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# Union of Egoists

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-Kevin I. Slaughter

## **What is a UnionOfEgoists.com?**

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

## **What is a Union of Egoists?**

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

– Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*

## **What is Egoism?**

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

-Trevor Blake, *Confessions of a Failed Egoist*



J.M. Zube  
Wilshire St., Berrima, N.S.W.,  
Australia

1.1.66

Mr. S.E. Parker,  
2 Orsett Terrace,  
London, W. 2  
England

Dear Mr. Parker,

Mr. Henry Meulen, editor of "The Individualist", London, many months ago had sent me a copy of "minus one", No. 2 and somehow I got a copy of No. 10, either from the Sydney Libertarians or from you. I like much of the content and nevertheless I will not subscribe to it. Neither my means nor my spare time are sufficient to buy and read all the literature I like. I would not mind, though, if you would send me some of your issues in exchange for my publication "Peace Plans", of which I sent you issues 3-5. I would like you to consider a change over of your size to the more magazine like appearance of my publication. The few loose sheaf type of publications tends to be damaged rapidly by a few readers and to end up fast in the wastebin. I believe that a more bookish appearance tends to increase the respect a publication is treated with and thereby its lifespan. I admit that this is an unreasonable attitude but it seems to be one of the facts of present life. Hardly ~~any~~ anyone has the room or facilities to stock foolscap issues.

The straight right hand borderline does not make so much more additional work. The Sydney libertarian "Broadsheet" publishers showed me how simple it is. One has just to write the text twice, the first time with the empty or surplus spaces marked at the right hand side: ---+++ From this manuscript one can type directly on the stencil, adding or saving spaces as indicated.

Until I learned to know ideas like those expressed in the article "panarchy" in No. 4 of my series I counted myself among the individualist anarchists, too, my favourite being Benjamin P. Tucker. Since then I believe that the anarchists in their claim to know the best system for all people have something in common with totalitarians. In spite of assertions of non-aggressiveness many anarchists, if only given the chance, would force their system on statist, planners, interventionists, dirigists, monopolists, protectionists etc., would not concede them the right of independent self-government. At best they want to convert all to anarchist beliefs, a rather utopian aim, considering how difficult it is e.g. to get even a few subscribers for an anarchist review.

This seems to express an authoritarian attitude, though benevolent, towards authoritarians. It is certainly not a tolerant attitude. Mind you, I do not object against a rightful resistance against authoritarians whenever they interfere with the affairs of libertarians.

The second point which turned my anarchist into a panarchist belief is the difference between anarchists, many of whom e.g. disregard the concept of rights completely. Dr. Paul Eitzbacher in "Der Anarchismus", Guttenberg, Berlin, 1900, gave once a schematic survey of the differences. The differences seem to be as large that even if all people classified themselves as anarchists it would still require a panarchic society to realize their various programs.

Another belief most anarchists seem to share with authoritarians and statist is the belief that political organization must of necessity be of a territorial kind and could not be based on voluntary membership.

Much of the interference we suffer from today is probably not so much based on malice but on ignorance of any true alternatives. We are all in the same boat seems to be the underlying motive.

Another point : As long as anarchists are a small minority they have at present not much chance to convince the majority by words and to to enjoy anarchist freedom during their lifetime. They seem to be in the same position a small religious sect is in. But any small religious sect today is insofar more rational than the anarchists are as it claims merely religious tolerance, autonomous self-administration, and for the rest is content with freedom to make converts. No sect would be content with exercising its religious belief only when it has convinced all or at least the majority. As Spencer said in Social Statistics, there is no fundamental difference between religious and political freedom.



Furthermore, both, statists and anarchists, are predominantly utilitarians, trying to realize regardless of right and wrong what they consider to be the best for all. As anarchism has an all-embracing aim one can expect that the means applied, once the movement gets stronger, will be more or less totalitarian, too. Some of the communist or syndicalist anarchists are good examples.

Admittedly, many anarchists speak of a future society as a society made up out of numerous volunteer associations. But usually they are content with this rather general prediction. From the resistance against anarchist ideas which they can experience every day, they should have concluded that in future there will be at least minorities preferring to be ruled by some kind of authoritarian leadership. If anarchists would clearly demonstrate how such states could be preserved on a voluntary basis, they would reduce the number of their enemies considerably. Once they would get around to studying the details of how a libertarian society could peacefully and tolerantly put up with such people and vice versa, they would have to study some details of their own program, too. Only few anarchists so far studied the possibilities and techniques of non-statist monetary systems, apparently believing that central state banks would forever exist and supply their communities with sufficient exchange media. Others are free traders but not so consequent that they would favour even its one-sided introduction on an extraterritorial scale: extraterritorial enclaves or depots of extraterritorial free trade communities. At the same time as anarchists slander some of the others as reactionaries, capitalists, conservatives, such people think like true anarchists and study the details of private postal services, water - and energy supply, roadbuilding etc. like the Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, does.

Like most anarchists you fail, at least in your issue No. 2 to make positive proposals and content yourself with general statements only. I do not at all deny the great value of sound and clear principles but am very much interested in practical applications. True, one cannot and should not "plan" freedom in every detail and could leave much if not all to the creativity of free individuals. But it would certainly do no harm if some practical instances were supplied of how free and creative individuals would often or sometimes or as a rule use their freedom. (The reprint of Armand's article on Property in No. 10, deals at least in some detail with anarchist cooperative production and is insofar an exception.) Anarchists cannot hope to fire the enthusiasm of others if they offer general notions only.

Most are content with criticizing the present system and demanding its abolition, leaving the new "system" more or less to chance. As the interventionists are rather numerous and know precisely what they want in terms of positive laws, the outcome is rather predictable. Freedom will last only a few days and will be replaced by another authoritarian regime. Today's anarchists and their disinterest for details of rightful or free behaviour would be largely to blame for that.

Most revolutionaries shared the belief, thought that the main task is the overthrow of the old regime, and so they usually lost the revolution, even if they won in the power struggle.

This lack of interest in their own job which anarchists share with revolutionaries in general is well expressed in the poem by Pat Parker on p. 2:

"When that day comes it won't matter a bucket of cow shit  
whether you took the right or left or radical stand on Cuba....."  
If you would try to find, find, and realize the proper stand, "that day" of nuclear suicide would never come. - Anarchy ~~it~~ would eliminate the targets and thereby indirectly the bombs. As guarantee it would offer the ~~shattering~~ destruction of motives for war and the financial and coercive powers to carry a war out.

As most anarchists are disinterested in studying practical applications of their beliefs, they are usually the victims of some general conceptions which are misleading or misunderstood. You know probably sufficient instances.

For me the poetic prose of Armand's introduction to issue 2 is a good instance. It is so abstract that many will interpret it very differently. He says: "We are a-political and take no part in party quarrels." How can anarchists call themselves a-political when their aim, their "Great Society" is the ideal society where every individual enjoys full freedom? This is certainly not a mere religious, philosophical, scientific or economic but in particular a political aim.

"We....take no part in party quarrels". So, you would not resist a Nazi or Communist party if it grew to dangerous proportions in England and the rise of other such parties and be it one led by Franco, does not matter? in other countries



As long as we are victims of the party struggle, we take part, involuntarily though. We have no chance at present to vote or opt out of the system, to escape internal or external fights. Armand in the following lines speaks of "absolute liberty of...secession" but again fails to give the practical illustrations. In case he has ever supplied them I would be very grateful if you would point out the corresponding literature.

No matter how anarchists like to call themselves they are still something like a non-parliamentarian party trying to exercise at least a spiritual (moral) domination. Their motive is the desire not to be dominated themselves. Consequently they should object only against those party activities which interfere with the freedom of people who are neither members nor voters for the party in question. They, Anarchists, as a party movement, promising benefits to members, and realizing beneficial principles for members only, offering others only the benefits of practical demonstrations and advice, should dedicate their creative powers even to the non-etatist solution of earthly problems like sewage and waste disposal, fire-fighting for profit, etc. The Foundation for Economic Education does a good job in this.

Discarding their "conform with anarchism - claims", which in extreme cases has made bombthrowers out of anarchists (not particularly against tyrants only) the anarchists ought to do the same with regard to freedom in general as a man favouring freedom of speech does regarding this particular freedom. He would not try to realize this particular freedom for himself only, speaking all the time, shouting others down or interrupting them incessantly. No, he would see to it that as far as possible everyone would gain a fair chance to utter his opinion, even if it is quite contrary to his own. Naturally, he would remain free to listen to or to ignore their arguments. They should generalize Voltaire's dictum: I disapprove of what you say but am ready to sacrifice my blood for your right to say it. In other words, anarchist ought to propagate and to realize their right, even as a small minority, to live in every respect according to their anarchist beliefs, at the own expense and risk, without let or hindrance by the majority or any other minority and at the same time they ought to demand and fight for the same right of all other groups. You are right, the much, probably too much abused and misunderstood name "anarchism" would not cover such a movement sufficiently. This is why I do not consider myself as an anarchist any more.

An anarchist "state" within a state would naturally not have much in common with any state of the present type. Because of voluntary membership its constitution would have to have the unanimous approval of all anarchist members, would therefore contain only the irreducible minimum of order. I believe it would be pretty much like my libertarian human rights draft.

Will state courts always be available to settle arguments among anarchists, arguments which in spite of their present protestations they may happen to have? Should not the long practice of extraterritorial jurisdiction be studied with this in mind? In my private scale of values one page of such a discussion is worth 100 anarchist poems, conveying only vague ideas. Are the objections of nationalists and etatists against such courts valid for anarchists, too? Thomas F. Millard's "The End of Extraterritoriality in China", A.B.C. Press, Shanghai, 1931, quotes no less than 91 relevant publications.

In which respects would the statutes of an ideal anarchist community set up by you differ from my rights draft? I know, the word "right" is tabu to you. Well, replace it by another word if you please.

Armand's "absolute liberty of assembly, union, grouping, association and secession" would not only be for anarchists but for all others too, would it not? Anarchists could not sensibly object if etatists established volunteer communities without territorial claims (or if such communities remained after the secession of the libertarians) and if they would not object, or resist, but rather tolerate them they would not any more be anarchists in the usual meaning of this word among anarchists, though they themselves would live as anarchists. Sorry, I cannot put it any better. They would thus even give Nazi and Communist volunteers an opportunity to live according to their primitive ideas.

"We are for liberty and free agreement against authority and imposed rule." It is a sensible rule if applied only to rational beings, as long as they are rational but it is not a policy to be pursued without limitations regarding kids, maniacs, criminals or totalitarians. If you defend yourself successfully against an attack by a criminal you rule, temporarily, over him, by force. To protect not only yourself, your wife, your children but others, too, against such attacks, alone or in association with others, is not only part of your freedom but a responsibility, too, it is in other words, not only a right but a duty, recognized by every reasonable being.



How far would you go in your rejection of and resistance against tyrannical rule? Personally, I favour tyrannicide and rightful revolutions and like the following argument: "With reasonable men, I will reason, with humane men I will plead; but to tyrants I will give no quarter."

William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879 as quoted by Leon Uris in *Mila 18*.

"Free examination against dogmatism": I admit with Lichtenberg that one ought to doubt everything at least once but this is no excuse for doubting everything continually because one is too lazy to look for and study the many available proofs. This concerns in my opinion ~~exactly~~ the idea that human and natural rights are mere arbitrary dogmas.

Did you ever come across an English translation of Fichte's work on the French Revolution? I want to reprint the passage on secession from the state.

Sorry, to impose on you with such a long letter. In an oral discussion I would like to raise many more points, but the conventional written form of discussion is too time-consuming and ineffective.

Sincerely yours,

Summer, 1978

the dandelion

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# Letters To The Editor

## Socialized Mentalities

Dear Mike Coughlin,

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, 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, so 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.

It is for this reason that I found Reichert's article, "A Lesson in Anarchism", incredibly naive and superficial. Indeed, it demands his belief in the possibility of "miraculously" transforming power to accept that the "informal social control" he advocates will be in any way fundamentally different from the "formal social control" that he denounces. It is clear that any form of social control, whether "formal" or "informal", will be control over me and that I will be required to submit to it one way or another. So much for my "liberty"....

As an anarchist-individualist I acknowledge neither the legitimacy of State control over me, nor that of an acephalous mob labelling 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 valour.

"Consequently, anarchy.... is not the construction of a new and suffocating society. It is the decisive fight against all societies - christian, demo-

cratic, 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."

The one thing that redeems Reichert's article from the utopian glibness so beloved by the socialized mentality is his recognition in his concluding remarks that an anarchist society is impossible. The anarchist, he writes, "puts himself in permanent opposition.... (and) is thus forever on the defensive and can hardly win any decisive victories". This sudden breakthrough into the hard realism of "permanent protest" reveals a critical perspective that one day he might direct at "society" and its oppressions.

Yours sincerely  
S. E. Parker

2 CLAP July / 8 Peace News

5 July 1974

## PRINT

### MINUS ONE

is an irregular review for anarchists, egoists and individualists that has been published since 1963. A duplicated, one-man magazine, it acts as a medium of expression for, and a link between, those "poets and tramps" who are concerned to defend their individuality against the encroachments of authority—whether of the Right, the Left or the Centre. All work connected with *Minus One* is unpaid, except for the actual duplicating. Now the typewriter on which stencils are cut is over 15 years old and in urgent need of replacement. There are also reprints and other publishing projects which have had to be laid aside due to escalating costs.

£50 would buy a new typewriter and be a considerable boost to the rest. Cheques etc to S. E. Parker, 186 Gloucester Terrace, London W2.

