

non serviam

self-ownership & self-enjoyment

18

Ken MacLeod
What Sid Did

Sid Parker
The Union of Egoists – Comments
&
William Flygare – An Obituary

«Whoever is a complete person
does not need – to be an authority!»

Max Stirner
*The False Principle
Of Our Education*

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Editor's Word

A few years have passed since the last issue of *Non Serviam*. It is time for it to resurface. So we are starting out fresh with a homage to Sid Parker written by Ken MacLeod. Sid himself also contributed two pieces to this issue. The first of Sid's pieces is also a homage, but as opposed to the one by Ken, one of sadness: An obituary of William Flygare, a man I had looked forward to corresponding with.

Sid's other contribution is a thorough criticism of my conception of the «Union of Egoists», a concept introduced by Stirner that critics to this day still cannot agree on the meaning of. It raises many interesting issues; issues that will be responded to in depth in the next issue.

Finally, the Non Serviam web and the Nonserv list have moved homes quite a few times since last. Nonserv has found a stable home courtesy of the etext archives, and has address nonserv@etext.org. Subscription issues are handled by majordomo@etext.org. Non Serviam is still handled manually by yours truly, and its present home is:

http://www.leikestova.org/solan/non_serviam/

Visit the web site, and tell me if you have any contributions to the collection of "no"s in any language.

Until issue 19, enjoy!

Spring 1999,
Svein Olav Nyberg

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What Sid Did

The luckiest way to stumble across the writings of S. E. Parker is after a long exploration of anarchism and libertarianism. What a breath of fresh air! Especially after exploring the closed room of Objectivism. As far as I know, Parker has written nothing about Rand – which suggests a certain gallantry. A man big enough to criticize Ragnar Redbeard (the mysterious author of *Might Is Right*) as a moralist has no need to beat up little old ladies.

Ken MacLeod

What Sid did was to drive a wedge between egoism and anarchism. Dora Marsden – whose writings Parker has helped to rescue from obscurity – did the same decades earlier, but in a context which is now remote, and in a dense and allusive style. Parker writes in the plainest English. Bakunin, Engels once said, created anarchism by combining Stirner and Proudhon. Parker rescued Stirner from that entanglement, in which even Tucker was snared. Nobody any longer has an excuse to combine egoism with a muddle of economic fallacies.

I've heard it said, half in jest, that «Sid will argue that egoism is compatible with any political philosophy – except

anarchism.» There's a lot of truth in that, because egoism is not about how the world should be – it is, in part, an explanation of how the world is as it is. All forms of anarchism, even individualist anarchism, have a moral basis in the rejection of domination. How inconsistent to proclaim «the war of all against all» and to disdain the use of that war machine, the state, when it acts in your interests!

The political applications of this insight are far wider than may be apparent to those whose heads are, as Parker has aptly put it, «stuck in the anarchist tar-bucket». And they are not necessarily conservative, or «right-wing», in their implications. Over the past couple of decades, and partly as a result of libertarian argument, millions upon millions of people have allowed the interests to be sacrificed to «the free market». Like a starving man who believes it is immoral to steal (which it is, but the egoist will always ask «So?») they have put property rights ahead of their property.

The spooks of idealistic socialism have been thoroughly exorcised. But a realistic socialism rests not on morals but on might – and the sovereign franchise, as one of Heinlein's characters puts it, is might. No egoist should have the slightest qualm about using it, and encouraging others to use it, if it is in his interest to do so. The spooks of libertarianism still haunt the world, and Parker has exposed them as rags on a stick.

At least, that's what Sid did for me.

Wm. Flygare (1916-1997)

William Flygare died on September 2, 1997. He was eighty years old. Born of Swedish parents in Boston, U.S.A., he was educated at Roosevelt University, Chicago, where he gained a B.A. in philosophy. In 1951 he was invited to Japan by the Lady Ohtani to study Buddhism at Ohtani University. Here he added to his B.A. an M.A. in Buddhist Studies, but later found he could no longer believe in the Buddhist faith. He also lectured in English at Ohtani. In 1954 he moved to the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies and there rose from Staff Lecturer to Professor. He lived in Kyoto City until his death.

Sid Parker

His published works included two collections of poetry: *Presence* in 1972 and *This* in 1993 (revised 1995); a monograph *Montaigne-Shakespeare* in 1978; an annotated edition of Etienne la Boetie's *The Will to Bondage* in 1974. In 1996 he completed *The Wrath of Hamlet*, which has yet to be published. In addition he contributed reviews, translations and poetry to *Minus One* and *Ego*.

Around 1970 he prepared a new edition of Max Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* for The Libertarian Book Club of New York which, despite their initial enthusiasm, they eventually refused to publish. His

introduction contained a witty overview of the diverse reactions of both published writers and private correspondents to their reading of Stirner, a translation of Goethe's light-hearted drinking song «Vanitas! Vanitatum! Vanitas!» «that Stirner had adopted as his theme song», and a description of «the making» of the form and style of *The Ego and His Own*. Flygare concluded, «Max Stirner has been associated with philosophy, (a-)politics, history and especially with language and literature, but it is most likely as an educator (educer rather than inducer) that he lives.» «To teach means to encourage.»

A glimpse of the man behind the writings was shown when he retired and wrote a farewell message to his students for the Kyoto University magazine *Logos*. In it he recalled the student disturbances of 1969: «In my diary I read «Hatsun-guô (Pronunciation Sutra) beats reds»; while all other class-rooms were empty, we could prevent rioters from breaking up your class by standing in our midst and answering nonsense with nonsense by our chanting the pronunciation syllables «er-aw-oh» and so on.»

William is survived by his wife Yoshiko, his daughters Freya and Mathilde, and a grandson, Ôtaro.



The Union Of Egoists – Comments

Sid Parker

1) You (that is Svein Olav Nyberg; ed. note) write that «The Union requires that both/all parties are present through conscious egoism». I do not think that the examples of «unions of egoists» given by Stirner in his reply to Hess – i.e. some children playing, a couple of sweethearts, some friends going for a drink – support your view. The children, sweethearts and friends were hardly likely to be conscious egoists, students of Stirner. Much more likely they would be in various ways possessed by fixed ideas such as Christianity, good citizenship, «mummy and daddy know best», etc. The same goes for «unions uniting to catch a thief or to get better pay for one's labour». Your conception of the union of egoists strikes me as a very *idealized* one, similar to those promised, but never delivered, by religio-therapeutic cults. If we have to wait for fully conscious egoists, free from all possession, before we can form such unions, then we are condemned to waiting for the advent of the *ideal* man, a spook belonging to never-never land.

2) Stirner seems to me to be sometimes using the conception of «the union of egoists» as a metaphor to describe a *change of attitude* rather than an actual

«institution». For example, when he writes «therefore 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 I transform it rather into my property and my creature; that is I annihilate it and form in its place the Union Of Egoists», it appears to me that he is not here claiming that he wants to *literally* destroy the State as an *institution*, but as an *idea*, a *sacred principle*. Otherwise, what point would there be in seeking to utilize the «human society» of the State if one is going to abolish it? You cannot use something which no longer exists. Indeed, Stirner himself bears this out when he states «only when the State comes into contact with his ownness does the egoist take any active interest in it. If the condition of the State does not bear hard upon the scholar, is he to occupy himself with it because it is his «most sacred duty»? *So long as the State does according to his wishes* (my italics) what need has he to look up from his studies?» Here Stirner is treating the State as a mere instrument, not as «ruling principle». Stirner's own vagueness about the exact nature of «the union of egoists» is partly to blame for the fantasies that some have woven about it as a means of «world transformation». However, the considerably less weight he gave to it in his replies to his critics and his locating it in the examples he gave there, supports the view of Henri Arvon (*Aux Sources de l'Existentialisme: Max Stirner*, 1954) that in *The Ego and His Own* Stirner had not «succeeded in freeing himself completely from the climate of social reform that surrounded him» when writing of the union of egoists.

3) You reject Hess's criticism of our equal in the tree, the Stirner's conception of the union of egoist beast, so the presupposition that others as consisting of a relationship are *our equals* springs from between an Einzige and an Eigentum – i.e. that I treat hypocrisy. No one is my equal, you as my property. You but I regard him, equally see this sort of relationship as «one-sided» and contend with all other beings as that Stirner really meant something my property?» Of course, such a view of else. Did he? Nothing could be the other as property clearer to my mind than he did not mean something else. What does not rule out coming to «an understanding ... in order, by agreement, to strengthen *my power*, and by combined force to accomplish more than individual force can effect ... thus it is a – something else. What therefore not aspire to community, but to *one-sidedness*. Let us not seek treating the other as his property as the most comprehensive commune, compatible with forming a union with him! «human society», but let us seek in What Stirner means by «union» is not what others only means and organs which we Hess said he meant, but nor did he mean what you say he meant ... may use as our property! As we do not see



our equal in the tree, the Stirner's conception of the union of egoist beast, so the presupposition that others as consisting of a relationship are *our equals* springs from hypocrisy. No one is my equal, but I regard him, equally with all other beings as my property?» Of course, such a view of the other as property does not rule out coming to «an understanding ... in order, by agreement, to strengthen *my power*, and by combined force to accomplish more than individual force can effect ... thus it is a – union». Stirner, then, regarded treating the other as his property as compatible with forming a union with him! What Stirner means by «union» is not what Hess said he meant, but nor did he mean what you say he meant ...

About The Contributors

Ken MacLeod is a sociable ex-programmer from Edinburgh, who has now turned to writing science fiction novels, the two first of which have won the Prometheus award. Ken has visited most political orientations, and so knows them well enough to avoid them.

Sid Parker is a merry Londoner full of anectdotes. He has formerly edited the magazines *Minus One*, *Ego* and *The Egoist*, whose heir *Non Serviam* is. He is currently a contributor to *Non Serviam*, while keeping up the publishing of his occasional newsleaflet, *En Marge*.

Ich hab' meine Sach' auf nichts gestellt, juchhe!
Drum ist so wohl mir in der Welt, juchhe!
Und wer will meine Kamerade sein,
Der stosse mit an, der stimme mit ein
Bei dieser Neige Wein.

Ich stellt' meine Sach' auf Geld und Gut, juchhe!
Darüber verlor ich Freud' und Mut, o weh!
Die Münze rollte hier und dort,
Und hascht' ich sie an einem Ort,
Am andern war sie fort.

Auf Weiber stellt' ich nun meine Sach', juchhe!
Daher* mir kam viel Ungemach, o weh!
Die Falsche sucht' sich ein ander Teil,
Die Treue macht' mir Langeweil,
Die Beste war nicht feil.

Ich stellt' meine Sach' auf Reis' und Fahrt, juchhe!
Und ließ meine Vaterlandesart, o weh!
Und mir behagt' es nirgends recht,
Die Kost war fremd, das Bett war schlecht,
Niemand verstand mich recht.

Ich stellt' meine Sach' auf Ruhm und Ehr', juchhe!
Und sieh', gleich hat ein andrer mehr, o weh!
Wie ich mich hatt' hervorgetan,
Da sah'n die Leute scheel mich an,
Hatte keinem Recht getan.

Ich setzt' meine Sach' auf Kampf und Krieg, juchhe!
Und uns gelang so mancher Sieg, juchhe!
Wir zogen in Feindes Land hinein,
Dem Freunde sollt's nicht viel besser sein,
Und ich verlor ein Bein.

Nun hab' ich meine Sach' auf nichts gestellt, juchhe!
Und mein gehört die ganze Welt, juchhe!
Zu Ende geht nun Sang und Schmaus;
Nur trinkt mir alle Neigen aus,
Die letzte muß heraus!

* Zelter: «Woher»

