

# LETTERS PAGE

Dear Green Anarchist,  
Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.

In case anyone was put off by Richard Hunt's opinion of 'Where We Stand', (GA, No2), I'd like to say that some of us (at least) certainly do reject violence! Anarchy has got a really bad name through its association with violence, and I think if we are ever going to get the Anarchist message across to enough people to actually achieve Anarchy, we are going to have to dispel a lot of fears first.

My dictionary defines Anarchy as: absence of government in a society; political or social disorder; a doctrine that all government should be abolished. I can't find anything that even implies violence, let alone shows it to be inherent.

Presumably social disorder has got a history of being violent; and governments have reacted violently towards people seeking to abolish them!

Really, I don't think there's any more violence in Anarchy than there is in any other part of society. Violence just attracts the most publicity - look at the miners' strike. We don't see many peaceful pickets on television, do we? And I'm told there are plenty.

I think it's high time for we Green Anarchists, with our clarity of thinking, to set an example to the less popular variety of violent Anarchists, and to the society we so much want to change, and totally condemn violence on every level.

Remember the vision! And let's not taint it! Anarchy with peace will be idealism. Anarchy with violence would be a nightmare.

Personally, radical as I am, I would rather have the system we've got at the moment than contemplate the stereotype Anarchist jobs marauding around, dishing out freedom with a gun. And I think that is what people think.

Yours ecologically, Cathy Ashley.  
Plymouth Ecology Party, Plymouth Campaign against the Police Bill.  
GreenBikers Group, 16 f. Williams Ave. Prince Rock, Plymouth.

Dear GA,

would like to say that I do not like the way that you wrote the article about Birmingham STC. Basically you have implied something that I hope you didn't mean and which is certainly not true. You suggested

that the ten people who were arrested in the van from London were responsible for the gluing up of the bank etc. This is not true and it is very dangerous and irresponsible for you to print something as suggestive as that statement was. For a start there were only nine of us charged. The driver was released after 34 hours in the cells. The police treated us like shit which is what we expected. They have charged us with going equipped for Criminal Damage but we are expecting them to add charges. So we would expect some decent coverage from the Anarchist press, but what do we get? A load of distorted shit. It's about time that the Anarchist press got their facts right before they dump other people in the shit. You have done it. Black Flag did it, and Peace News do it quite often. Your paper does not serve its purpose if it doesn't communicate facts about our action or events or else those actions become worthless.

Anarchy, love, peace. One of the Birmingham defendants.

Dear Editors,

..... It is extremely doubtful if Stirner's philosophy can be fitted into an anarchist frame of reference. For years I thought it could, but now I do not. Anarchism, of whatever school, forbids the "domination of man by man". It is a doctrine of renunciation, like Christianity. There is nothing in Stirner's 'ethic of power' to stop any conscious egoist from dominating anyone else, if he or she has the capacity and the interest. Stirner writes, "My freedom is diminished by my not being able to carry out my will on another object .... like .... a government, an individual, etc." And "Take hold and take what you require! With this the war of all against all is declared. I alone will decide what I will have." If one can envisage a general practice of Stirner's egoism, then Kropotkin is probably not far off the mark when he prophesies that it would lead to the ascendancy of the more gifted over the less gifted. Since I do not regard this as a necessarily 'bad' thing, I have come to the conclusion that it is time for the uneasy and equivocal connection between Stirner and anarchism to be severed, and that the conscious egoist and the anarchist go their separate ways.

Sincerely, S. E. Parker, Editor of 'Ego'. Garden Flat, 91 Talbot Rd. London. W2.

God, like Stirner's non-social 'ego' may be an illusion. The proletariat and the State are surely not. Prisons are real, police truchceons hurt and need to be avoided. Exploitation can't be understood if we treat prisons as illusions.

The danger of Stirner's theory is where it logically leads. However wary we are of Marxist authoritarian socialism, if we accept Stirner's self-interst egoism, we are led to dog-eat-dog capitalism (though Stirner was against the nation state). That's why the free-market capitalists have advocated individualist anarchists like Stirner. It is important also to disentangle Marx's authoritarian politics from his social theories. His materialism and his analysis of capitalism are important to understand and have contemporary relevance. By dismissing his ideas and following Stirner we will simply remain ignorant of the forces that confront us.

All good wishes, Brian Morris.  
18 Hillyfield, Lewes, Sussex.

Donald Room replies,

Brian Morris's opinion that Marx and Engels refuted Stirner, is astonishing. It is no refutation of a book on butter to say it is not about cheese, nor any refutation of an ethical treatise to say it has no sociological perspective.

"Reality" and "substance" have different meanings. Some nouns, for instance 'carrot', refer to objects; others, for instance 'journey', to relationships between objects. The reality of a journey is indisputable, but a journey has no substance in the sense that a carrot has substance. Stirner's 'ghosts' are misconceptions in which relationships are mistaken for substantial objects. S. E. Parker

is the author of a lucid introduction to the latest edition of Stirner's work, 'The Ego and Its own' (Rebel Press, £4.50 and well worth it). He is mistaken, however, in his recent findings that Stirner and Anarchism are not fully compatible. Anarchy in Malatesta's definition is not a society where domination of man by man is forbidden, but a condition in which domination of man by man is impossible. It is to be achieved, not by universal renunciation of power, but by universal refusal to be dominated.

If you oppress me, Stirner says, "I do not surrender to you, I only wait, and when I can come at you I will." Were there a general practice of Stirner's egoism, it would be impossible to organize people on the basis of domination, because as soon as the ruler's attention wandered, her power would cease.