l'en dehors. 1930
- "Inversion sexuelle." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 1072-1074. ie, homosexuality (note the antiquated terminology). 1934
- "Jalousie sexuelle." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 1086-1089. 1934
- "Libertins." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 1259. 1934
- "Mariage." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 1417-1418. 1934
- "Naturisme individualiste (le)." *Encyclopédie onorchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 1781-1784. 1934
- Le naturisme individualiste*. Orléans: l'En dehors. 1931
- "El Nudismo." *Iniciales* 6: 5-6. 1932
- "Onanisme." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 1844-1845 1934
- La procréation volontaire au point de vue individualiste*. Paris: Editions de "l'Anarchie." 1910
- "Pudeur." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 2243-2244. 1934
- La révolution sexuelle et la camaraderie amoureuse*. Paris: "Critique et raison." 1933 Translated into Spanish by Urbano Carrasco as *Sexualismo revolucionario* (Valencia: Ediciones Mañana, 1932).
- "Sexualisme." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 2572-2574. 1934
- "Symbolisme sexuel." *Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Ed. Sébastien Faure. Paris: Librairie internationale. 2697-2702. On the psychoanalytic theory of fetishism. 1934

It seems to me that society usually wins. There are, to be sure, free spirits in the world, but their freedom, in the last analysis, is not much greater than that of a canary in a cage. They may leap from perch to perch; they may bathe and guzzle at their will; they may flap their wings and sing. But they are still in the cage, and sooner or later it conquers them.

H.L. Mencken

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 behavior that must be accepted by all (and that includes your libertarian communist utopia) and insofar as the norm is a product of the average, the crowd, the mediocre, then anarchists are always enemies of society.

Ardent Press

