

The Culture of Individualist Anarchism in Late Nineteenth-Century America

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Individualist anarchism in America of the late nineteenth century revolved around and was expressed through *Liberty*, a periodical published and edited by Benjamin R. Tucker from 1881 to 1908.¹ During its twenty-seven year publication, *Liberty* chronicled the intellectual development of the libertarian movement. It served as a conduit for foreign thought, particularly that of Proudhon and Spencer; it introduced Max Stirner and egoism to America;² it was the forum for lengthy, high-caliber debate on issues such as children's rights, intellectual property, natural rights and economics. *Liberty* was the first American paper to publish Nietzsche,³ and when George Bernard Shaw's first article appeared in America, it appeared in *Liberty*.⁴ Since Tucker and the majority of the writers for *Liberty*—including Victor Yarros, George Schumm, E. C. Walker, James L. Walker, Henry Appleton and A. P. Kelly—were professional journalists, its quality was consistently high. Its contributors were so diverse as to include Lysander Spooner and Vilfredo Pareto, J. K. Ingalls and Dyer D. Lum.

Because *Liberty* mirrored the controversies and the personalities of its time, and because its editor—Benjamin R. Tucker—was the most influential of the individualist anarchists, it is natural to use *Liberty* as a textbook of libertarian culture of the late nineteenth century.

By the culture of individualist anarchism, I mean the unique assumptions and attitudes with which the anarchists viewed the world and society. This included: a sense of internationalism; an emphasis upon social reform; and opposition to the political means of achieving social goals.

I

A prominent aspect of the internationalism of the anarchists was the immense influence that foreign thinkers exerted upon the movement. One of the most important of these influences was the French political philosopher Pierre Joseph Proudhon, whose words—"Liberty, the mother not the daughter of Order"—appeared as a motto on *Liberty's* masthead. Tucker, in fact, dedicated *Liberty* to Proudhon: "Liberty is... a journal brought into existence almost as a direct consequence of the teachings of

Proudhon." He continued by proclaiming Proudhon "the profoundest political philosopher that has ever lived."⁵ Almost all of Tucker's editorial columns were headed by quotations from the French philosopher. One of the two quotations employed was: "In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke. . . all those insights of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel."⁶

This quote typifies the influence of Proudhon, which was most conspicuous in economic areas. As an advocate of the labor theory of value, Proudhon condemned rent and interest as usury and championed free banking, which he believed would virtually eliminate all interest. Tucker pointed to Proudhon's experimental bank, The Bank of the People, as a successful example of a labor bank (a bank in which labor rather than a commodity such as gold was the standard of value).⁷ Proudhon's theory of banking was popularized among the anarchists through William Greene—a personal friend of Proudhon—and especially through Greene's pamphlet *Mutual Banking*,⁸ which Tucker called "the most important work on finance ever published in this country."⁹ The Americans' acceptance of the labor theory of value was to become one of their main points of departure from their counterparts, the British individualists.

Another major foreign influence was the German philosopher Max Stirner. Stirner's book, *Der Einzige und Sein Eigenthum (The Ego and His Own)*, was translated by Steven Byington and published in English in 1907 with an introduction by James L. Walker.¹⁰ Although this translation came fairly late in the movement's history, the first article on egoism appeared in *Liberty* in 1886 by Tak Kak, the pseudonym of James L. Walker. The ensuing controversy caused the most significant rift that was to occur in the individualist anarchist movement. When, in 1887, Tucker rejected natural rights as the basis of libertarianism and adopted Stirnerite egoism in its stead, the natural rights advocates claimed that he was destroying not only the idea of rights but also the individualist anarchist movement itself.¹¹

Although the actual proponents of egoism in *Liberty* were James L. Walker and J. B. Robinson, Tucker was bitterly criticized because it was known that he privately sanctioned their position. Gertrude B. Kelly wrote to Tucker: "we might well be led to suppose that you had been 'hired by the enemy' to bring disgrace upon. . . Anarchism by allowing such distortions of their principles as Tak Kak has presented to appear in the columns of *Liberty* with little or no comment from you." She ended this attack: "My friends, my friends have you completely lost your heads? Cannot you see that without morality, without the recognition of other's rights, Anarchy, in any other than the vulgar sense, could not last a single day?"¹² This controversy ceased when the natural rights side of the debate (Gertrude B. Kelly and her brother John F. Kelly) dissociated themselves from *Liberty*.^{13,14}

The third foreign thinker with great impact was the British philosopher Herbert Spencer. The foremost Spencerian in *Liberty*, in terms of longevity,

was unquestionably Victor Yarros, although Gertrude Kelly and John Kelly were also conduits.

There were two ways in which Spencer's impact was experienced. First, his philosophy provided a foundation for an integrated, scientific approach to individualism. It was Spencer's emphasis on science, particularly on evolution, that largely accounts for his tremendous success in this country. Evolution was a key concept to the individualists who tried to incorporate the theories of Spencer and Darwin into their moral system; and it is with the Spencerians that one finds an attempt to establish scientific ethics. The Spencerian periodical *Popular Science Monthly*¹⁵ is an illustration of this blending. Articles on individualism are interspersed with, for example, diagrams of the inner workings of a telescope, for the Spencerians believed that the functioning of a telescope and that of morality were equally scientific.

Secondly, Spencer's impact provided a point of departure. His early article "The Proper Sphere of Government,"¹⁶ which appeared in the *Non-conformist*, so limited government that it was stripped of the power to declare war. Spencer's early work, *Social Statics*, contained the later deleted chapter "The Right to Ignore the State," which was a justification of anarchy without ever using that label.¹⁷ A large part of *Liberty's* discussion of Spencer revolved around a comparison of the young Spencer with the current Spencer, who was considered a heretic because of his alleged conservatism.

The anarchists seemed especially angered by Spencer's offhanded dismissal of Proudhon¹⁸ and by an article entitled "The Coming Slavery" which appeared in the *Contemporary Review*.¹⁹ This article commented upon what Spencer termed "the undeserving poor" and enraged Gertrude Kelly who interpreted it as an attack on the workingman. In her response to this article, Kelly typified *Liberty's* approach to Spencer. She wrote: "The only true advocates of *laissez-faire* in modern times are the Anarchists. They are Mr. Spencer's true disciples, more true to his teachings than he is himself."²⁰

Less prominent figures were also noteworthy, especially Auberon Herbert, Kropotkin, Bakunin and John Henry Mackay, but the overwhelming foreign influences were Proudhon, Stirner and Spencer. This influence was an important factor behind the many translations and reprints that flowed from the movement. One example of this widespread activity was Benjamin Tucker's translation of the works of Proudhon, at a time when the complete works of Lysander Spooner were not available.²¹ Often, translations appeared in *Liberty* in the form of serialized novels. Sophie Kropotkin's autobiographical novel, *The Wife of Number 4,237*, chronicled her husband's imprisonment by the French government.²² The literature translated was usually French or Russian and often was translated by Sarah Holmes (who also published a number of individualist works in book form).²³ Columns from contemporary foreign newspapers such as

Clemenceau's *La Justice* and *La Revolte* by Kropotkin were frequent additions to *Liberty*, though the bulk of reprinted material came from Britain.

When Tucker traveled to England and Europe in 1889, he met a number of the foreign radicals, and thereafter the British individualists began to appear frequently in *Liberty*. Wordsworth Donisthorpe, the London correspondent for *Liberty*, contributed lengthy articles and reported on the activities of British organizations, such as the Liberty and Property Defense League. The American anarchists and the British individualists often debated issues such as the charging of interest and children's rights. Generally, the Americans were more radical in areas such as government, while the British, who did not so widely accept the labor theory of value, were better in economics.²⁴

Other correspondents for *Liberty* were: Vilfredo Pareto, who wrote several reports on Italy; David Andrade, who contributed several excellent articles on Australia; and John Henry Mackay, who wrote from Germany.

It is interesting to note that this attention to the foreign press and foreign writers was not totally one-sided. Columns from *Liberty* were translated and reprinted abroad. For instance, the Spanish *A Vida*, a communist-anarchist periodical, translated an article by Steven Byington from a French journal which had been previously translated and reprinted from *Liberty*. *A Vida* then proceeded to take Byington to task for his interpretation of anarchism. Byington in turn translated the Spanish article and responded to it in *Liberty*.²⁵

Another feature of this internationalism was the anarchists' tendency to champion distinctly foreign causes. The individualist anarchists became so involved in the Irish no-rent movement, for example, that Henry Appleton and Sidney Morse contributed columns to the main no-rent paper, *Irish World*.²⁶ This controversy was more hotly discussed in the first volume of *Liberty* than were most distinctively American concerns. Similarly, the persecution of the Russian nihilists in the early 1880's was a major focus of *Liberty*'s first three years. Issue one, page one, in fact, was dominated by a portrait of and a poem to Sophie Perovskaya, the assassin of Czar Alexander II.

It is interesting to speculate on the reason for this sense of internationalism. Although the movement was fortunate to include Byington, a fine professional translator, and although many of the anarchists were bilingual, the major factor lay in the flood of immigration into this country and into the anarchist movement. Paul Avrich comments on this influx in his book, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre*: "There were by Voltairine's estimate [circa 1900] between 400 to 500 anarchists in Philadelphia, of whom 145 were regulars. Seventy-five of these were Russian Jews, 40 were native Americans, 24 Germans, 3 Italians, 2 Cubans and one Frenchman."²⁷ Anarchism everywhere in America felt the impact of this immigration in terms of translations, foreign language papers published in

America, the infusion of foreign thought, and a concern with foreign affairs. Writers dealing specifically with individualist anarchism included: Gertrude and John Kelly, from Ireland; Victor Yarros, who emigrated from the Ukraine to avoid political arrest; James L. Walker and William Hanson, born in Britain; and George Schumm, from Germany.²⁸ Unfortunately, this immigration was sharply cut off by the repressive anti-anarchist immigration laws of the early 1900's.²⁹ It is with these laws that libertarianism lost much of its international flavor.³⁰

II

Another defining aspect of individualist anarchism was its insistence upon individual rights in the social realm. This insistence made its advocates, to a large extent, fellow travelers with the social reformers of two prominent movements of the day — freethought and free love.

American freethought was a basically anti-Christian, anti-clerical movement whose purpose was to make the individual politically and spiritually free to decide for himself on religious matters. A number of the contributors to *Liberty* were prominent figures in both freethought and anarchism. The individualist anarchist George MacDonald was a co-editor of *Freethought* and, for a time, the *Truth Seeker*. E. C. Walker was co-editor of the excellent freethought/free-love periodical, *Lucifer, the Light Bearer*.³¹

Although the anarchists agreed with the goals of freethought, they were often critical of the major figures of the movement. Robert Ingersoll was heavily criticized for his refusal to extend individual liberty into economic areas such as banking. In speaking of Ingersoll's advocacy of protectionism, one of the kinder things Tucker had to say was: "justice requires me to state that Ingersoll's sins are due rather to his shallowness and ignorance than to any desire to bolster up the iniquities of the plutocracy."³² In turn, Ingersoll's supporters termed Tucker "the self-appointed corrector of the human race."³³ To paraphrase Tucker's criticism: although the individualist anarchists shared freethought goals, they insisted on carrying individual choice further than the majority of freethinkers. They wished to fundamentally change society rather than to merely reform it.

This was a recurring conflict. A more extreme instance, in which many freethinkers refused to extend liberty even in religious matters, occurred when the government began to persecute the Mormons for the religious practice of polygamy. Horace Seaver, co-editor of the freethought paper *The Boston Investigator*, refused to defend the Mormons, falling back on the argument: "Would you like to see your daughter living in polygamy?"³⁴ Tucker's response to Seaver exemplified the individualist anarchist approach. "It does not now occur to the Mormon hater that the wishes of the daughters themselves should be consulted," observed Tucker. "Every honest

father, whatever he may desire to see his daughter do or not do, will strive to secure her in the right of choice—that is, Liberty.”³⁵ This debate ended with Seaver accusing Tucker of advocating polygamy and Tucker accusing Seaver of being “a peevish old man.”³⁶

It is useful to dwell upon these conflicts in order to distinguish individualist anarchism from freethought, but the movement was generally sympathetic to freethought. Many of the anarchists were ardent freethinkers; reprints from freethought papers such as *Lucifer, the Light Bearer, Freethought*, and the *Truth Seeker* appeared in *Liberty*; and, most importantly, the anarchists agreed with the political/educational goals of freethought and with the anti-Christian, anti-clerical bias. The church was viewed as a common ally of the State and as a repressive force in and of itself. The most notable exception to this was Byington who defended Christianity, accurately pointing out that Christians had played a significant role in libertarian causes of the past. In this stand, however, Byington was almost unique, and Tucker’s opinion seemed to be that he would outgrow it.³⁷ To Tucker’s credit, he even printed Byington’s defense of missionaries with which he must have violently disagreed.³⁸

The individualist anarchists also participated in the free-love movement. The purpose of this movement was to separate the State from sexual matters, to leave sexual matters to the consciences of the participating individuals. These sexual matters included birth control, marriage, adultery, divorce, age of consent laws, and legitimacy claims. As a rule, the radicals involved in this movement were puritanical in their views and behavior; free love, therefore, should not be equated with promiscuity. The spirit of free love was similar to the crusading moral spirit of abolitionism from which many of the free-love advocates sprang. As Ezra Heywood stated: “Relieving one from outer restraint does not lessen but increases this Personal Accountability; for by making him FREE, we devolve on him the necessity of self-government; and he must respect the rights of others, or suffer the consequences of being an invader.”³⁹

Much of the association that free love has with promiscuity is the result of a propaganda campaign by free-love opponents who sought to discredit the movement. This propaganda was so effective that many freethinkers—who would seem natural allies of the free-love advocates—condemned the movement in order to escape guilt by association. The arrest of D. M. Bennett, editor of the most influential American freethought paper *The Truth Seeker*, occurred in 1878 for violation of the Comstock obscenity laws. This caused a great controversy in the freethought ranks. Some wanted to support Bennett, while the majority wanted nothing to do with his free-love activities. The hostility of most freethinkers toward free love was expressed at the 1879 convention of the Liberal League, a main organ of freethought. The convention opposed Bennett and voted to support the obscenity laws, while Ingersoll attempted to ban free-love advocates from membership in

the League. He argued: "Let them spend their time examining each other's sexual organs, and in letting ours alone."⁴⁰

Significantly, the individualist anarchists were the link between the two movements. They were the radical faction in both movements because they viewed both positions as two points on the same continuum—that of individual liberty.

There are significant differences between the anarchist participation in freethought and in free love. As with freethought, a number of the individualist anarchists—Ezra Heywood, E. C. Walker, Lillian Harman—were prominent in both movements. And, again, significant differences arose between Tucker and the major figures in the free-love movement. But here the similarity ends. The disagreements were not moral but strategic, and the individualist anarchists themselves were largely critical of Tucker's stand on these disagreements. This is one of the few areas in which Tucker's name is not a synonym for the movement as a whole.

An example of a disagreement over strategy occurred when Moses Harman, the editor of *Lucifer, the Light Bearer*, was sentenced under the Comstock laws. Moses Harman and Ezra Heywood set themselves up for prosecution by the State by mailing and printing material on birth control and the injustice caused by current sexual laws. Although Tucker was clear that both men had the right to publish and distribute whatever they wished, he loudly condemned them as "rash comrades who precipitate an irresistible onslaught upon our whole line which is liable to result in our annihilation."⁴¹ Tucker feared that they would spark further repression which would endanger the right to discuss anarchism.

Needless to say, many of the individualist anarchists severely criticized Tucker, declaring that this was a time to support the accused men, not to condemn them. These recurring conflicts over strategy caused an important, though temporary, rift in the movement, particularly between E. C. Walker and Tucker. The issue in question was the non-State, non-church marriage of Walker and Lillian Harman, which they insisted the State should recognize as a valid marriage. Tucker thought it was absurd and dangerous to appeal to the State and, as he saw it, extend its grasp even further into sexual matters. Walker and Harman believed that State recognition of their union would deal a severe blow to the laws and traditions of marriage. When Walker and Harman were imprisoned for their stand, Tucker continued to criticize them despite the indignation and sympathy expressed by the radical community.⁴² In fairness to Tucker, it should be pointed out that he printed both sides of the issue and advocated contributing money to their defense.

Despite its seemingly conservative stand on the imprisonment of Moses Harman and Ezra Heywood, *Liberty* itself flouted the Comstock laws. Walt Whitman, much admired by Tucker, was the object of censorship when the Boston Post Office suppressed *Leaves of Grass* in 1882 owing to one of its

poems entitled *To a Common Prostitute*. Tucker openly republished the book⁴³ and offered it for sale through the mails, taunting the postal authorities with an advertisement that declared:

To Oliver Stevens, District Attorney. . . . You are hereby notified. . . that I have in my possession, and do now offer for sale, copies of the work advertised above. . . . And, to avoid unnecessary trouble and make the evidence of sale indisputable, I offer, on receipt for any one of you of an order for a copy of the work, to deliver a copy to you in my own person, at such place in Boston as you may designate.⁴⁴

The invitation was never accepted.

Although individualist anarchism was distinct from freethought and free love, it may be viewed as a minority faction within these movements. It functioned as a radical minority that pushed constantly for hard-line advocacy of individual rights.

III

The integrating theme behind individualist anarchism was the primacy of the individual and the desire to eliminate all but defensive force from society. The anarchists proposed a society by contract to replace the society by force which they saw around them. And the kind of force they most loudly opposed was political activity, i.e., voting and electoral politics. They considered any participation in electoral politics to be a violation of libertarian principles. In Tucker's words: "If Liberty has a weak-kneed friend who is contemplating a violation of his anarchist principles by voting just for once, may these golden words from John Morley's 'Compromise' recall him to his better self: 'A principle, if it be sound, represents one of the larger expedencies. To abandon that for the sake of some seeming expediency of the hour is to sacrifice the greater good for the less on no more creditable ground than that the less is nearer.'"⁴⁵

On the issue of holding political office, Lysander Spooner was one of the clearest of the individualist anarchists. In *A Letter to Thomas Bayard*, he framed his objection to the holding of political office, irrespective of who the particular holder may be. By what right, Spooner asked, can one person occupy a position of power over another's life? What circumstance would make this a proper situation? If you have the natural right to protect your life and property and if you delegate this right to another person, then his position is contractual and thereby in accord with libertarian principles. But what does this delegation entail? It means, according to Spooner, that you possess the right which is being delegated; that the delegation was explicit and not merely assumed, for a contract may not be assumed; and, that you can withdraw your delegation and reclaim the exercise of your natural rights, for to say that you cannot withdraw your delegation is to say that you have given away not the exercise of a particular right but your entire lib-

erty. In Spooner's words: "No man can delegate, or give away his own natural right to liberty...or to give to another, any right of arbitrary dominion over himself; for that would be giving himself away as a slave. And this no one can do. Any contract to do so is necessarily an absurd one and has no validity."⁴⁶

Voltairine de Cleyre expressed a similar view in a lecture delivered before the Boston Secular Society in 1890 and subsequently reprinted in *Liberty*. "I go to the White House" de Cleyre stated, "I say '[President] Harrison, are you the government?' 'No madam, I am its representative.' 'Well, then, where is the principal? — Who is the government?' 'The people of the United States.' 'The whole people?' 'The whole people.' 'You, then are the representative of the people of the United States. May I see your certificate of authorization?'" De Cleyre went on to define what she meant by authorization and why she morally opposed political office and the process of voting. "A body of voters cannot give into your charge any rights but their own. By no possible jugglery of logic can they delegate the exercise of any function which they themselves do not control. If any individual on earth has a right to delegate his powers to whomsoever he chooses, then every other individual has an equal right: and if each has an equal right, then none can choose an agent for another, without the other's consent. Therefore, if the power of government resides in the whole people and out of that whole all but one elected you as their agent, you would still have no authority whatever to act for that one."⁴⁷

Spooner was also opposed to voting. In *No Treason*,⁴⁸ Spooner attacked the idea that by voting one is giving sanction to the State. He argues convincingly that voting can be viewed as a means of self-defense. It is not clear, however, that by attacking the idea of voting as implied consent that Spooner is supporting electoral politics. Arguing against a negative is not the logical equivalent of advocating a positive. Fortunately, Spooner was much clearer about voting elsewhere. In a letter dated 1845, written by Spooner to his friend George Bradburn of the Liberty Party, Spooner states: "I do not rely upon political machinery...for the principle of it is wrong; for it admits...that under a constitution, the law depends on the will of the majorities, for the time being, as indicated by the acts of the legislature."⁴⁹ Spooner was something of an annoyance to Bradburn because, although he was an abolitionist, he refused to vote for the Liberty Party.

Spooner was also clear in *Against Women Suffrage*, an article reprinted in *Liberty*. "Women are human beings and consequently have all the natural rights that any human beings have," Spooner argued. "They have just as good a right to make laws as men have, and no better; and that is just no right at all."⁵⁰ As an alternative to voting, Spooner admonished women to go to the State House and throw the existing statute books on the fire.

The individualist anarchists overwhelmingly believed that voting and the holding of political office were direct violations of libertarian morality.

This issue was debated only twice in *Liberty*.⁵¹ The first instance occurred when Henry Appleton attempted to infiltrate and use the Knights of Labor to achieve certain labor goals through that organization's participation in politics. Appleton accepted political activity as compromise. He wrote: "Tucker has yet to learn that compromise is a true scientific principle under Anarchism."⁵² He then proceeded to defend compromise against the rigid "plumb-line" approach of Tucker. After Tucker's harsh reply entitled "Plumb-line or Corkscrew?"⁵³ Appleton backed down by stating: "Such a course of action [political activity], I do not regard as compromise. . . ." Appleton made it clear that he was fighting for liberty by "trying to get a little nearer to the head and horns of the beast and finish up my work on that end."⁵⁴ Although Appleton's integrity was never questioned, the ensuing dispute was so bitter that Appleton—hitherto *Liberty*'s most frequent contributor—chose to disappear from its pages.

Victor Yarros also locked horns with Tucker. In one of his many articles for *Liberty*, Yarros opposed voting on strategic rather than on moral grounds. He wrote: "A friend and reader of *Liberty* recently put this query to me: When some practical, immediate good can be accomplished by the election of a particular man or the victory of a particular party, is it not the part of wisdom and propriety. . . to aid and abet such election?" Yarros replied: "The real question is whether the immediate and practical good which, by our hypothesis, can be secured is not overbalanced by indirect and remote injury to the essential aims and purpose of Anarchism. Answer this question in the negative, and all reasons for boycotting politics vanish. . . . Anarchists have no religious or moral objection to voting and party warfare."⁵⁵ Somewhat contradictorily, Yarros added "anarchists would not deem it ethically proper to use the ballot (which means aggression) for the purpose of furthering the cause of freedom."⁵⁶ Tucker responded: "For my part, when I say that I would use the ballot if I thought thereby I could best help the cause of freedom, I make the declaration in precisely the same sense. . . as when I declare. . . that I would dynamite if I thought that thereby I could best help the cause of freedom."⁵⁷

Yarros contested the claim that ballots or bullets were, in principle, the same. "How absurd, then it is to say that there is no difference in principle between using the ballot. . . and using dynamite. Dynamite deprives man of life and limb; the use of the ballot for the purpose of securing freedom interferes with no one's exercise of his faculties."⁵⁸ Tucker noted Yarros' inconsistency: "He now tacitly premises such a transformation of politics that invasion is eliminated, and concludes therefrom that Anarchists may, on special occasions, participate in them without aggression."⁵⁹ In response, Yarros shifted ground again by defending not electoral politics but voting in referendums. This contradictory and temporary defense of political activity is the closest statement in *Liberty* that, under special circumstances, political activity does not compromise libertarian morality.

Individualist anarchism was overwhelmingly anti-political. One of *Liberty's* themes was "power corrupts" and one of its regular columns, "The Beauty of Government," was devoted to this theme, especially regarding police and the court system. If libertarianism of the late nineteenth century stood for any one principle it was opposition to the political solution to social problems.

From this refusal to grant validity to government, it is natural that a sense of internationalism developed. With the rejection of statism, national boundaries became pretensions of statist grandeur; the only boundaries to be respected were those of private property.

From the rejection of political activity, the anarchists directed their energy into social reform movements. They wrote and lectured. They joined organizations that sought to repeal laws. They championed strikes, boycotts, unions and other peaceful means of economic restructuring.⁶⁰ They experimented with alternative education systems such as that offered in the Modern School Movement and with alternative communities such as New Harmony. Moreover, the anarchists preached and practiced civil disobedience, especially in regard to freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

IV

An inevitable question which confronts any radical movement is whether or not it is a success. The standard of success is usually the extent to which the movement influences the laws and governmental structure of its time. By this standard individualist anarchism cannot be deemed a success.

However, in analyzing individualist anarchism it is necessary to put it in historical context. The Civil War and the growth of government which accompanied and followed it shaped America of the late nineteenth century. The post-Civil War period ushered in compulsory education, persecution of the Mormons, severe immigration restrictions, the Comstock laws, woman's suffrage, and the Spanish-American war. The tide of the time was pro-State and anti-individualist.⁶¹ As Charles Burgess commented: "During that era of blood and in the decades that followed grew the first effective consensus about nationhood—and the widespread use of compulsion to transform that consensus into operational reality."⁶²

The idea of society as a collective organism became dominant, and with this idea the individual was relegated to being merely one aspect of a more important whole. The rights of the individual were juxtaposed with the rights of society. The popular political theory advocated a scientific administration of that organism. This theory had the great attraction of never having been tried. Against this pro-State tide, the individualist anarchists were instrumental in preserving—and in some instances increasing—the religious and sexual freedom of their time. In the areas of freedom of speech and freedom of the press, they acted as a counterfoil to the Com-

stock laws. Given their context, they were as successful as any pro-individualist cause could have been.

A more complicated question is whether or not their ideas were successful, for it is difficult to assess the impact of an idea or a tradition. The true impact of Locke's *Second Treatise on Government* — a key book in libertarianism — was not realized until long after its publication when it was used by the revolutionaries of the War of Independence. Ideas have life-spans far in excess of any individual or any phase of a tradition. The true success of individualist anarchism lies in the current libertarian movement for which it forms the necessary historical and theoretical foundation.

NOTES

1. *Liberty* was published in Boston from August 1881 to February 1892, and thereafter in New York until April 1908, shortly after which its offices were destroyed by fire, and it never resumed publication. There were two associate editors: A. P. Kelly (May 1884 to May 1888) and Victor Yarros (June 1890 to February 1892).
2. *Liberty* 3 (March 6, 1886): 8. The article was by Tak Kak, the pseudonym of James L. Walker.
3. *Liberty* 9 (December 17, 1892): 1, 4.
4. *Liberty* 11 (July 27, 1895): 2–10. Originally entitled *A Degenerate's View of Nordau*, this was later reprinted as *The Sanity of Art*.
5. *Liberty* 1 (January 1882): 4.
6. This quotation was used from *Liberty* 4 (August 21, 1886) onward. The quotation used prior to this issue was "A free man is one who enjoys the use of his reason and his faculties; who is neither blinded by passion, nor hindered or driven by oppression, nor deceived by erroneous opinions."
7. *Liberty* 9 (February 24, 1894): 5.
8. *Mutual Banking* was one of the pamphlets *Liberty* offered for sale as *Liberty's Library*; advertisements for it appeared throughout the twenty-seven years of publication.
9. *Liberty* 15 (February 1906): 7.
10. *Egoism*, a periodical published by Georgia and Henry Replogle, ran the first twelve chapters of J. L. Walker's *The Philosophy of Egoism* between May 1890 and September 1891.
11. Technically, Tucker did not repudiate rights. He claimed that they were a useful social construct with which to organize society. He attempted to base rights in contract rather than in the nature of man.
12. *Liberty* 5 (August 13, 1887): 7.
13. Gertrude Kelly's last article was in *Liberty* 5 (September 10, 1887); John Kelly's last appearance was through a letter to the editor, *Liberty* 5 (March 31, 1888): 4. The Kellys and Lazarus (the pseudonym of Sidney H. Morse), who also left over the egoism controversy, wrote thereafter for several publications, most notably the *Nemesis*.
14. For a detailed discussion of egoism and the *Liberty* controversy see James J. Martin, *Men Against the State* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Ralph Myles, 1970), which is still the definitive source on this matter.
15. Edited by Edward L. Youmans, *Popular Science Monthly* was the leading Spencerian periodical in America.
16. This article appeared in the *Nonconformist* in twelve parts beginning June 15, 1842.
17. Spencer repudiated this chapter in 1892.
18. Spencer admitted to never having read Proudhon. *Liberty* 8 (June 25, 1892): 1.
19. This article was part of a series of papers printed in *The Contemporary Review* and later republished in *Man Versus the State*.
20. *Liberty* 3 (October 24, 1885): 7.
21. *The Proudhon Library*, as it was called, was first advertised in *Liberty* 4 (February 12,

- 1887): 8. The first work translated in this series was *System of Economic Contradictions*. Unfortunately, Tucker never completed this series. Translating Proudhon was a long-range concern of Tucker's; at the age of 21, he had already translated *What is Property?*
22. *Liberty* 3 (March 6, 1886) through *Liberty* 4 (May 22, 1886).
 23. Titles published by Sarah Holmes included *Three Dreams in a Desert* by Olive Schreiner and *The Science of Society* by Stephen P. Andrews.
 24. Examples of the difference between the Americans and the British on interest occur in *Liberty* 10 (May 19, 1894): 8 and *Liberty* 10 (July 28, 1894): 8-9, between the American Hugo Bilgram and the British J. Greevz Fisher.
 25. *Liberty* 15 (August 1906): 24-34.
 26. Henry Appleton wrote under the pseudonym of Honorius; Sidney H. Morse used Phillip.
 27. Paul Avrich, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 131.
 28. George and Emma Schumm were instrumental in the publishing of *Libertas*, a German-language version of *Liberty* first announced by Tucker in *Liberty* 5 (December 31, 1887): 4.
 29. These laws were, in part, a reaction to the assassination of President McKinley by a self-proclaimed anarchist.
 30. In stressing the internationalism of this period, I do not mean to deny the unique and indigenous roots of American anarchism.
 31. First published in 1880 under the title *Valley Falls Liberal, Lucifer, the Light Bearer* was one of the most important libertarian publications of its time. Its co-editor, E. C. Walker, was a prominent individualist anarchist. *Lucifer*, which changed its name to *The American Journal of Eugenics* in 1907, outlasted *Liberty*.
 32. *Liberty* 8 (June 27, 1891): 1.
 33. *Liberty* 8 (July 25, 1891): 1.
 34. *Liberty* 3 (April 25, 1891): 4.
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. *Ibid.*
 37. Tucker was mistaken in this hope. Byington went on to translate the Bible.
 38. Byington's defense of missionaries was in *Liberty* 11 (September 7, 1895): 6-8.
 39. Ezra Heywood, *Cupid's Yokes: or, The Binding Forces of Conjugal Life* (Princeton, Mass.: Co-operative Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 4.
 40. Orvin Larson, *American Infidel: Robert G. Ingersoll* (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1962), p. 150.
 41. *Liberty* 7 (May 24, 1890): 6.
 42. For discussion of this matter and of free love in general, I would highly recommend Hal D. Sears, *The Sex Radicals* (Lawrence, Kans.: Regents Press, 1977).
 43. First advertised in *Liberty* 1 (July 22, 1882): 4.
 44. *Ibid.*
 45. *Liberty* 2 (August 23, 1884): 4.
 46. *Liberty* 1 (May 27, 1882): 2.
 47. *Liberty* 6 (February 15, 1890): 7.
 48. Lewis Perry, *Radical Abolitionism* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 200.
 49. *Liberty* 1 (June 10, 1882): 4.
 50. There were individuals who were not "hard-line" about this issue (such as Joseph Labadie), but they were exceptional and never made it a point of debate.
 51. *Liberty* 4 (April 17, 1886): 4.
 52. *Ibid.*
 53. *Liberty* 4 (May 1, 1886): 5.
 54. *Liberty* 4 (February 26, 1887): 4.
 55. *Liberty* 12 (November 1896): 3.
 56. *Ibid.*
 57. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 58. *Liberty* 12 (December 1896): 5.
 59. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

60. *Liberty's* response to the July 16, 1881 meeting of the Working People's International exemplified Tucker's enthusiasm for such labor organizations. Tucker proclaimed it to be "a momentous event, which marks an epoch in the progress of the great labor movement" and commissioned a special correspondent whose reports may have been the first accounts of that International published in America. Wm. B. Greene, one of Tucker's mentors, wrote a comprehensive exposition of the International's principles, *International Address*, which was widely advertised by *Liberty*. With the expulsion of Woodhull and the International's hostility to anarchism, however, Tucker's interest waned and the organization was mentioned with decreasing frequency. See *Liberty* 1 (August 20, 1881): 2.
61. For further discussion of this trend, I would recommend Murray Rothbard's *Left and Right* (San Francisco: Cato Institute, 1979).
62. Charles Burgess, *Harvard Educational Review* 46, no. 2 (May 1976): 201.