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Union of Egoists

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-Kevin I. Slaughter

What is a UnionOfEgoists.com?

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

What is a Union of Egoists?

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

– Max Stirner, The Ego and Its Own

What is Egoism?

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

-Trevor Blake, Confessions of a Failed Egoist

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No. 44
1980

15p.

MIRUS ONE - An Individualist Review

STIRNER, MARX AND FASCISM.

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 recent book "Main Currents of Marxism" reveals an all too familiar Marxist "critique" of Stirner's philosophy.

By 1980 L. K. in Poland, hardly enjoyed full freedom of press as yet, especially with such a title. HAD to be the party line. J.E. U.S. 97.

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 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:

refer. his censor. J.E.

"As recent studies by Helme 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 conformity, the latter being the means by which the individual secured his own niche in the system. Stirner's philosophy has nothing to say against conformity, it only objects to the Ego being subordinated to any higher principles: 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 to 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 that "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 peoples 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 Danis 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 Rexist 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 premise 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 summarizes Stirner as saying "My Ego is sovereign, it recognizes no authority or constraint such as humanity, the truth, the state?" (the state?)

1 It is certainly true that Stirner thought that a conscious egoist
2 must have to pretend conformity if he or she does not have
3 might at times to assert him/herself openly against authority. But such
4 conformity is firmly based on a recognition of the purely prudential nature
5 of such a pretence as is shown in the following example given by Stirner:
6 "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 became 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 "asocial egoism". The trouble

1 It is certainly true --
2 might at times have to...
3 any answer? ...
4 view is? ...
5 of such? ...
6 The fetters of...

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 phrase", 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". This is, of course, conditional upon "the giving up of the (untrue)self and becoming part of 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 the result of my awareness of myself as specific individual living at a particular time who cannot be defined by the bafflebap of peddlers of social salvation. I am here and now - not there and then.

S.E.Parker

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INDIVIDUALIST ANARCHISM AND THE SWEDISH ANARCHISTS

(Brand (the burning brand), organ for the Anarchist Federations in Scandinavia, is rather eclectic, most of its articles in Swedish and Danish being of a Socialist turn of mind. However, in one of two instalments, the Swedish individualist, C.J. Bjorklund, reminisces about Karl Elving, Sweden's prophet of individualist anarchism, and then offers a brief survey of the background from Warren and Stirner to Mackay. (Sept-Oct, 1966); in the other instalment, Bjorklund presents a brief section on Stirner's book followed by reminiscences of Stirner's influence on Waldemar Bernhard, painter, poet, author, journalist)

In the Young Socialist Club at Uppsala in the 1910's, there was a member who was fond of debating and would often meet with the students. His name was Karl Elving, a shoemaker. His wife, Anna (Bjorling) was one of the first to organize the domestic helpers, as maid-servants were called in those days. She herself had worked as a maid-servant with the gentry. When Elving shoved his work aside to take part in meetings and discussions, she would take his place at the last pegging and soiling to the point of exhaustion. There had to be food in the larder for the family and its two children.

Karl Elving was an imposing figure, tall in stature, and rather stout during his later years; he passed away 24 March 1930. His hair was always overgrown, bushy, dishevelled, and unkempt. Disfiguring his regular features was a somewhat lumpish nose. His teeth were sound and white, his mouth small, Strindbergian. When he disapproved of something, he would clench his lips in a firm fixed manner as though to prevent words from bursting forth. His eyes, searching and questioning, would sometimes spout fire as he talked. It was impossible for him to keep still when he spoke; he would beat the floor with his stick, pace up and down, and nervously gesticulate with his hands. He would always say "hm!" uninterruptedly when he had to listen, something he never cared to do.

Elving was the prophet of individualist anarchism in Sweden and he had an unprecedented facility for speaking. He could at any time and at any gathering extemporize without the least preparation for one or two hours, or even longer. Were the address to be followed by a long debate, he would then be found thriving in his own element.

The Elving family lived in Highhill Street (Hogbergsgatan) in Stockholm. Almost every day, the American individualist-anarchist, Blomen, whom I nicknamed the Porkchop-Lover, would come to visit. In his pocket he would always have, specially beaten according to American recipe, a raw porkchop which he would have Mrs. Elving fry with plenty of butter and onions. He always had to have bread together with potatoes, but never offered to contribute anything towards the costs. One day Anna scolded him for exploiting his friends. Hurt, the porkchoplover vanished only to pop up again with his especially prepared porkchop in his pocket.

"Every person is prompted by egoistic motives; if I have right, I have right"; this was Blomen's interpretation of American Anarchism. In America, he had saved up a lump of money on which he intended to live at ease for a certain number of years. "After that, I shall commit suicide," he said, "unless there is a revolution." He was always on the lookout for the prospects of a revolution, and he looked to us with demanding eyes. It thus depended upon us as to whether he was to live or die.

5

In 1913, Elving found himself on an agitation tour arranged by the young socialist clubs in the Province of Norrbotten in the north. He was invited to take over a tobacco and newspaper kiosk which the club in the town of Malmberget had inherited from a deceased member named Augustsson. This kiosk, called "The Dodecagon" (To lvkanten), stood on the grounds of the Labour Party's headquarters which had burnt down and was replaced with a modern building. Elving became a member of the Malmberget Young Socialists' Club which had been active from 1905. After the big strike it was closed down, but it resumed activity from 1912 to 1922 when the newly organized Joint Local Organizations sapped its strength. Among others, its members included the bigwig Viktor Kramer, that most original storyteller Pelle Sundvall, Lapphans Bergendal, Lorens Sjostrom, Oskar Stromberg, Emil Moberg, Oskar Henriksson, H.S. Kraak, and "The Red Maiden" Ada Schott, who at this time were associated with Hedenvind Eriksson. Ada Schott and the Malmberg girl, Agnes Wasserman, sold a huge number of copies of the papers Brand and The People's Will (Folkviljan)†

Elving managed the "Dodecagon" exceedingly well. He became a skillful business man, offered his clients quality goods, agitated for good literature, and furnished the Malmberg residents with such discussions as they had never before experienced. When a milk strike was declared in Berget, he propagandized for the strikers and taught the house-wives that fig-water could be given the children in place of milk.

At New Year's time in 1918, Karl Elving left Malmberget and went to Stockholm. On the corner of Parsonage (Prästgardagatan) and Carpenter (Timmermanagatan) Streets, he established himself as a fruit-dealer. This quarter is called "The Dragon" and one day two 'dragons' in the form of tax-collectors came and demanded taxes. Finding only small change in the cash register, one of the 'dragons' held Elving fast while the other fished out his wallet and confiscated the 81 crowns it contained. In those days, the clothes in the wardrobe could with impunity be seized as a pledge for taxes.

Elving contributed off and on to the press, mostly to Brand and The Worker (Arbetaren). But first and last he was the speaker and debater. On the side, he had written two brochures, the self-published "Conflict at Berge" (1907), and "Morals, Short Dresses, Pornography" (1930) published by Brand. The former is a story about how a landed proprietor, after having experienced a tragedy and after having read Kropotkin's "Conquest of Bread" and "Mutual Aid", handed over one of his estates to his workers. The latter contains an attack against the morality-crones, an answer to the archbishop's tirade against short dresses, and a defence of the struggle for freedom of the press and against pornography.
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During the opening decades of the 20th century, individualist anarchism was discussed with great fervour, both publicly and at the meetings of the young socialist clubs. America and Germany were the lands of origin for this doctrine. The pioneer was presumably the American Josiah Warren who wrote articles and pamphlets on the subject. In 1833, according to the historian Max Nettlau, the first anarchist newspaper, The Peaceful Revolutionist, made its appearance. Young America was not only productive of hand work, rapid industrialization, and pecuniary power, but also gave rise to ideas of a libertarian character, partly of religious origin. Of interest is the ten years existence from 1851 of the socialist colony or experimental town of "Modern Times" on Long Island (1). In Boston, a paper called "Libertas" was published in German.

In Germany, Leipzig 1844, appeared "Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum", The Ego and His Own, which is considered to be the basic text for individualist-anarchism. The author was Max Stirner, pseudonym for Johann Caspar Schmidt. The book was immediately confiscated. The Ministry

of the Interior, however, released the book declaring that it was too absurd to be dangerous. Max Stirner belonged to a radical group called "The Free". It consisted of authors, journalists, and academicians who met in Hippel's wine-cellar in Friedrich-strasse in Berlin. Stirner was only fifty when he died in 1856; his chief work was forgotten, but in 1888 Stirner was rediscovered by the poet John Mackay and the work was republished in a number of editions.

Perhaps there is nothing especially new to be found in Stirner's interesting philosophical work, but he maintained his opinions with a power and paradoxical pointedness that aroused attention. He has been called Germany's first anarchist, which may be true in the sense that he defended the individual against any and all dictatorial claims. Stirner's work was a revolt against the growing might of the Prussian state with its reactionary church and military demanding absolute obedience. The opening words already reveal Stirner's intentions

"How much should not be my cause! : Above all the cause of good, the cause of God, the cause of man, of freedom, of humanity, of justice; the cause of my people, my prince, my fatherland; the cause of mind and a thousand other causes. Only my cause is never to be mine. Shame on the egoist who thinks only on himself.

Stirner talks of the Sultan, but what he means is the German Kaiser: "Think of the Sultan who so lovingly cares for 'his'. Is he not the essence of unselfishness? Does he not sacrifice himself hour after hour for his? Indeed, for his. Just once show yourself not as his but as your own. You will be clapped in jail for pitting your egoism against his. The Sultan has built his affair on nothing but himself. He is to himself all in all. He is the Only and tolerates no one who dares not to be his.

"I for my part," says Stirner, "have taken lessons from them and will, rather than unselfishly serve these big egoists, be the egoist myself." "God and Man have built their cause on nothing else but themselves; I shall build my cause on me. I am, like God, not for others, I am all unto myself, I who am the Only. 'Oh, but the good-cause should at least be my cause!' Stirner asks, 'What is good, what is bad? I am myself my cause, and I am neither good nor bad,' he answers and adds that these things have no meaning for him. His affair is "not the godly, human, good, true, right, etc." Stirner says, "Nothing is more to me than myself."

Before proceeding further, a few words about the discoverer, the poet John Henry Mackay. "Stirner's immortal work could be hidden under the dust of cultural decline, but it is imperishable and has now been called to life," says Mackay. He was born in Greenock, Scotland, but spent most of his life in Berlin, Germany. Mackay wrote several collections of poems which received great recognition. His social poem, "Arma parato fero" (Seize Weapons In Preparedness) was immediately subjected to German social-law censorship. Mackay's book, "The Anarchists", was published in 1891 and translated into Swedish in 1910. The work, "Der Freiheitssucher" Psychologie einer Entwicklung" (The Freedom Hunter: The Psychology of a Development), appeared in 1920. I have in my possession the copy numbered "1" and have furnished copies of this book with a dedication. His books on freedom he left to his friend, Benjamin Tucker, of Boston, whose paper "Liberty" "sends a radiant light through the night." In 1898, Mackay published the biography "Max Stirner, Sein Leben und sein Werk" and a volume of Stirner's "Kleinere Schriften und Entgegnungen," the results of many years of research. One of Mackay's collections of poems, "Sturm" (Storm), was published by Fritz Kater in six editions totalling 17,000

* Sent! 7.2 .

copies. Mackay's collected works have been published in eight volumes, 2400 pages. Some of his work has been translated into English, Dutch, Czech, Danish, and...Swedish.

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"I have built my affair on nothing." So sounds the rubric in the first chapter of Stirner's book, "The Ego and His Property". Is not the rubric faulty? Stirner builds his affair on himself, according to his own statement. The self, the I, the individual, consequently the person, however, is hardly nothing. The personal is of particularly great importance. For Stirner, the I is the only reality. In the I is to be found all might, morality, and grasp of truth. Stirner comes no closer than this to explaining the I. Perhaps it is impossible to do so. But the I is for him the starting point, the real, and this I is egoistic, which is nothing to be ashamed of. All depends upon which expression egoism takes. To the coarse being, egoism means grasping any and all means at one's disposal as much as possible. A normally motivated or sensitive individual considers his fellows, seeks to avoid harming others, and seeks to mitigate suffering and need. But this he does for his own sake, for egoistic reasons: he suffers seeing others suffer. He wants to alleviate his own suffering and is not motivated by commandments or calling.

Stirner scorns those who think that freedom comes as a gift. "Take right," says he, "and freedom will come of itself." This is easy to say, but it is actually not so easy to take right, for example, from a dictator of the modern cut, such as Stirner had never experienced. Stirner is correct when he says, "I have only the freedom which I myself procure. I do not deserve this freedom if I let it be taken from me."

"The tiger has the right when he seizes me," says Stirner, "and I have the right when I kill him," he adds. But if the "tiger", the dictator and his henchmen, seizes and murders and burns in gas ovens six million Jews, this can never be or be made to be right. If mankind were always moved by the feeling that the deed is a crime, opposed consequently to right. Moreover, right is also a right, sometimes a great right. (2) *x) As if individual rights, e.g. freedom of speech & press, were meant & defined for animals rather than somewhat rational beings.* J.Z

Stirner's pronouncements that "right is what is right for you" and "right is a folly handed down by a spook" are misunderstood and misused. ^A These are sentences torn out of their context. What Stirner means is that right is not something floating mystically above the person. Its source is to be found within the individual. Therefore, Stirner would ^B humanize right and bring it down to earth as a matter of personal right. But there are persons who, with reference to Max Stirner, have made their appearance as bandits. In the paper "Temps Nouveaux" in 1910, Jean Grave warned against that element. (3) At a meeting in Malmo, a so-called individualist turned up who argued that the individual had the right to rape young girls, for the individual had above all the right to live and to be himself.* As shelter and shield for similar bits of witlessness and detestable criminalities is the use made of that distinguished philosopher, Max Stirner. How crudely Stirner is misinterpreted can also be seen in the regard he had for Jesus as one who raised himself above the State. Jesus was, according to Stirner, a representative of self-esteem and self-realization, a man according to Stirner's style. (4)

x) As if the young girls had no ego, no right, no liberty to be respected, just because they had no might. Stirner imparted an artificial moral value to might which, by its very nature it does not possess. See Rousseau's "Social Contract", ch. 4, 1st div. J.Z.

In the North, Stirner was first translated into Danish by Axel Garde, No less a person than Georg Brandes wrote a forward. Later came a translation into Swedish by Albert Jensen published by Halsen and Slatts in Nybro in 1910. But individualist anarchism had already been discussed in the young socialist clubs, not least in Stockholm's North Club. Notable amongst those who propagated individualism were the above-mentioned Karl Elving, Thorild Lundstrom, Waldemar Bernhard Johansson

A) Correct for the internal affairs of an extratorially autonomous community of volunteers, whether e.g. a league of egoists or one of altruists.

B) Correct as a prescription for all other communities & their dissenting views of the ideal life for themselves. These doctrinal suppositions are the basic cause of wars, oppressions, civil wars & revolutions - all to uphold spoils, spheres or etc. J.Z. 2.8.12.

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(who later called himself simply Waldemar Bernhard), A. Lindholm, Bernhard Johansson of Fors. Notable among the members of the North Club at that time were the author of the Kvasar Waltz, sketcher and painter Arthur Hogstedt, and the artist Ivan Agueli who was to win world renown. The latter often stood watch as doorkeeper at the lively meetings. Thorild Lundstrom became in his line, the paint trade, a major enterpriser in Gothenburg. Like Waldemar Bernhard, he had an artistic turn.

Waldemar Bernhard developed into being our country's most able graphist. Dr. Ragnar Hoppe considered his "both sheerly artistic and culture-historically valuable depiction of Swedish landscapes to be among the most noteworthy in this art and technique which have seen day in our land during the recent decades". The well known art critic Dr. Nils Palmgren wrote that "Waldemar Bernhard's technique has left all other Swedish artists behind". The art critics lavished praise on his work; all would wholeheartedly agree with Otte G. Garlsund's judgement that "Waldemar Bernhard is probably the first and certainly the only one in this country who could achieve a complete success in his art. His art is gentlemanly correct in its whole bearings: harmonic and decorous; everything is reserved, quiet, and noble, such as good timeless art should be." The City of Stockholm presents his pictures of Stockholm as mementoes to distinguished visitors. From 1936 on, he was awarded a public grant.

The artist Waldemar Bernhard was born in Linköping 8 April 1890 and passed away 14 March 1965. When he was twelve, he had to begin work as a (house)painter's apprentice. He organized the apprentices and went on strike for higher wages and better working conditions. He was early connected with the young socialist movement and he began to contribute to Brand when he was seventeen years old. As a young social agitator, he was zealous for individualist anarchism. He was eccentric: In a meeting in Gothenburg 26 April 1912, he gave an address on the Subject "Can Oatmeal Porridge Overthrow Society?" He argued that if a cow could live on grass and hay, then the workers on general strike can live on oatmeal porridge. If only oatmeal and no other provisions were to be purchased, then the economic laws would completely collapse and the revolution be accomplished.

As time went on, Waldemar Bernhard became a journalist on The Borås Daily and on Trade News in Gothenburg. In 1919, he took over The Sigtuna News where he became the chief editor and only writer. He also contributed to Strix and The Pricker (Näggen). He was a good friend of Erik Linrers and Dan Andersson. I met Dan when he came to Stockholm 25 September 1920. He checked in at the Hotel Hellman in Brewer Street (Bryggaregatan). The day after he was dead, the victim of cyanogen poisoning; the bed clothes had not been properly aired after fumigation against vermin.

In 1941, a very fine book appeared on Dan, written by his friend of many years, Waldemar Bernhard, who calls the work "A Book About Dan Andersson". Not without reason does he cite on the last page the following verses of Dan:

but if with the dead one day you find my body cold and clam,
then well could it be my proper wage to lie there so sedate;
yet I should still be the man who fought out my fate,
yet I should still have the right to be what I am.

Surely Waldemar was a young socialist. Yet all his life he remained an individualist anarchist, profoundly influenced by Max Stirner. This was also expressed in his brief "Should Egoism Be Condemned?" in 1910. But he was, unlike a number of other persons, sufficiently intelligent to understand that there was a raw crass egoism as well as a fine considerate egotism. In 1913 he wrote "Society's Revolutionists" with a

forward by John Landquist; in this book he criticizes mainly communist utopias and crude "freethinker" agitation. In the "Banner-Bearer" series in 1950, he wrote about his close friend of many years, Hinke Bergregren; a very interesting book. Waldemar Bernhard was a distinguished lyricist; in 1916, he published a selection of his poems under the title "Sonnets". He had printed this book on his own platen-press on handmade stamped paper; an extremely exclusive publication.

(Translated by Wm. Flygare)

(Translator's note: Whether or not this article is incomplete I cannot at present tell. I think that the Scandinavian, esp. Swedish, tone is something new to MINUS ONE. Enlightening to me were two points of interpretation: 1) That Stirner's merit lay not in the originality of his thought but in the power of his style; if so, this very merit might account for the uses to which he has been put. 2) The *thé Sultan* represents the Kaiser against whom Stirner revolts and whom he finds revolting; if so, I wonder how the "Boots of the Right" theorists would be able to resolve this contradiction.)

EDITORIAL COMMENT:

x) King, rather, while he argued in Berlin. J.Z.

I have published this account of "individualist anarchism" in Sweden largely because it concerns a country of which little is known of individualist activity. However, I must say that Bjorklund does not appear to be an individualist in my sense of the word. He seems to be one of those people who try to straddle both socialism and individualism and come to grief in the attempt. In addition, I find irritating both his lack of description of the ideas he ascribes to the individuals he knew and his fondness for presenting tit-bits of the "how-very-peculiar" sort about those who he regarded as not "normally-motivated" (whatever that means) without giving us any background to them or their actions. I will say no more about this for the present, except on four references I have numbered in the article:

x) Not - when they are consistent voluntarists at the same time! J.Z.

1) Modern Times can hardly be described as a "socialist" colony.

2) This is a thoroughly confused and confusing interpretation of Stirner's views. In Stirnerian terms, the Nazis were in "their right" as against the Jews. The Jews would have been equally in "their right" if they had defended themselves against the persecution by the Nazis. Might would have decided the issue. Both sides, however, wrapped themselves in moralistic cloaks. The Nazis were possessed by the desire to "purify" the "race". The Jews were crippled by a belief in legality and victimhood. Any discussion of this question is, however, greatly hampered by the "six million Jews" burnt in "gas ovens" legend. There is a growing body of revisionist historical opinion that, although the Nazis were racists and did persecute Jews, they did not have a deliberate policy of "gassing" nor did the number of Jews they killed amount to anything like six million. (See the studies of Paul Rassinier on this question - particularly "Debunking The Genocide Myth", Institute for Historical Review, 1978.)

3) Jean Grava detested individualists and is a most unreliable source concerning them.

4) "Jesus" was not depicted in *The Ego and His Own* as "a man according to Stirner's style". Certainly Stirner used him as an illustration of an "insurgent" against a particular social order, but this in no way implies that "Jesus" was a Stirnerian egoist. On the contrary, in another part of his book Stirner likens him to Socrates as another example of "possessedness".

S.E.P.

(BerniKast: "Die Thematik des 'Eigners' in der Philosophie Max Stirners: Sein Beitrag zur Radikalisierung der anthropologischen Fragestellung" Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1979. The "Eigner" Thematic in Max Stirner's Philosophy: Its Contribution to the Radicalization of the Framing of the Anthropological Question)

Stirnerian bad luck! An eighteen month delay in recommending this work to the readers of MINUS ONE: The publisher sent me a copy 29 May 79; it was lost in the mails. Thereupon, the author kindly sent me a copy at his own expense to reach me 31 July 80; I was robbed of attention till now. ^{It's} All that can be done at this point is to present a few of my experiences with its excellencies as hastily as possible before this work too suffers from the high book-mortality that even the best publications are so subject to now-a-days. *Egoistic authors would reserve their right to keep their books permanently in print, at least on microfiche. J.E. 21. 8. 97.*

The most important characteristic, I believe, is the love that Kast brings to "the forgotten philosopher"; in most recent studies, Stirner has served as a convenience to be used as a political soccer-ball to be kicked "right" or "left" or, more despicably, as an academic passport to a ratnest job, gross hindrance to insight in any subject.

Prerequisite to Stirner Studies is a background in philosophy, language, and literature. Kast evidences all three, both in width and depth. Researchers are commonly equipped with the first one or two disciplines, but the frequent ignoring (or ignorance) of the third has led to failure in coming to terms with Stirner's nuances and rhetoric. To give an instance: In my own reading (1970), I placed great importance on Stirner's reputation as a teacher of literature and, thanks to notes in the Byington translation, I was led to translate what I felt to be the essence of the Stirnerian mode, Goethe's "Vanitas! Vanitatum Vanitas!" - in form, a light drinking song, but of an epic dimension that matches Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and the Turtle", which is a dirge to idealism, ironically offered to celebrate a wedding! Kast, with his better background, since his main field is German Language and Literature, has explored, not only this poem, but a wealth of Goethean and other literary referents and their significance in Stirner.

As an example of rhetorical difficulty, I had long been puzzled by Stirner's presentation of "World History" in his Einzig, a pattern which seemed to me to make no sense against Stirner's sense of "presence" and "thought-rid-ness" (the latter notion attractive to fashionable Zennists & Existentialists); Kast cleared up this difficulty by showing Stirner's "historicism" to be a scale (Travestie) on Hegel's view, to which Stirner stands radically opposed. In this respect, Kast reveals in his closing words that the Einzig is a book of polemic and opposition, and as such cannot possibly be regarded as a positive philosophical exposition and development of Stirner's position (a fact which I had weakly intuited, the analogy arising in my mind being that of a Shakespeare who had written little more than a Hamlet).

S.E.Parker, in his Outline of Individualism, uses the wording "quite different....from 'Right' and 'Left'"; in eking out Stirner's philosophy from the whole corpus of his works, Kast thoroughly disabuses the reader of any notion of Stirner as a Hegelian, Young or Old. The aim of "The Eigner Thematic" is to show Stirner's overthrow of the Hegelian dialectic and its implications, and to oppose these with the "I am... present" Eigner (a word best not translated). In the closing words, Kast writes that the Eigner's understanding of the world is 1) what clings to the person ("ego-istic"), 2) in a concrete situation, 3) in a given

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moment in time (The ignoring of the time-factor is what accounts for a clutter of naive and hostile interpretations). That Stirner's philosophy is readily misunderstood is understandable, because of the Stirnerian split between words and meanings beyond words, something encountered in poetry rather than philosophy. A further split is seen between the self and the world, each of whom have their self-created, self-contained criteria; here I sense an analogy with Montaigne's ontological conclusion in the Apologie to the effect that becoming cannot know being.

Tracing Stirner's evolution of the Eigner from beginning to end, the book is divided into three parts (14 chapters and 22 sub-chapters): Early writings, the Einzig, and Later writings, including The History of the Reaction. To do full justice to Kast's work, the reader is invited to examine it for himself, as the richness of close-reading and materials cannot be gone into here (e.g. the name-list lists 338 names from antiquity to date and Helm's Bibliography has been updated by 89 titles). To me, Bern Kast has done for Stirner what Frederick Hugo has done for Montaigne. For the reader who lacks the tongues, "The Eigner Thematik" deserves a competent translation.

Wm. Flygare

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ANARCHISM IN JAPAN

(A Short History of the Anarchist Movement in Japan. Edited by Le Libertaire Group. Published by The Idea Publishing House c/o Kawenishi Kosan Bldg., 11-22, 5-chyome Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan. 10 US dollars or 2,300 yen)

Just as I was about to start the final stencil for this issue of MINUS ONE the postman brought me a copy this well-produced book from Japan. I will be reviewing it in greater detail in the next issue, but since this issue is so concerned with Stirner I will quote the following view of Stirner and anarchism by the Japanese poet and translator of The Ego and His Own into Japanese, Jun Tsuji (I have rather freely adapted the English version given in the book):*

"Stirner is usually admitted as an egoistic or philosophical anarchist. He acknowledged himself an egoist on each page of his book, but he was not an avowed anarchist. Nor did he advocate any ism. If he had any doctrine of his own, it would have been a doctrineless doctrine. His supreme order (if it were that) was only that "you shall be your own you" or "you must live your own life". He did not tell us "as I preach to you so and so truth, you must follow my truth and live as I have instructed you". From Stirner's viewpoint, anyone who followed a principle or doctrine and served it as his supreme truth, whether he is a socialist (e.g. Marx) or an anarchist (e.g. Kropotkin) is an idealist, that is to say, possessed."

Jun Tsuji, who was born in 1884 and died of starvation in 1944, is represented in this book by a piece called "The Soliloquy of a Bohemian". But, as I have said, more of this in the next issue....

As I found the style & word choice in this book so false & often ridiculous that I could not manage to read more than a few pages & quit it again as useless S.E.P. to me. Might be informative in good English. J.E. - 21. 8. 1947