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# The Voluntaryist

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*"If one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself."*

November 1984

## **"PRO-GOVERNMENT ANARCHISTS": "ANARCHISTS HAVE FORGOTTEN THEIR PRINCIPLES"**

By Carl Watner

If history teaches us anything, it is that war, like no other activity of the State, decimates anarchist movements. Not only does war create a breach in libertarian ranks (between those who endorse governmental involvement in war and those who don't), the State inevitably uses the patriotic fervor stimulated by war to crack down on dissent during times of military conflict. The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate the fundamental anti-war position of anarchism and to show how the war issue divided and depleted anarchist ranks during World War I.

Although the title of this paper sounds like a voluntaryist accusation directed against the "political" anarchists today, it represents the headlines of two articles published by Errico Malatesta in the London FREEDOM in 1914 and 1916. Peter Kropotkin, the Russian exile and one of the leaders of the European anarchist movement, had taken the position, at the outbreak of World War I, that the French government should be supported in its fight against German militarism. His support of the Allied cause surprised many of his colleagues. On the other hand, the vast majority of anarchists, both in Europe and the United States, refused to support any government or any form of war. To them, wars were caused by States. Since anarchists were opposed to all States; since they looked upon them as criminal and invasive institutions, it was a relatively straightforward conclusion for them to be against war.

Kropotkin's position on World War I was something of a mystery to his followers, although for him it formed a consistent pattern of thought. Much of his early thinking was clearly anti-war, but it became clouded by his passionate dislike of Prussia. In his classic anti-war essay, "La Guerre", written in 1882, he viewed war "as a means for the enrichment of the state, as the exploiter of the masses, and as the logical extension of the violence and greed" of State capitalism. He saw war as a threat to the workers' revolution, which he hoped would overthrow the French State. German militarism was designed to crush the revolutionary tradition of France and was therefore to be opposed. Unfortunately for his anarchist philosophy, the only way to oppose the German threat was to support France, and this he chose to do.

At the turn of the century, Kropotkin had analyzed the Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War. He had refused to take sides in either conflict, condemning them as "senseless slaughter." Wars of imperialism were always to be condemned, yet here lies the key to his support of France. In 1905, he had published a letter in LE TEMPS in Paris, in which he was concerned with the "crucial distinction between war and revolution, as well as defining the difference between patriotic and imperialist wars on the one hand and wars of national defense and liberation on the other." Kropotkin informed his readers that "if Germany invaded France, he would **take a rifle and defend her.**" The important part of his message was why he would do this. "He would fight **not as a soldier of the bourgeoisie, but rather as a soldier of the revolution.**" A German invasion of France represented a threat to "continuing the revolution." A defeat of France would be "a tragedy for civilization" since France was the most "progressive of any country in its ripeness for the coming revolution and because of its record of achievements in past revolutions."

The uproar over this letter in 1905 foreshadowed the debates that were to follow Kropotkin's pronouncements on World War I. At least one prominent critic pointed out that Kropotkin was asking anarchists "to be anti-militarist revolutionaries and revolutionary nationalists at one and the same time." This was undesirable, even if it were within the realm of possibility. Anarchists must accept a hard-line position against war: "if one accepts war, he must accept all of its consequences, its hierarchy, its servitude, its statism." The general anarchist attitude towards war seemed to favor this position. At the International Anarchist Congress in Amsterdam in 1907, it was stated that anarchists were "declared enemies of all armed force in the hands of the state." Anarchists were to encourage working men to refuse military service and to do everything within their power to destroy military power. "Kropotkin was, therefore, already in complete disagreement with the anarchist movement at this time on this issue." Many of his opponents felt he "had gone too far with his Francophilia."

When war broke out in September 1914, Kropotkin soon repeated his thesis that the "Germans threatened now to eradicate this Latin civilization which had given birth to 1789, 1848, and 1871. ... These themes of the intrinsic value of French civilization and its revolutionary heritage, of the monstrous threat represented by

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# The Voluntaryist

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Editor: **Wendy McElroy**

Contributing Editors: **Carl Watner and  
George H. Smith**

## EDITORIAL

### WHAT'S NEXT IN THE PURSUIT OF LIBERTY?

Ever since the Libertarian Party was founded in 1971, electoral politics has been the dominant strategy in the pursuit of liberty. For the last 13 years, this strategy has been particularly disastrous for the libertarian movement. This year, the Bergland campaign has been relatively unsuccessful in gaining attention to the libertarian platform and the vote totals (if one considers that an important measure) even less so. The very nature of electoral action has fragmented an already factional movement.

Outside of the electoral context, the movement has witnessed a weakening, too. The educational boosters of the movement, those financially capable of supporting organizations like the Center for Libertarian Studies, the Institute for Humane Studies, and the Cato Institute, have either been hard-hit economically or have become less prone to support these groups. Undoubtedly, the weak state of the Libertarian Party's finances has helped drain away funds from these educational activities. The publishing end of the movement has suffered. INQUIRY, UPDATE, and FRONTLINES no longer exist and other newsletters or journals only appear sporadically. When The Voluntaryists were organized in the summer of 1982, George Smith made a prediction that hard times were ahead for all libertarians. Not only was the growth of the leviathan State continuing, but the movement was so wracked by internal differences that it was weakening itself. Time has proved him correct.

In the Dallas Accord of 1974, anarchists were asked to overlook the differences with minarchists in the Libertarian Party. This snuffed out all further debate within the Party over the serious question of whether the ultimate goal should be just less government or "no" government. These modern-day anarchists found themselves in an analogous situation to Kropotkin (see the article on "Pro-Government Anarchists" in this issue), when he placed himself in the absurd and unfortunate position of supporting one State over another during the horrible conflict of World War I. Wherever anarchists have joined

rank with "political" libertarians, there has been little notable success in furthering the idea of "no" government.

To the anarchists who wear the label "libertarian", The Voluntaryists are the one group that has criticized electoral activity, and yet placed an emphasis on education and activism. In the words of our "Statement of Purpose", we are dedicated to promoting non-political strategies to achieve a free society, since we believe that political methods invariably strengthen governmental legitimacy. As we have said before, we do not measure success by vote totals, but rather by how many people come to view the State as the criminal gang it really is; not by how many laws are abolished by libertarian legislators, but by how many people hold the law in contempt and refuse to obey State legislation.

From the start, the most well-intentioned libertarians involved with the Libertarian Party saw it as a vehicle for educational activity. Several questions must be asked, however. Just who was to be educated and to what ideas were they to be exposed? More than half of the eligible voters choose not to vote in an average election. As a political party, the LP had to aim at the 50% who do vote. But this is a difficult task, because people who already participate in politics generally have their minds made up, if not on party affiliation, at least on their stands on issues. People who already have strong political opinions are the least open to persuasion.

Even worse, many Libertarian Party "educationists" have tried to reach out to the 50% of the population which doesn't vote. What a terrible contradiction for the anarchists in the Party. Non-voters have either deliberately chosen not to vote, or they are apathetic. Either way they are refusing to support the political establishment. How can a libertarian justify trying to make them give up their non-participation? Finally, what types of ideas has the Libertarian Party been promoting? By running candidates, as political parties must - if they are to be a political party - the Libertarian Party has been destroying the anarchist message that all political power should be abolished.

Before there was a Libertarian Party the conventional wisdom was to educate people at the top: the leaders, the opinion-makers, the philosophers; and eventually this would all "trickle-down" to the rest of the populace. But even the Libertarian Party has shown that this idea is wrong. Wherever the LP has had any appreciable success it has been because of a "grass-roots" approach. The average citizens of this country are not stupid. Far

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from it. In their own ways, millions of them are living their lives outside the system, away from the State. If government had never been invented, these people would naturally be anarchistic and never know the difference. It is time for all libertarian anarchists to pick up the gauntlet and persuade these people of the rightness of a consistent theory of "no" government, rather than consent to being ruled.

The voluntaryist view is that we libertarians are in for a very long struggle against the State. There is no such thing as a quick fix in this arena. The State has had centuries to mold and brainwash people's minds. All the conscientious libertarian can do is to offer his or her truths in an attempt to persuade, convince and inform that part of the populace which is susceptible to understanding our message. Non-violent resistance - whether one simply ignores the State or speaks out and acts publicly in defiance against the State - plays its role in this struggle, but it does require the courage of one's convictions. It also has a tremendous educational impact. People must see injustices occur before they can decide where they stand on the issues. Institutionalized coercion allows them to avoid the need to make a decision whether to continue their support or withdraw their cooperation from the State. As Benjamin Tucker once said, if one fifth of the people were to refuse to pay their taxes on principle, he doubted if the other four-fifths would agree to pay for their incarceration.

The voluntaryist has to have a long range vision and be geared toward improving him or herself as an individual. Only by changing individuals can we change that collective known as society. If we could tell the future, we could answer the question: What's Next?, but the truth is none of us really knows. Therefore we have to do all within our power individually to live by and practice the truth as we know it. We must be dedicated to razing the State, but we must also raise new voluntary associations which allow people to be self-responsible. We have to contribute to the development of constructive alternatives to State services and attempt to get people to understand that they do have the capabilities of providing for themselves without government. Only then can we be assured of having taken care of the means; realizing that right means are the only route to our final destination.

New emphasis needs to be placed on non-political alternatives to promoting voluntaryism and libertarian ideas in general outside of the electoral context. To those anarchists who have spent 10 or more years promoting libertarian political activity, we ask: What has it produced? A fair amount of public exposure to the word 'libertarian', but little understanding of what it means. You should not continue to pour time and money

into a failed strategy. Isn't it time to proudly declare the illegitimacy of the State and put your resources into voluntaryism?

Carl Watner and Paul Bilzi

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German militarism, and of the necessity to combat enemy activity in battle were repeated the next few months." FREEDOM, in October 1914, printed a letter by Kropotkin which supported his "pro-government" position towards France. He spoke at least one public meeting, where he stressed that "no one could afford to be indifferent to the victor of this war and that the continued progress of the workers' movement meant supporting the coalition of England, France, and Russia."

Opposition to his views soon began to be aired and Kropotkin soon "found himself not only at war with Germany but with many of his friends and with the majority of the anarchist movement." In an article in the November 1914 FREEDOM, entitled "Anti-Militarism: Was it Properly Understood," Kropotkin maintained most anarchists had been "spellbound" by the possibilities of a general strike among the workers of all nations in preventing war. Since it was obvious that such a general strike was not going to occur, he thought active military defense was the only possible response to Germany. "A policy of noninvolvement was in fact aiding the aggression of the enemy."

It was under these circumstances that Errico Malatesta spoke out on behalf of the anti-war anarchists. In the same issue of FREEDOM appeared his article, "Anarchists Have Forgotten Their Principles." Malatesta related his theory of class struggle between the exploited and the exploiters and pointed out that anarchists had "always fought against patriotism" and "were proud of being internationalists." "If ... the privileged classes were to renounce their privileges" then it would be time enough to side with one nation against another. "But if kings wish to remain kings, ... then the ... Anarchists should leave them to their own devices, while being themselves on the lookout for an opportunity to get rid of the oppressors inside the country, as well as of those coming from the outside." Malatesta had no more confidence in the French or English States than in Germany. "An Allied victory would simply mean the domination of Europe by England and Russia, which was little better than German domination." It was imperative that Anarchists "keep outside every kind of compromise with the Governments and the governing classes."

Malatesta's criticism of Kropotkin continued in the next issue of FREEDOM, where he claimed that "Kropotkin's

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position was tantamount to obeying the orders of a government." What then remained of one's anti-militarism or Anarchism, for that matter? Furthermore, Malatesta wrote:

As a matter of fact, Kropotkin renounces anti-militarism because he thinks that the national questions must be solved before the social question. For us, national rivalries and hatreds are among the best means the masters have for perpetuating the slavery of the workers, and we must oppose them with all our strength. And so, to the right of the small nationalities to preserve, if you like, their language and their customs, that is simply a question of liberty, and will have a real and final solution only when the States being destroyed, every human group, nay, every individual, will have the right to associate with and separate from, every other group.

Malatesta regretted that Kropotkin's friends were not foresighted enough to see where his "preaching against the German danger" and his "anti-German prejudices would land him." He concluded by urging Kropotkin "to repudiate his error and join the masses against their masters in government."

Nevertheless as the war continued, Kropotkin refused to change his mind. Thus to "make their position absolutely separate from Kropotkin's," Malatesta and a prominent number of anti-war anarchists published a manifesto in March 1915. "This manifesto claimed that war is the natural consequence of an exploiting system, and therefore the blame cannot be placed on any particular government, nor can any real distinction be drawn between offensive and defensive war. In the modern age, wars are the results of the existence of States. **The State has arisen out of military force, and it is still on military force that it must logically rest in order to maintain its omnipotence.** The anarchists must recognize only one war of liberation, that waged by **the oppressed against the oppressors, by the exploited against the exploiters.** They must seek to spread **the spirit of revolt**, to organize revolution against all States and show men **the generosity, greatness, and beauty of the anarchist ideal: social justice realised through the free organization of producers; war and militarism done away with for ever, and complete freedom won by the abolition of the State and its organs of destruction.**"

As a result, Kropotkin and his supporters issued a countermanifesto on February 28, 1916, to explain their support of the war. This "Manifesto of the Sixteen" (it actually had only 15 signers, though) set forth their "defensist" position. The war, from the start, was not a war of national armies, "but a war of peoples." Thus to

see the war only in terms of "evil leaders commanding elite forces" was wrong. France's position as leader in the revolutionary tradition must be protected. It was the struggle against Germany which truly represented antagonism to the State.

Notwithstanding the prominence of the 16, "the majority of anarchists throughout the world remained faithful to their anti-militarist and anti-patriotic heritage, rallying behind such **internationalists** as Errico Malatesta, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, Rudolf Rocker, and Sebastien Faure." Rocker was interned in England during the war as an enemy alien and was unable to take part in the debate. (It is interesting to note, however, that during World War II, Rocker abandoned his own anti-militarism and supported the Allies). Luigi Fabbri, the Italian, and Emile Armand, in France, also supported the anti-war position. Malatesta offered a rebuttal to Kropotkin's manifesto in the April 1916 issue of FREEDOM. In his attack, titled "Pro-Government Anarchists," Malatesta pointed out that anarchists who remain faithful to anarchism must "protest against this attempt to implicate Anarchism in the continuance of this ferocious slaughter" and must disassociate themselves from those anarchists who are able to reconcile themselves to cooperation with their governments.

The dispute between Kropotkin and Malatesta really focused on their conception of means and ends. Malatesta accused Kropotkin of adopting "governmental methods" in resisting Germany:

Except the popular Revolution, there is no other way of resisting the menace of a disciplined Army but to try and have a stronger and more disciplined Army; so that the most ardent anti-militarists, if they are not Anarchists ... are inevitably led to become ardent militarists. In fact, in the problematical hope of crushing Prussian Militarism, they have renounced all the spirit and all the traditions of Liberty; they have Prussianized England and France; ....

It is interesting to note that other "Francophiles" besides Kropotkin were attracted to support the war against Germany. Benjamin Tucker, who had been living in France until 1914 (at which point he moved to England) was also an ardent Francophile. There is no record of his contact with Kropotkin, but the two shared a mutual outlook. Tucker, too, disappointed many of his individualist followers in America by supporting the war against Germany. He favored the Allies because he hated and feared "the German people as a nation of domineering brutes bent on turning the whole world into a police-ridden paradise on the Prussian pattern." In a letter to a friend Tucker wrote:

Germany's onslaught on civilization in August 1914, confronted all liberty lovers with a horrible alternative: ... to suffer ... a ... permanent annihilation of our liberties (at the hands of Germany) or to suffer ... a ... temporary annihilation (or suspension) of those liberties. ... From the start I have favored war to the limit-war till Germany (rulers and people alike) shall be so whipped and stripped that never more shall she have the will or the power to renew aggression. In choosing this course I deliberately ... accept the evils involved in it.... Among those evils I accept conscription, though conscription, which must commend itself to every believer in the State equally with taxation so far as principle is concerned, is entirely counter to my political philosophy. I also accept the incidental evil of having to cooperate for a limited time with a considerable number of brutes. But I reserve the right to square accounts with brutality after the liquidation of '1' union sacree.'

Despite Tucker's defection, most anarchists in the United States remained anti-war, whether or not they were of collectivist or individualist anarchists. Emma Goldman, for example, was a staunch anti-militarist both before the war and during the war. She criticized Kropotkin's position and was active in the formation of the No-Conscription League in this country during World War I. For her resistance to registration and the draft, both she and Alexander Berkman were placed on trial, found guilty, imprisoned for two years, fined \$10,000 each, and eventually expelled from the country. No one can claim that she did not stand up for her principles.

So having related this episode in anarchist history, what lesson can we take from it? Perhaps the extended debate which took place in anarchist circles over World War I is an example of the danger of the fallacy of accepting "the lesser of two evils" theory. The anarchists who supported the Allies all agreed that France and England were dangerous as States go, but they were more fearful of German domination. So they chose what they perceived to be as the lesser of two evils. Might we say that they forgot that the lesser of two evils is still evil? Conceptually and structurally their arguments were practical ones for wishing to see a French victory. Their defection from anarchist principles was based on the same type of reasoning that the "political" anarchists today use to support collaboration with the State. Nearly all departures from anarchist principles, whether it be in time of war or peace, are based on this practical justification. Yet anarchism, if it means anything, means adherence to principle. One cannot be a true and consistent anarchist and still support the lesser of two evils. Nor can one be a true and consistent anarchist and at the same time be a supporter of the State. One

can never support the State, no matter what the situation or the circumstances, no matter how dangerous the alternative consequences might seem. To support government is no longer to be an anarchist.

## AUBERON HERBERT, VOLUNTARYIST

By Eric Mack

**Editor's Introduction:** Although we have differences with Auberon Herbert, we think that our readers should be aware of his 19th Century contributions to voluntarism.

From the early 1880's until his death in 1906, Auberon William Edward Molyneux Herbert was the hardcore libertarian figure in British intellectual and political life. While this country had both Benjamin Tucker and Lysander Spooner during this period, Britain had only Auberon Herbert. Of course, Britain was also the home of Herbert Spencer, whom Auberon Herbert saw as the fountainhead of libertarian ideas. But it was principally Herbert himself who represented the most consistently, radically, anti-State, pro-freedom position during these years.

Herbert was born in 1838, the youngest son of the third Earl of Carnarvon. In family, education (at Eton and Oxford), military service (with the seventh Hussars in India), and marriage, the Hon. Auberon Herbert was a well-placed member of the British ruling class. The Herberts were Tories, and Auberon Herbert's oldest brother eventually served in a succession of Conservative cabinets. Herbert himself organized Conservative debating societies at Oxford, and in his first try for a seat in the House of Commons in 1868 he stood as a Conservative. But by the late 1860's and early 1870's Herbert came to see himself as a radical liberal. In 1870 he tried again for a seat in Commons - this time as a Liberal, but again unsuccessfully. Then finally, in 1872, he won a by-election and entered the House as a Liberal.

During this period his more radical activities included declaring his republicanism in the House of Commons, and strongly supporting the formation of an agricultural laborer's union. He also, unfortunately, supported legislation for state education. But he insisted, at least, that this education be strictly nonsectarian. Retrospectively this stand is interesting because in one of his first fully libertarian essays, "State Education: Help or Hindrance?" (1880) Herbert came to maintain that for every good argument against state religion - and they were legion - there was a good parallel argument against state education. Still, as a final indication that during this earlier Parliamentary period Herbert had not yet arrived at his consistent libertarianism, we may note his

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sponsorship of something called the Wild Bird's Protection Act.

Herbert was, nevertheless, sufficiently troubled by the character of political life and institutions to decide not to stand for re-election in 1874. It was at this time that he met Herbert Spencer. And discussion with and reading of Spencer lead him to the view that

thinking and acting for others had always hindered, not helped, the real progress; that all forms of compulsion deadened the living forces in a nation; that every evil violently stamped out still persisted, almost always in a worse form, when driven out of sight, and festered under the surface.

Indeed, this belief in the inefficacy of force, in its counterproductive and antiprogressive effects, was perhaps the most fundamental and constant element in Herbert's worldview. It was this belief which clearly was present, in more specific form, long before Herbert's explicit libertarianism. Thus when he wrote home from India as early as 1860 to express his opposition to the caste system, he added that British attempts to eliminate this system forcibly were likely to "trample the evil in, not out." And writing from America during the Civil War, he said, "I am very glad that slavery is done away with, but I think the manner is very bad and wrong." While Herbert may have intended here to support the right of secession, it is likely also that he felt that even slavery should not be forcibly tramped out -- could not be genuinely and lastingly dissolved by mere force. Indeed, so fundamental was Herbert's opposition to the use of force that, as we shall see, his position sometimes threatened to slip into pacifism.

Herbert's anti-imperialism developed during the 1870's. As early as 1875 he expressed concern about Britain's involvement in the Suez project, and in 1878 he was one of the chief organizers of the anti-Jingoism rallies at Hyde Park, counteracting the momentum toward war with Russia. In the early 1880's he again opposed British intervention in Egypt as the use of national power to guarantee the results of particular speculations. His anti-imperialism also led him to demand Irish self-determination and, later, to oppose the Boer War.

As early as 1877 Herbert had been disturbed by the "constant undertone of cynicism" in the writings of Herbert Spencer, and he resolved, in contrast, to do full justice to the principled moral case for a free society. He refused to follow Spencer in the latter's growing intellectual accommodation to coercive institutions, especially taxation. And, in later years, Herbert always held himself somewhat distant from organizations such as the

Liberty and Property Defense League which he felt to be "a little more warmly attached to the fair sister Property than ... to the fair sister Liberty." In 1879, Herbert gave a series of talks to the Liberal Union of Nottingham expressing his now uncompromisingly individualist radicalism. And on the basis of those talks, he was denied the Liberal nomination for his old Commons seat. This experience must have solidified his decision to battle primarily with the pen. Herbert's first major work was a series of essays collectively labeled "A POLITICIAN IN TROUBLE ABOUT HIS SOUL" which culminated in the segment, "A POLITICIAN IN SIGHT OF HAVEN." While the earlier sections dealt generally with the moral unsavoriness of party politics, the last segment outlined Herbert's Haven - a fully "voluntaryist" society in which the rights to self-ownership, liberty, and property were fully recognized and in which, therefore, all compulsory taxation was abolished. In 1885 Herbert brought out his most systematic work THE RIGHT AND WRONG OF COMPULSION BY THE STATE. Here he presented a series of arguments in defense of the rights of self-ownership and freedom from force and its moral equivalent, fraud. These arguments turned on the special role that each person's judgments about his happiness must play in his own life and moral well-being, and on the absurdities involved in the contrary claim that some people are the natural owners, in whole or in part, of others.

Herbert further argued for absolute respect for the holdings which individuals acquired through their labor without violating the rights of other individuals. And he included an important defense of freedom of contract in terms of his distinction between "direct" and "indirect" force when another party induced him to do something for which the first party would like greater payment. Herbert insisted that as long as the first party was not directly coerced into the exchange, his rights were not violated, and, at least in his own eyes, he had benefited. Only direct force could prevent indirect force. And direct force would violate rights and leave some parties worse off than they were found. With respect to justifying defense, Herbert argued that one party's use of (direct) force against another placed the first party "outside the moral-relation" and "into the force-relation." On such an occasion the aggrieved party may use force for the sake of self-preservation. Such defensive force was, Herbert argued, of the nature of a usurpation, though it was a "justified usurpation." This ambivalence toward even defensive force persisted at least implicitly in many of Herbert's later writings.

One can get a sense of the radicalism of Herbert's work by this rough list of goals proposed in THE RIGHT AND WRONG OF COMPULSION BY THE STATE; abolition of state enterprises and state-fostered monopolies, abolition of professional licensing, abolition of state and compulsory

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education, repeal of laws requiring vaccination, repeal of laws in violation of freedom of contract, repeal of Sunday blue laws, repeal of laws suppressing brothels and allowing the arrest of prostitutes, abolition of state constraints on marriage and divorce, abolition of the House of Lords, eventual (with the death of Victoria) conversion from monarchy, self-determination for Ireland, independence for India "without any attempt at developing its civilization according to British force," withdrawal from entanglements in Egypt, and in general, "a strictly non-aggressive" foreign policy.

In 1890 Herbert founded the weekly (later changed to monthly) FREE LIFE, "The Organ of Voluntary Taxation and the Voluntary State", which he continued to publish until 1901. In his optimism Herbert saw State-Socialism as the last gasp in the cause for "one Fight More -- The Best and the Last" against this "mere survival of barbarism, ... mere perpetuation of slavery under new names against which the reason and moral sense of the civilized world have to be called into rebellion." Also, throughout the 1890's Herbert engaged in published debates with such noted contemporary Socialists as Belfort Bax, J. A. Hobson, and Grant Allen. Herbert embarked upon the publication of FREE LIFE despite Spencer's concern that Herbert's opposition to taxation would bring his other views (the ones shared by Spencer) into disrepute. Spencer was wrong, however, if he thought that, for Herbert, taxation was just another issue. Herbert's stand on taxation was motivated by more than his deep commitment to general principles and consistency. For one thing, he argued, compulsory taxation crucially marked the difference between the State-Socialist and the true Individualist.

I deny that A and B can go to C and force him to form a State and extract from him certain payments and services in the name of such State; and I go on to maintain that if you act in this manner, you at once justify State-Socialism. The only difference between the tax-compelling Individualist and the State-Socialist is that whilst they both have vested ownership of C in A and B, the tax-compelling Individualist proposes to use the powers of ownership in a very limited fashion, the Socialist in a very complete fashion.

Herbert added, "I object to the ownership in any fashion."

For Herbert, the power to levy taxes was the "stronghold" which must be "levelled to the ground." For, "There can be no true condition of rest in society, there can be no perfect friendliness amongst men who differ in opinions, as long as either you or I can use our

neighbor and his resources for the furtherance of our ideas and against his own." It is compulsory taxation, he insisted, which generates the corrupt, and aggressive game of politics and which in its ultimate expression,

gives great and undue facility for engaging a whole nation in war. If it were necessary to raise the sum required from those who individually agreed in the necessity of war, we should have the strongest guarantee for the preservation of peace. ... Compulsory taxation means everywhere the persistent probability of a war made by the ambitions or passions of politicians.

As one might expect, and as Spencer fearfully anticipated, Herbert's abolitionism and his continual attack on involuntary taxation led to his being labelled an anarchist. This "charge" came from idiots, from informed advocates of State Socialism, from advocates of limited (but tax-funded) governments, and from anarchists. In the last instance, Benjamin Tucker always insisted that, despite himself, and to his credit, Auberon Herbert was a true anarchist. Upon hearing of Herbert's death, Tucker wrote, "Auberon Herbert is dead. He was a true Anarchist in everything but name. How much better (and how much rarer) to be an Anarchist in everything but name than to be an Anarchist in name only."

Herbert's superb essay of 1894, "The Ethics of Dynamite," can be seen as a response to the idiotic charge that he was an anarchist of the terrorist sort. Here Herbert argued that as an enemy of government, he was the greatest enemy of dynamite. For "dynamite is not opposed to government; it is, on the contrary, government in its most intensified and concentrated form." Dynamite is just the most recent development in the art of governing people. Herbert even went so far as to suggest a special explanation for the revulsion that the defenders of the State have for the dynamiter.

Deep down in their consciousness lurks a dim perception of the truth, that between him and them exists an unrecognized blood-relationship, that the thing of which they have such a horror is something more than a satire, an exaggeration, a caricature of themselves, that, if the truth is to be fairly acknowledged, it is their very own child, both the product of and the reaction against the methods of "governing" men and women, which they have employed with so unsparing a hand.

Important as it was for Herbert to repudiate any alleged association with the dynamiter, he insisted that the dynamiter's **enemy** was the primary source of his

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evil. Ideologically, it was the justification of the coercive State, of force and domination, which provided the philosophical basis for the dynamiter. And, materially, it was the crushing "great official machines" of Statehood which produced the impassioned dynamiter.

What of the "charge" that Herbert was an anarchist of what he himself labeled the "reasonable" sort? In the passage directed against the tax-compelling "individualist" we have already seen that Herbert believed individuals should be free to withhold support from any institution -- even any institution designed to protect rights. Yet Herbert insisted, against the informed commentators, that he was not an anarchist. For he thought that all people in a given territory would freely converge on a single institution as their means of protecting their common rights. Indeed, he thought that since a single agency would best protect rights, each individual had "strong minor moral reasons" for supporting this common Voluntary State. Benjamin Tucker denied that such a common agency would be a genuine State. But Herbert, for whom the admission of defensive force was always the crucial and controversial step, maintained that Tucker himself, and anyone who allowed the defensive use of force, was an advocate of government. In Herbert's eyes, Tucker and Spooner simply advocated "scattered" or "fragmented" government. Crucially absent at this point in the dispute was any well-developed conception of a competitive market among rights-protecting enterprises. Such a conception would have explained why and how the business of rights protection would best be "fragmented." And often the Herbert-Tucker debate on anarchism slipped, without either party fully realizing it, over into a debate about the basis for legitimate property rights. Here errors flowing from Tucker's acceptance of a labor theory of value were matched by Herbert's too ready acceptance of the legitimacy of current land holdings.

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## The Voluntaryist

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P.O. Box 5836 • Baltimore, Maryland 21208

In the final years of his life, Herbert composed two of his greatest essays, "Mr. Spencer and the Great Machine" and "A Plea for Voluntaryism." Both of these essays are studies of power, "that evil, bitter, mocking thing ... the curse and sorrow of the world" and of its degenerating effects on the individual and society. Echoing Spencer's distinction between the industrial and military modes of co-ordination, Herbert elaborated on the radical difference between "the way of peace and co-operation" and "the way of force and strife." He focused on the inherent dynamic of political power, the ways in which the great game of power politics captures its participants no matter what their initial intentions. He argued that no man's integrity or moral or intellectual selfhood can withstand his embrace of the soul-consuming machine. Even the individual who appears to win in his battle for power, he argued, is the worse for it. For, "From the moment you possess power, you are but its slave, fast bound by its many tyrant necessities." And the growth of the great machine means an end to progress. For progress is the work of diverse individuals, of "a great number of small changes and adaptations, and experiments ... each carried out by those who have strong beliefs and clear perceptions of their own." And this true experimentation disappears under "universal systems." Against such systems Herbert championed always and above all else the self-governed and unique individual.

We have as individuals to be above every system in which we take our place, not beneath it, not under its feet, and at its mercy; to use it, and not be used by it; and that can only be when we cease to be bubbles, cease to leave the direction of ourselves to the crowd -- whatever crowd it is -- social, religious, or political -- in which we so often allow our better selves to be submerged.

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