form of socialism (a *"petit bourgeois"* form of socialism, to use the typical insulting Marxist phrase). Thus support for "private property" need not mean support for capitalism (as shown, for example, by the Individualist Anarchists). To claim otherwise is to ignore the essential insight of socialism and totally distort the socialist case against capitalism.

To summarise, from an anarchist (and Marxist) perspective capitalism is **not** defined by "property" as such. Rather, it is defined by private property, property which is turned into a means of exploiting the labour of those who use it. For most anarchists, this is done by means of wage labour and abolished by means of workers' associations and self-management (see next section for a discussion of individualist anarchism and wage labour). To use Proudhon's terminology, there is a fundamental difference between property and possession.

Secondly, and more importantly, what the Individualist Anarchists meant by "private property" (or "property") was distinctly different than what is meant by supporters of capitalism. Basically, the "libertarian" right exploit, for their own ends, the confusion generated by the use of the word "property" by the likes of Tucker to describe a situation of "possession." Proudhon recognised this danger. He argued that *"it is proper to call different things by different names, if we keep the name 'property' for the former [individual possession], we must call the latter [the domain of property] robbery, repine, brigandage. If, on the contrary, we reserve the name 'property' for the latter, we must designate the former by the term* ***possession*** *or some other equivalent; otherwise we should be troubled with an unpleasant synonym."* [**What is Property?**, p. 373] Unfortunately Tucker, who translated this work, did not heed Proudhon's words of wisdom and called possession in an anarchist society by the word "property" (but then, neither did Proudhon in the latter part of his life!)

Looking at Tucker's arguments, it is clear that the last thing Tucker supported was capitalist property rights. For example, he argued that *"property, in the sense of individual possession, is liberty"* and contrasted this with capitalist property. [**Instead of a Book**, p. 394] That his ideas on "property" were somewhat different than that associated with right-"libertarian" thinkers is most clearly seen with regards

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than not, just the word rather than what the word describes). This is a strange position for someone seeking liberty to take, as liberty is a product of social interaction (i.e. the relations we have and create with others) and not a product of things (property is not freedom as freedom is a relationship between people, not things). They confuse property with possession (and vice versa).

In pre-capitalist social environments, when property is directly owned by the producer, capitalist defences of private property can be used against it. Even John Locke's arguments in favour of private property could be used against capitalism. As Murray Bookchin makes clear regarding pre-capitalist society:

> *"Unknown in the 1640s, the non-bourgeois aspects of Locke's theories were very much in the air a century and a half later . . . [In an artisan/peasant society] a Lockean argument could be used as effectively against the merchants . . . to whom the farmers were indebted, as it could against the King [or the State]. Nor did the small proprietors of America ever quite lose sight of the view that attempts to seize their farmsteads and possessions for unpaid debts were a violation of their 'natural rights,' and from the 1770s until as late as the 1930s they took up arms to keep merchants and bankers from dispossessing them from land they or their ancestors had wrestled from 'nature' by virtue of their own labour. The notion that property was sacred was thus highly elastic: it could be used as effectively by pre-capitalist strata to hold on to their property as it could by capitalists strata to expand their holdings."* [**The Third Revolution**, vol. 1, pp. 187–8]

The individualist anarchists inherited this perspective on property and sought means of ending the transformation of American society from one where labour-property predominated into one where capitalist private property (and so exploitation) predominated. Thus their opposition to state interference in the economy as the capitalists were using the state to advance this process (see section F.8.5).

So artisan and co-operative property is not capitalist. It does not generate relationships of exploitation and domination as the worker owns and controls their own means of production. It is, in effect, a

organised in guilds." Capitalism, he argued, was based on capitalists owning *"**social** means of production only workable by a collectivity of men"* and so they *"appropriated . . . the product of the **labour of others**."* Both, it should be noted, had also made this same distinction in the **Communist Manifesto**, stating that *"the distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property."* Artisan and peasant property is *"a form that preceded the bourgeois form"* which there *"is no need to abolish"* as *"the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it."* This means that communism *"derives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriation."* [Marx and Engels, **Selected Works**, p. 412, p. 413, p. 414, p. 47 and p. 49]

We quote Marx and Engels simply because as authorities on socialism go, they are ones that right-"libertarians" (or Marxists, for that matter) cannot ignore or dismiss. Needless to say, they are presenting an identical analysis to that of Proudhon in **What is Property?** and, significantly, Godwin in his **Political Justice** (although, of course, the conclusions drawn from this common critique of capitalism were radically different in the case of Proudhon). This is, it must be stressed, simply Proudhon's distinction between property and possession (see section B.3.1). The former is theft and despotism, the latter is liberty. In other words, for genuine anarchists, "property" is a ***social relation*** and that a key element of anarchist thinking (both social and individualist) was the need to redefine that relation in accord with standards of liberty and justice.

So what right-"libertarians" do when they point out that the individualist anarchists supported property is to misunderstand the socialist critique of capitalism. They, to paraphrase Marx, confuse two very different kinds of "property," one of which rests on the labour of the producers themselves and the other on the exploitation of the labour of others. They do not analyse the social relationships between people which the property in question generates and, instead, concentrate on **things** (i.e. property). Thus, rather than being interested in people and the relationships they create between themselves, the right-"libertarian" focuses on property (and, more often

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On the first issue, it is important to note that there are many different kinds of private property. If quoting Karl Marx is not **too** out of place:

> *"Political economy confuses, on principle, two very different kinds of private property, one of which rests on the labour of the producer himself, and the other on the exploitation of the labour of others. It forgets that the latter is not only the direct antithesis of the former, but grows on the former's tomb and nowhere else.*
>
> *"In Western Europe, the homeland of political economy, the process of primitive accumulation is more of less accomplished . . .*
>
> *"It is otherwise in the colonies. There the capitalist regime constantly comes up against the obstacle presented by the producer, who, as owner of his own conditions of labour, employs that labour to enrich himself instead of the capitalist. The contradiction of these two diametrically opposed economic systems has its practical manifestation here in the struggle between them."* [**Capital**, vol. 1, p. 931]

So, under capitalism, *"property turns out to be the right, on the part of the capitalist, to appropriate the unpaid labour of others, or its product, and the impossibility, on the part of the worker, of appropriating his own product."* In other words, property is not viewed as being identical with capitalism. *"The historical conditions of [Capital's] existence are by no means given with the mere circulation of money and commodities. It arises only when the owner of the means of production and subsistence finds the free worker available on the market, as the seller of his own labour-power."* Thus wage-labour, for Marx, is the necessary pre-condition for capitalism, **not** "private property" as such as *"the means of production and subsistence, while they remain the property of the immediate producer, are not capital. They only become capital under circumstances in which they serve at the same time as means of exploitation of, and domination over, the worker."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 730, p. 264 and p. 938]

For Engels, *"[b]efore capitalistic production"* industry was *"based upon the private property of the labourers in their means of production"*, i.e., *"the agriculture of the small peasant"* and *"the handicrafts*

all anarchists oppose the "free market" by definition as all anarchists oppose the **capitalist** "free market." And, just as correctly, "anarcho"-capitalists would oppose the individualist anarchist "free market," arguing that it would be no such thing as it would be restrictive of property rights (**capitalist** property rights of course). For example, the question of resource use in an individualist society is totally different than in a capitalist "free market" as landlordism would not exist. This is a restriction on capitalist property rights and a violation of a capitalist "free market." So an individualist "free market" would not be considered so by right-wing "libertarians" due to the substantial differences in the rights on which it would be based (with no right to capitalist private property being the most important).

All this means that to go on and on about individualist anarchism and it support for a free market simply misses the point. No one denies that individualist anarchists were (and are) in favour of a "free market" but this did not mean they were not socialists nor that they wanted the same kind of "free market" desired by "anarcho"-capitalism or that has existed under capitalism. Of course, whether their economic system would actually result in the abolition of exploitation and oppression is another matter and it is on this issue which social anarchists disagree with individualist anarchism **not** whether they are socialists or not.

G.1.2 What about their support of "private property"?

The notion that because the Individualist Anarchists supported "private property" they supported capitalism is distinctly wrong. This is for two reasons. Firstly, private property is not the distinctive aspect of capitalism — exploitation of wage labour is. Secondly, and more importantly, what the Individualist Anarchists meant by "private property" (or "property") was distinctly different than what is meant by theorists on the "libertarian"-right or what is commonly accepted as "private property" under capitalism. Thus support of private property does not indicate a support for capitalism.

Section G: Is individualist anarchism capitalistic?

The short answer is, no, it is not. While a diverse tendency, the individualist anarchists were opposed to the exploitation of labour, all forms of non-labour income (such as profits, interest and rent) as well as capitalist property rights (particularly in land). While aiming for a free market system, they considered laissez-faire capitalism to be based on various kinds of state enforced class monopoly which ensured that labour was subjected to rule, domination and exploitation by capital. As such it is deeply **anti**-capitalist and many individualist anarchists, including its leading figure Benjamin Tucker, explicitly called themselves socialists (indeed, Tucker often referred to his theory as ***"Anarchistic-Socialism"***).

So, in this section of our anarchist FAQ we indicate why the individualist anarchists cannot be classified as "ancestors" of the bogus libertarians of the "anarcho"-capitalist school. Rather, they must be classified as libertarian **socialists** due to their opposition to exploitation, critique of capitalist property rights and concern for equality, albeit being on the liberal wing of anarchist thought. Moreover, while all wanted to have an economy in which all incomes were based on labour, many also opposed wage labour, i.e. the situation where one person sells their labour to another rather than the product of that labour (a position which, we argue, their ideas logically imply). So while **some** of their ideas do overlap with those of the "anarcho"-capitalist school they are not capitalistic, no more than the overlap between their ideas and anarcho-communism makes them communistic.

In this context, the creation of "anarcho"-capitalism may be regarded as yet another tactic by capitalists to reinforce the public's perception that there are no viable alternatives to capitalism, i.e. by claiming that "even anarchism implies capitalism." In order to justify this claim, they have searched the history of anarchism in an effort to find some thread in the movement that can be used for this purpose. They think that with the individualist anarchists they have found such a thread. However, such an appropriation requires the systematic ignoring or dismissal of key aspects of individualist-anarchism (which, of course, the right-"libertarian" does). Somewhat ironically, this attempt by right-"libertarians" to exclude individualist anarchism from socialism parallels an earlier attempt by state

put it, the most *"potent"* of the *"factors and forces [which] tended to undermine and discredit that movement"* was *"the amazing growth of trusts and syndicates, of holding companies and huge corporations, of chain banks and chain stores."* This *"gradually and insidiously shook the faith of many in the efficacy of mutual banks, co-operative associations of producers and consumers, and the competition of little fellows. Proudhon's plan for a bank of the people to make industrial loans without interest to workers' co-operatives, or other members, seemed remote and inapplicable to an age of mass production, mechanisation, continental and international markets."* [*"Philosophical Anarchism: Its Rise, Decline, and Eclipse"*, pp. 470–483, **The American Journal of Sociology**, vol. 41, no. 4, p. 481]

If the individualist anarchists shared the "anarcho"-capitalist position or even shared a common definition of "free markets" then the *"power of the trusts"* would simply not be an issue. This is because "anarcho"-capitalism does not acknowledge the existence of such power, as, by definition, it does not exist in capitalism (although as noted in section F.1 Rothbard himself proved critics of this assertion right). Tucker's comments, therefore, indicate well how far individualist anarchism actually is from "anarcho"-capitalism. The "anarcho"-capitalist desires free markets no matter their result or the concentration of wealth existing at their introduction. As can be seen, Tucker saw the existence of concentrations of wealth as a problem and a hindrance towards anarchy. Thus Tucker was well aware of the dangers to individual liberty of inequalities of wealth and the economic power they produce. Equally, if Tucker supported the "free market" above all else then he would not have argued this point. Clearly, then, Tucker's support for the "free market" cannot be abstracted from his fundamental principles nor can it be equated with a "free market" based on capitalist property rights and massive inequalities in wealth (and so economic power). Thus individualist anarchist support for the free market does not mean support for a **capitalist** "free market."

In summary, the "free market" as sought by (say) Tucker would not be classed as a "free market" by right-wing "libertarians." So the term "free market" (and, of course, "socialism") can mean different things to different people. As such, it would be correct to state that

earlier *"the denial of competition had not effected the enormous concentration of wealth that now so gravely threatens social order"* and so while a policy of mutual banking might have stopped and reversed the process of accumulation in the past, the way now was *"not so clear."* This was because the tremendous capitalisation of industry now made the money monopoly a convenience, but no longer a necessity. Admitted Tucker, the *"trust is now a monster which . . . even the freest competition, could it be instituted, would be unable to destroy"* as *"concentrated capital"* could set aside a sacrifice fund to bankrupt smaller competitors and continue the process of expansion of reserves. Thus the growth of economic power, producing as it does natural barriers to entry from the process of capitalist production and accumulation, had resulted in a situation where individualist anarchist solutions could no longer reform capitalism away. The centralisation of capital had *"passed for the moment beyond their reach."* The problem of the trusts, he argued, *"must be grappled with for a time solely by forces political or revolutionary,"* i.e., through confiscation either through the machinery of government *"or in denial of it."* Until this *"great levelling"* occurred, all individualist anarchists could do was to spread their ideas as those trying to *"hasten it by joining in the propaganda of State Socialism or revolution make a sad mistake indeed."* [quoted by James J. Martin, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 273–4]

In other words, the economic power of *"concentrated capital"* and *"enormous concentration of wealth"* placed an insurmountable obstacle to the realisation of anarchy. Which means that the abolition of usury and relative equality were considered **ends** rather than side effects for Tucker and if free competition could not achieve these then such a society would **not** be anarchist. If economic inequality was large enough, it meant anarchism was impossible as the rule of capital could be maintained by economic power alone without the need for extensive state intervention (this was, of course, the position of revolutionary anarchists like Bakunin, Most and Kropotkin in the 1870s and onwards whom Tucker dismissed as not being anarchists).

Victor Yarros is another example, an individualist anarchist and associate of Tucker, who by the 1920s had abandoned anarchism for social democracy, in part because he had become convinced that economic privilege could not be fought by economic means. As he

socialists to do the same. Tucker furiously refuted such attempts in an article entitled *"Socialism and the Lexicographers"*, arguing that *"the Anarchistic Socialists are not to be stripped of one half of their title by the mere dictum of the last lexicographer."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 365]

Nevertheless, in the individualists we find anarchism coming closest to "classical" liberalism and being influenced by the ideas of Herbert Spencer, a forefather of "libertarian" capitalism (of the minimal state variety). As Kropotkin summarised, their ideas were *"a combination of those of Proudhon with those of Herbert Spencer."* [**Anarchism**, p. 296] What the "anarcho"-capitalist is trying to is to ignore Proudhon's influence (i.e. the socialist aspect of their theories) which just leaves Spencer, who was a right-wing liberal. To reduce individualist anarchism so is to destroy what makes it a unique political theory and movement. While both Kropotkin and Tucker praised Spencer as a synthetic philosopher and social scientist, they were both painfully aware of the limitations in his socio-political ideas. Tucker considered his attacks on all forms of socialism (including Proudhon) as authoritarian as being, at best, misinformed or, at worse, dishonest. He also recognised the apologetic and limited nature of his attacks on state intervention, noting that *"amid his multitudinous illustrations . . . of the evils of legislation, he in every instance cites some law passed ostensibly at least to protect labour, alleviating suffering, or promote the people's welfare. But never once does he call attention to the far more deadly and deep-seated evils growing out of the innumerable laws creating privilege and sustaining monopoly."* Unsurprisingly, he considered Spencer as a *"champion of the capitalistic class."* [quoted by James J. Martin, **Men Against the State**, p. 240] As we will discuss in section G.3, it is likely that he would have drawn the same conclusion about "anarcho"-capitalism.

This does not mean that the majority thread within the anarchist movement is uncritical of individualist anarchism. Far from it! Social anarchists have argued that this influence of non-anarchist ideas means that while its *"criticism of the State is very searching, and [its] defence of the rights of the individual very powerful,"* like Spencer it *"opens . . . the way for reconstituting under the heading of 'defence' all the functions of the State."* [Kropotkin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 297] This flows,

social anarchists argue, from the impact of liberal principles and led some individualist anarchists like Benjamin Tucker to support contract theory in the name of freedom, without being aware of the authoritarian social relationships that could be implied by it, as can be seen under capitalism (other individualist anarchists were more aware of this contradiction as we will see). Therefore, social anarchists tend to think of individualist anarchism as an inconsistent form of anarchism, one which could become consistent by simply logically applying its own principles (see section G.4). On their part, many individualist anarchists simply denied that social anarchists where anarchists, a position other anarchists refute (see section G.2). As such, this section can also be considered, in part, as a continuation of the discussion begun in section A.3.

Few thinkers are completely consistent. Given Tucker's adamant anti-statism and anti-capitalism, it is likely that had he realised the authoritarian social relationships which contract theory tends to produce (and justify) when involving employing labour, he would have modified his views in such a way as to eliminate the contradiction (particularly as contracts involving wage labour directly contradicts his support for "occupancy and use"). It is understandable why he failed to do so, however, given the social context in which he lived and agitated. In Tucker's America, self-employment was still a possibility on a wide scale (in fact, for much of the nineteenth century it was the dominant form of economic activity). His reforms were aimed at making it easier for workers to gain access to both land and machinery, so allowing wage workers to become independent farmers or artisans. Unsurprisingly, therefore, he viewed individualist anarchism as a society of workers, not one of capitalists and workers. Moreover, as we will argue in section G.4.1, his love for freedom and opposition to usury logically implies artisan and co-operative labour — people selling the products of their labour, as opposed to the labour itself — which itself implies self-management in production (and society in general), not authoritarianism within the workplace (this was the conclusion of Proudhon as well as Kropotkin). Nevertheless, it is this inconsistency — the non-anarchist aspect of individualist anarchism — which right "libertarians" like Murray Rothbard select and concentrate on, ignoring the anti-capitalist context in which

"but of course all that God stuff is just absurd." You cannot have it both ways. And, of course, the "anarcho"-capitalist support for non-labour based economics allow them to side-step (and so ignore) much of what anarchists — communists, collectivists, individualists, mutualists and syndicalists alike — consider authoritarian and coercive about "actually existing" capitalism. But the difference in economic analysis is critical. No matter what they are called, it is pretty clear that individualist anarchist standards for the freedom of markets are far more demanding than those associated with even the freest capitalist market system.

This is best seen from the development of individualist anarchism in the 20th century. As historian Charles A. Madison noted, it *"began to dwindle rapidly after 1900. Some of its former adherents joined the more aggressive communistic faction . . . many others began to favour the rising socialist movement as the only effective weapon against billion-dollar corporations."* [*"Benjamin R. Tucker: Individualist and Anarchist,"* pp. 444–67, **The New England Quarterly**, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. p. 464] Other historians have noted the same. *"By 1908,"* argued Eunice Minette Schuster *"the industrial system had fastened its claws into American soil"* and while the *"Individualist Anarchists had attempted to destroy monopoly, privilege, and inequality, originating in the lack of opportunity"* the *"superior force of the system which they opposed . . . overwhelmed"* them. Tucker left America in 1908 and those who remained *"embraced either Anarchist-Communism as the result of governmental violence against the labourers and their cause, or abandoned the cause entirely."* [**Native American Anarchism**, p. 158, pp. 159–60 and p. 156] While individualist anarchism did not entirely disappear with the ending of **Liberty**, social anarchism became the dominant trend in America as it had elsewhere in the world.

As we note in section G.4, the apparent impossibility of mutual banking to eliminate corporations by economic competition was one of the reasons Voltairine de Cleyre pointed to for rejecting individualist anarchism in favour of communist-anarchism. This problem was recognised by Tucker himself thirty years after **Liberty** had been founded. In the postscript to a 1911 edition of his famous essay *"State Socialism and Anarchism"*, he argued that when he wrote it 25 years

analysis that would be considered symptoms of economic unfreedom under most socialist driven analyses.

This can be seen if you look closely at the case of Tucker's comments that anarchism was simply *"consistent Manchesterianism."* If this is done then a simple example of this potential confusion can be found. Tucker argued that anarchists *"accused"* the Manchester men *"of being inconsistent,"* that while being in favour of laissez faire for *"the labourer in order to reduce his wages"* they did not believe *"in liberty to compete with the capitalist in order to reduce his usury."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 83] To be consistent in this case is to be something other — and more demanding in terms of what is accepted as "freedom" — than the average Manchesterian (i.e. a supporter of "free market" capitalism). By *"consistent Manchesterism"*, Tucker meant a laissez-faire system in which class monopolies did not exist, where capitalist private property in land and intellectual property did not exist. In other words, a free market purged of its capitalist aspects. Partisans of the capitalist theory see things differently, of course, feeling justified in calling many things "free" that anarchists would not accept, and seeing "constraint" in what the anarchists simply thought of as "consistency." This explains both his criticism of capitalism **and** state socialism:

> *"The complaint of the Archist Socialists that the Anarchists are bourgeois is true to this extent and no further — that, great as is their detestation for a bourgeois society, they prefer its partial liberty to the complete slavery of State Socialism."* [*"Why I am an Anarchist"*, pp. 132–6, **Man!**, M. Graham (ed.), p. 136]

It should be clear that a "free market" will look somewhat different depending on your economic presuppositions. Ironically, this is something "anarcho"-capitalists implicitly acknowledge when they admit they do not agree with the likes of Spooner and Tucker on many of their key premises and conclusions (but that does not stop them claiming — despite all that — that their ideas are a modern version of individualist anarchism!). Moreover, the "anarcho"-capitalist simply dismisses all the reasoning that got Tucker there — that is like trying to justify a law citing Leviticus but then saying

this aspect of individualist thought exists within. As David Wieck pointed out:

> *"Out of the history of anarchist thought and action Rothbard has pulled forth a single thread, the thread of individualism, and defines that individualism in a way alien even to the spirit of a Max Stirner or a Benjamin Tucker, whose heritage I presume he would claim — to say nothing of how alien is his way to the spirit of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta, and the historically anonymous persons who through their thoughts and action have tried to give anarchism a living meaning. Out of this thread Rothbard manufactures one more bourgeois ideology."* [**Anarchist Justice**, pp. 227–228]

It is with this in mind that we discuss the ideas of people like Tucker. As this section of the FAQ will indicate, even at its most liberal, individualist, extreme anarchism was fundamentally **anti**-capitalist. Any concepts which "anarcho"-capitalism imports from the individualist tradition ignore both the theoretical underpinnings of their ideas as well as the social context of self-employment and artisan production within which those concepts arose, thus turning them into something radically different from what was intended by their originators. As we discuss in section G.1.4 the social context in which individualist anarchism developed is essential to understanding both its politics and its limitations (*"Anarchism in America is not a* ***foreign importation*** *but a product of the social conditions of this country and its historical traditions,"* although it is *"true that American anarchism was also influenced later by European ideas."* [Rudolf Rocker, **Pioneers of American Freedom**, p. 163]).

Saying that, it would be a mistake to suggest (as some writers have) that individualist anarchism can be viewed purely in American terms. While understanding the nature of American society and economy at the time is essential to understanding individualist anarchism, it would be false to imply that only individualist anarchism was the product of America conditions and subscribed to by Americans while social anarchism was imported from Europe by immigrants. After all, Albert and Lucy Parsons were both native-

born Americans who became communist-anarchists while Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman only become anarchists once they had arrived in America. Native-born Voltairine de Cleyre moved from individualist to communist anarchism. Josiah Warren may have been born in Boston, but he developed his anarchism after his experiences in a experimental community set up by Welsh socialist Robert Owen (who, in turn, was inspired by William Godwin's ideas). While Warren and Proudhon may have developed their ideas independently, American libertarians became aware of Proudhon and other European socialists as radical journals had correspondents in France during the 1848 revolution and partial translations of radical writings from Europe appeared as quickly as they could be transmitted and translated. Individualist anarchists like William Greene and Tucker were heavily influenced by the ideas of Proudhon and so imported aspects of European anarchism into American individualist anarchism while the likes of the French individualist E. Armand brought aspects of American anarchism into the European movement. Similarly, both Spooner and Greene had been members of the First International while individualist anarchists Joseph Labadie and Dyer Lum where organisers of the **Knights of Labor** union along with Albert and Lucy Parsons. Lum later joined the anarcho-communist inspired **International Working People's Association** (IWPA) and edited its English language paper (the **Alarm**) when Parson was imprisoned awaiting execution. All forms of anarchism were, in other words, a combination of European and American influences, both in terms of ideas and in terms of social experiences and struggles, even organisations.

While red-baiting and cries of "Un-American" may incline some to stress the "native-born" aspect of individualist anarchism (particularly those seeking to appropriate that tendency for their own ends), both wings of the US movement had native-born and foreign members, aspects and influences (and, as Rocker noted, the *"so-called white civilisation of [the American] continent is the work of European immigrants."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 163]). While both sides tended to denounce and attack the other (particularly after the Haymarket events), they had more in common than the likes of Benjamin Tucker

incorporate the economic theories arising within other branches of individualist thought, theories such as marginal utility. Unable to embrace statism, the stagnant movement failed to adequately comprehend the logical alternative to the state — a free market." [*"Benjamin Tucker, **Liberty**, and Individualist Anarchism"*, pp. 421–434, **The Independent Review**, vol. II, No. 3, p. 433] Therefore, rather than being a source of commonality, individualist anarchism and "anarcho"-capitalism actually differ quite considerably on what counts as a genuinely free market.

So it should be remembered that "anarcho"-capitalists at best agree with Tucker, Spooner, et al on fairly vague notions like the "free market." They do not bother to find out what the individualist anarchists meant by that term. Indeed, the "anarcho"-capitalist embrace of different economic theories means that they actually reject the reasoning that leads up to these nominal "agreements." It is the "anarcho"-capitalists who, by rejecting the underlying economics of the mutualists, are forced to take any "agreements" out of context. It also means that when faced with obviously anti-capitalist arguments and conclusions of the individualist anarchists, the "anarcho"-capitalist cannot explain them and are reduced to arguing that the anti-capitalist concepts and opinions expressed by the likes of Tucker are somehow "out of context." In contrast, the anarchist can explain these so-called "out of context" concepts by placing them into the context of the ideas of the individualist anarchists and the society which shaped them.

The "anarcho"-capitalist usually admits that they totally disagree with many of the essential premises and conclusions of the individualist anarchist analyses (see next section). The most basic difference is that the individualist anarchists rooted their ideas in the labour theory of value while the "anarcho"-capitalists favour mainstream marginalist theory. It does not take much thought to realise that advocates of socialist theories and those of capitalist ones will naturally develop differing notions of what is and what should be happening within a given economic system. One difference that **has** in fact arisen is that the notion of what constitutes a "free market" has differed according to the theory of value applied. Many things can be attributed to the workings of a "free" market under a capitalist

against the landlord and a violation of "free market" principles. Such a system of "occupancy and use" would involve massive violations of what is considered normal in a capitalist "free market." Equally, a market system which was based on capitalist property rights in land would **not** be considered as genuinely free by the likes of Tucker.

This can be seen from Tucker's debates with supporters of laissez-faire capitalism such as Auberon Herbert (who, as discussed in section F.7.2, was an English minimal statist and sometimes called a forerunner of "anarcho"-capitalism). Tucker quoted an English critic of Herbert, who noted that *"When we come to the question of the ethical basis of property, Mr. Herbert refers us to 'the open market'. But this is an evasion. The question is not whether we should be able to sell or acquire 'in the open market' anything which we rightfully possess, but how we come into rightful possession."* [**Liberty**, no. 172, p. 7] Tucker rejected the idea *"that a man should be allowed a title to as much of the earth as he, in the course of his life, with the aid of all the workmen that he can employ, may succeed in covering with buildings. It is occupancy **and** use that Anarchism regards as the basis of land ownership, . . . A man cannot be allowed, merely by putting labour, to the limit of his capacity and beyond the limit of his person use, into material of which there is a limited supply and the use of which is essential to the existence of other men, to withhold that material from other men's use; and any contract based upon or involving such withholding is as lacking in sanctity or legitimacy as a contract to deliver stolen goods."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 331, p. 4]

In other words, an individualist anarchist would consider an "anarcho"-capitalist "free market" as nothing of the kind and vice versa. For the former, the individualist anarchist position on "property" would be considered as forms of regulation and restrictions on private property and so the "free market." The individualist anarchist would consider the "anarcho"-capitalist "free market" as another system of legally maintained privilege, with the free market distorted in favour of the wealthy. That capitalist property rights were being maintained by private police would not stop that regime being unfree. This can be seen when "anarcho"-capitalist Wendy McElroy states that *"radical individualism hindered itself . . . Perhaps most destructively, individualism clung to the labour theory of value and refused to*

and Johann Most would have been prepared to admit and each tendency, in its own way, reflected aspects of American society and the drastic transformation it was going through at the time. Moreover, it was changes in American society which lead to the steady rise of social anarchism and its eclipse of individualist anarchism from the 1880s onwards. While there has been a tendency to stress individualist tendency in accounts of American anarchism due to its unique characteristics, only those *"without a background in anarchist history"* would think *"that the individualist anarchists were the larger segment of the anarchist movement in the U.S. at the time. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The collectivist branch of anarchism was much stronger among radicals and workers during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century than the individualist brand. Before the Civil War, the opposite would be true."* [Greg Hall, **Social Anarchism**, no. 30, pp. 90–91]

By the 1880s, social anarchism had probably exceeded the size of the "home-grown" individualists in the United States. The IWPA had some five thousand members at its peak with perhaps three times as many supporters. [Paul Avrich, **The Haymarket Tragedy**, p. 83] Its journals had an aggregate circulation of over 30,000. [George Woodcock, **Anarchism**, p. 395] In contrast, the leading individualist newspaper **Liberty** *"probably never had more than 600 to 1000 subscribers, but it was undoubtedly read by more than that."* [Charles H. Hamilton, *"Introduction"*, p. 1–19, **Benjamin R. Tucker and the Champions of Liberty**, Coughlin, Hamilton and Sullivan (eds.), p. 10] The repression after Haymarket took its toll and the progress of social anarchism was hindered for a decade. However, *"[b]y the turn of the century, the anarchist movement in America had become predominantly communist in orientation."* [Paul Avrich, **Anarchist Voices**, p. 5] As an added irony for those who stress the individualist nature of anarchism in America while dismissing social anarchism as a foreign import, the first American newspaper to use the name "**An-archist**" was published in Boston in 1881 by anarchists within the social revolutionary branch of the movement. [Paul Avrich, **The Haymarket Tragedy**, p. 57] Equally ironic, given the appropriation of the term by the American right, the first anarchist journal to use the term "libertarian" (**La Libertaire**, **Journal du Mouvement Social**)

was published in New York between 1858 and 1861 by French communist-anarchist Joseph Déjacque. [Max Nettlau, **A Short History of Anarchism**, pp. 75–6]

All this is not to suggest that individualist anarchism does not have American roots nor that many of its ideas and visions were not significantly shaped by American social conditions and developments. Far from it! It is simply to stress that it did not develop in complete isolation of European anarchism during the latter half of the nineteenth century and that the social anarchism which overtook by the end of that century was also a product of American conditions (in this case, the transformation of a pre-capitalist society into a capitalist one). In other words, the rise of communist anarchism and the decline of individualist anarchism by the end of the nineteenth century reflected American society just as much as the development of the latter in the first place. Thus the rise of capitalism in America meant the rise of an anarchism more suitable to the social conditions and social relationships produced by that change. Unsurprisingly, therefore, individualist anarchism remains the minority trend in American anarchism to this day with such comrades as Joe Peacott (see his pamphlet **Individualism Reconsidered**), Kevin Carson (see his book **Studies in Mutualist Political Economy**) and Shawn Wilbur (who has painstakingly placed many rare early individualist and mutualist anarchist works onto the internet) keeping its ideas alive.

So like social anarchism, individualist anarchism developed as a response to the rise of capitalism and the transformation of American society this produced. As one academic put it, the *"early anarchists, though staunchly individualistic, did not entertain a penchant for . . . capitalism. Rather, they saw themselves as socialists opposed to the state socialism of Karl Marx. The individualist anarchists saw no contradiction between their individualist stance and their rejection of capitalism."* She stresses that they were *"fervent anti-capitalists"* and thought that *"workers created value through their labour, a value appropriated by owners of businesses . . . The individualist anarchists blamed capitalism for creating inhumane working conditions and for increasing inequalities of wealth. Their self-avowed 'socialism' was rooted in their firm belief in equality, material as well as legal."* This,

There is another fallacy at the heart of the claim that markets and socialism do not go together, namely that all markets are capitalist markets. So another part of the problem is that the same word often means different things to different people. Both Kropotkin and Lenin said they were "communists" and aimed for "communism." However, it does not mean that the society Kropotkin aimed for was the same as that desired by Lenin. Kropotkin's communism was decentralised, created and run from the bottom-up while Lenin's was fundamentally centralised and top-down. Similarly, both Tucker and the Social-Democrat (and leading Marxist) Karl Kautsky called themselves a "socialist" yet their ideas on what a socialist society would be like were extremely different. As J.W. Baker notes, *"Tucker considered himself a socialist . . . as the result of his struggle against 'usury and capitalism,' but anything that smelled of 'state socialism' was thoroughly rejected."* [*"Native American Anarchism,"* pp. 43–62, **The Raven**, vol. 10, no. 1, p. 60] This, of course, does not stop many "anarcho"-capitalists talking about "socialist" goals as if all socialists were Stalinists (or, at best, social democrats). In fact, "socialist anarchism" has included (and continues to include) advocates of truly free markets as well as advocates of a non-market socialism which has absolutely nothing in common with the state capitalist tyranny of Stalinism. Similarly, they accept a completely ahistorical definition of "capitalism," so ignoring the massive state violence and support by which that system was created and is maintained.

The same with terms like "property" and the "free market," by which the "anarcho"-capitalist assumes the individualist anarchist means the same thing as they do. We can take land as an example. The individualist anarchists argued for an ***"occupancy and use"*** system of "property" (see next section for details). Thus in their "free market," land would not be a commodity as it is under capitalism and so under individualist anarchism absentee landlords would be considered as aggressors (for under capitalism they use state coercion to back up their collection of rent against the actual occupiers of property). Tucker argued that local defence associations should treat the occupier and user as the rightful owner, and defend them against the aggression of an absentee landlord who attempted to collect rent. An "anarcho"-capitalist would consider this as aggression

Thus claims that the Individualist Anarchists were not "really" socialists because they supported a market system cannot be supported. The simple fact is that those who make this claim are, at best, ignorant of the socialist movement, its ideas and its history or, at worse, desire, like many Marxists, to write out of history competing socialist theories. For example, Leninist David McNally talks of the *"anarcho-socialist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon"* and how Marx combated *"Proudhonian socialism"* before concluding that it was *"non-socialism"* because it has *"wage-labour and exploitation."* [**Against the Market**, p. 139 and p. 169] Of course, that this is not true (even in a Marxist sense) did not stop him asserting it. As one reviewer correctly points out, *"McNally is right that even in market socialism, market forces rule workers' lives"* and this is *"a serious objection. But it is not tantamount to capitalism or to wage labour"* and it *"does not have exploitation in Marx's sense (i.e., wrongful expropriation of surplus by non-producers)"* [Justin Schwartz, **The American Political Science Review**, Vol. 88, No. 4, p. 982] For Marx, as we noted in section C.2, commodity production only becomes capitalism when there is the exploitation of wage labour. This is the case with Proudhon as well, who differentiated between possession and private property and argued that co-operatives should replace capitalist firms. While their specific solutions may have differed (with Proudhon aiming for a market economy consisting of artisans, peasants and co-operatives while Marx aimed for communism, i.e. the abolition of money via state ownership of capital) their analysis of capitalism and private property were identical — which Tucker consistently noted (as regards the theory of surplus value, for example, he argued that *"Proudhon propounded and proved [it] long before Marx advanced it."* [**Liberty**, no. 92, p. 1])

As Tucker argued, *"the fact that State Socialism . . . has overshadowed other forms of Socialism gives it no right to a monopoly of the Socialistic idea."* [**Instead of a Book**, pp. 363–4] It is no surprise that the authoritarian left and "libertarian" right have united to define socialism in such a way as to eliminate anarchism from its ranks — they both have an interest in removing a theory which exposes the inadequacies of their dogmas, which explains how we can have both liberty **and** equality and have a decent, free and just society.

however, did not stop her asserting that *"contemporary anarcho-capitalists are descendants of nineteenth-century individualist anarchists such as Josiah Warren, Lysander Spooner, and Benjamin Tucker."* [Susan Love Brown, pp. 99–128, *"The Free Market as Salvation from Government"*, **Meanings of the Market**, James G. Carrier (ed.), p. 104, p. 107, p. 104 and p. 103] Trust an academic to ignore the question of how related **are** two theories which differ on such a key issue as whether to be anti-capitalist or not!

Needless to say, some "anarcho"-capitalists are well aware of the fact that individualist anarchists were extremely hostile to capitalism while supporting the "free market." Unsurprisingly, they tend to downplay this opposition, often arguing that the anarchists who point out the anti-capitalist positions of the likes of Tucker and Spooner are quoting them out of context. The truth is different. In fact, it is the "anarcho"-capitalist who takes the ideas of the individualist anarchists from both the historical and theoretical context. This can be seen from the "anarcho"-capitalist dismissal of the individualist anarchists' "bad" economics as well as the nature of the free society wanted by them.

It is possible, no doubt, to trawl through the many issues of, say, **Liberty** or the works of individualist anarchism to find a few comments which may be used to bolster a claim that anarchism need not imply socialism. However, a few scattered comments here and there are hardly a firm basis to ignore the vast bulk of anarchist theory and its history as a movement. This is particularly the case when applying this criteria consistently would mean that communist anarchism, for example, would be excommunicated from anarchism simply because of the opinions of **some** individualist anarchists. Equally, it may be possible to cobble together all the non-anarchist positions of individualist anarchists and so construct an ideology which justified wage labour, the land monopoly, usury, intellectual property rights, and so on but such an ideology would be nothing more than a mockery of individualist anarchism, distinctly at odds with its spirits and aims. It would only convince those ignorant of the anarchist tradition.

It is not a fitting tribute to the individualist anarchists that their ideas are today being associated with the capitalism that they so

clearly despised and wished to abolish. As one modern day Individualist Anarchist argues:

> *"It is time that anarchists recognise the valuable contributions of . . . individualist anarchist theory and take advantage of its ideas. It would be both futile and criminal to leave it to the capitalist libertarians, whose claims on Tucker and the others can be made only by ignoring the violent opposition they had to capitalist exploitation and monopolistic 'free enterprise' supported by the state."* [J.W. Baker, *"Native American Anarchism,"* pp. 43–62, **The Raven**, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 61–2]

We hope that this section of the FAQ will go some way to explaining the ideas and contributions of individualist anarchism to a new generation of rebels. Given the diversity of individualist anarchism, it is hard to generalise about it (some are closer to classical liberalism than others, for example, while a few embraced revolutionary means of change such as Dyer Lum). However, we will do our best to draw out the common themes of the movement, indicating where certain people differed from others. Similarly, there are distinct differences between European and American forms of mutualism, regardless of how often Tucker invoked Proudhon's name to justify his own interpretations of anarchism and we will indicate these (these differences, we think, justify calling the American branch individualist anarchism rather than mutualism). We will also seek to show why social anarchism rejects individualist anarchism (and vice versa) as well as giving a critical evaluation of both positions. Given the diverse nature of individualist anarchism, we are sure that we will not cover all the positions and individuals associated with it but we hope to present enough to indicate why the likes of Tucker, Labadie, Yarros and Spooner deserve better than to be reduced to footnotes in books defending an even more extreme version of the capitalism they spent their lives fighting.

if it did). Tucker, it should be noted, called Proudhon *"the father of the Anarchistic school of Socialism."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 381] Little wonder, then, that the likes of Tucker considered themselves socialists and stated numerous times that they were.

Looking at Tucker and the Individualist anarchists we discover that other socialists considered them socialists. Rudolf Rocker stated that *"it is not difficult to discover certain fundamental principles which are common to all of them and which divide them from all other varieties of socialism. They all agree on the point that man be given the full reward of his labour and recognise in this right the economic basis of all personal liberty. They all regard the free competition of individual and social forces as something inherent in human nature . . . They answered the socialists of other schools who saw in* ***free competition*** *one of the destructive elements of capitalist society that the evil lies in the fact we have too little rather than too much competition, since the power of monopoly has made competition impossible."* [**Pioneers of American Freedom**, p. 160] Malatesta, likewise, saw many schools of socialism, including *"anarchist or authoritarian, mutualist or individualist."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 95]

Adolph Fischer, one of the Haymarket Martyrs and contemporary of Tucker, argued that *"every anarchist is a socialist, but every socialist is not necessarily an anarchist. The anarchists are divided into two factions: the communistic anarchists and the Proudhon or middle-class anarchists."* The former *"advocate the communistic or co-operative method of production"* while the latter *"do not advocate the co-operative system of production, and the common ownership of the means of production, the products and the land."* [**The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs**, p. 81] However, while not being communists (i.e. aiming to eliminate the market), he obviously recognised the Individualists Anarchists as fellow socialists (we should point out that Proudhon **did** support co-operatives, but they did not carry this to communism as do most social anarchists — as is clear, Fischer means communism by the term *"co-operative system of production"* rather than co-operatives as they exist today and Proudhon supported — see section G.4.2).

Thompson, although the former ended up rejecting socialism and the latter became a communal-socialist). Proudhon, as noted, was a well known supporter of market exchange. German sociologist Franz Oppenheimer expounded a similar vision to Proudhon and called himself a *"liberal socialist"* as he favoured a free market but recognised that capitalism was a system of exploitation. [*"Introduction"*, **The State**, p. vii] Today, market socialists like David Schweickart (see his **Against Capitalism** and **After Capitalism**) and David Miller (see his **Market, State, and community: theoretical foundations of market socialism**) are expounding a similar vision to Proudhon's, namely of a market economy based on co-operatives (albeit one which retains a state). Unfortunately, they rarely, if ever, acknowledge their debt to Proudhon (needless to say, their Leninist opponents do as, from their perspective, it damns the market socialists as not being real socialists).

It could, possibly, be argued that these self-proclaimed socialists did not, in fact, understand what socialism "really meant." For this to be the case, **other**, more obviously socialist, writers and thinkers would dismiss them as not being socialists. This, however, is not the case. Thus we find Karl Marx, for example, writing of *"the socialism of Proudhon."* [**Capital**, vol. 1, p. 161f] Engels talked about Proudhon being *"the Socialist of the small peasant and master-craftsman"* and of *"the Proudhon school of Socialism."* [Marx and Engels, **Selected Works**, p. 254 and p. 255] Bakunin talked about Proudhon's *"socialism, based on individual and collective liberty and upon the spontaneous action of free associations."* He considered his own ideas as *"Proudhonism widely developed and pushed right to these, its final consequences"* [**Michael Bakunin: Selected Writings**, p. 100 and p. 198] For Kropotkin, while Godwin was *"first theoriser of Socialism without government — that is to say, of Anarchism"* Proudhon was the second as he, *"without knowing Godwin's work, laid anew the foundations of Anarchism."* He lamented that *"many modern Socialists"* supported *"centralisation and the cult of authority"* and so *"have not yet reached the level of their two predecessors, Godwin and Proudhon."* [**Evolution and Environment**, pp. 26–7] These renown socialists did not consider Proudhon's position to be in any way anti-socialist (although, of course, being critical of whether it would work and its desirability

G.1 Are individualist anarchists anti-capitalist?

To answer this question, it is necessary to first define what we mean by capitalism and socialism. While there is a tendency for supporters of capitalism (and a few socialists!) to equate it with the market and private property, this is not the case. It is possible to have both and not have capitalism (as we discuss in section G.1.1 and section G.1.2, respectively). Similarly, the notion that "socialism" means, by definition, state ownership and/or control, or that being employed by the state rather than by private capital is "socialism" is distinctly wrong. While some socialists have, undoubtedly, defined socialism in precisely such terms, socialism as a historic movement is much wider than that. As Proudhon put it, *"[m]odern Socialism was not founded as a sect or church; it has seen a number of different schools."* [**Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon**, p. 177]

As Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin and Tucker all stressed, anarchism is one of those schools. For Kropotkin, anarchism was *"the no-government system of socialism."* [**Anarchism**, p. 46] Likewise, for Tucker, there were *"two schools of socialistic thought"*, one of which represented authority and the other liberty, namely *"State Socialism and Anarchism."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, pp. 78–9] It was *"not Socialist Anarchism against Individualist Anarchism, but of Communist Socialism against Individualist Socialism."* [Tucker, **Liberty**, no. 129, p. 2] As one expert on Individualist Anarchism noted, Tucker *"looked upon anarchism as a branch of the general socialist movement."* [James J. Martin, **Men Against the State**, pp. 226–7] Thus we find Individualist anarchist Victor Yarros, like Tucker, talking about *"the position and teachings of the Anarchistic Socialists"* when referring to his ideas. [**Liberty**, no. 98, p. 5]

Part of problem is that in the 20th century, the statist school of socialism prevailed both within the labour movement (at least in English speaking countries or until fascism destroyed it in mainland Europe and elsewhere) and within the revolutionary movement (first

as social democracy, then as Communism after the Russian Revolution). This lead, it should be noted, to anarchists not using the term "socialist" to describe their ideas as they did not want to be confused with either reformed capitalism (social democracy) or state capitalism (Leninism and Stalinism). As anarchism was understood as being inherently anti-capitalist, this did not become an issue until certain right-wing liberals started calling themselves "anarcho"-capitalists (somewhat ironically, these liberals joined with the state socialists in trying to limit anarchism to anti-statism and denying their socialist credentials). Another part of the problem is that many, particularly those in America, derive their notion of what socialism is from right-wing sources who are more than happy to agree with the Stalinists that socialism **is** state ownership. This is case with right-"libertarians", who rarely study the history or ideas of socialism and instead take their lead from such fanatical anti-socialists as Ludwig von Mises and Murray Rothbard. Thus they equate socialism with social democracy or Leninism/Stalinism, i.e. with state ownership of the means of life, the turning of part or the whole working population into employees of the government or state regulation and the welfare state. In this they are often joined by social democrats and Marxists who seek to excommunicate all other kinds of socialism from the anti-capitalist movement.

All of which leads to some strange contradictions. If "socialism" **is** equated to state ownership then, clearly, the individualist anarchists are not socialists but, then, neither are the social anarchists! Thus if we assume that the prevailing socialism of the 20th century defines what socialism is, then quite a few self-proclaimed socialists are not, in fact, socialists. This suggests that socialism cannot be limited to state socialism. Perhaps it would be easier to define "socialism" as restrictions on private property? If so, then, clearly, social anarchists are socialists but then, as we will prove, so are the individualist anarchists!

Of course, not all the individualist anarchists used the term "socialist" or "socialism" to describe their ideas although many did. Some called their ideas Mutualism and explicitly opposed socialism (William Greene being the most obvious example). However, at root the ideas were part of the wider socialist movement and, in fact, they

show themselves as really supporters of capitalism. Most, if not all, anarchists would reject this claim. Why is this the case?

This because such claims show an amazing ignorance of socialist ideas and history. The socialist movement has had a many schools, many of which, but not all, opposed the market and private property. Given that the right "libertarians" who make such claims are usually not well informed of the ideas they oppose (i.e. of socialism, particularly **libertarian** socialism) it is unsurprising they claim that the Individualist Anarchists are not socialists (of course the fact that many Individualist Anarchists argued they **were** socialists is ignored). Coming from a different tradition, it is unsurprising they are not aware of the fact that socialism is not monolithic. Hence we discover right-"libertarian" guru von Mises claiming that the *"essence of socialism is the entire elimination of the market."* [**Human Action**, p. 702] This would have come as something of a surprise to, say, Proudhon, who argued that *"[t]o suppress competition is to suppress liberty itself."* [**The General Idea of the Revolution**, p. 50] Similarly, it would have surprised Tucker, who called himself a socialist while supporting a freer market than von Mises ever dreamt of. As Tucker put it:

> *"**Liberty** has always insisted that Individualism and Socialism are not antithetical terms; that, on the contrary, the most perfect Socialism is possible only on condition of the most perfect Individualism; and that Socialism includes, not only Collectivism and Communism, but also that school of Individualist Anarchism which conceives liberty as a means of destroying usury and the exploitation of labour."* [**Liberty**, no. 129, p. 2]

Hence we find Tucker calling his ideas both *"Anarchistic Socialism"* and *"Individualist Socialism"* while other individualist anarchists have used the terms *"free market anti-capitalism"* and *"free market socialism"* to describe the ideas.

The central fallacy of the argument that support for markets equals support for capitalism is that many self-proclaimed socialists are not opposed to the market. Indeed, some of the earliest socialists were market socialists (people like Thomas Hodgskin and William

situated individuals. Only given a context of equality can free exchange be considered to benefit both parties equally and not generate growing inequalities which benefit the stronger of the parties involved which, in turn, skews the bargaining position of those involved in favour of the stronger (also see section F.3).

It is unsurprising, therefore, that the individualist anarchists considered themselves as socialists. Like Proudhon, they desired a (libertarian) socialist system based on the market but without exploitation and which rested on possession rather than capitalist private property. With Proudhon, only the ignorant or mischievous would suggest that such a system was capitalistic. The Individualist Anarchists, as can be seen, fit very easily into Kropotkin's comments that *"the anarchists, in common with all socialists . . . maintain that the now prevailing system of private ownership in land, and our capitalist production for the sake of profits, represent a monopoly which runs against both the principles of justice and the dictates of utility."* [**Anarchism**, p. 285] While they rejected the communist-anarchist solution to the social question, they knew that such a question existed and was rooted in the exploitation of labour and the prevailing system of property rights.

So why is Individualist Anarchism and Proudhon's mutualism socialist? Simply because they opposed the exploitation of labour by capital and proposed a means of ending it. The big debate between social and individualist anarchists is revolves around whether the other school can **really** achieve this common goal and whether its proposed solution would, in fact, secure meaningful individual liberty for all.

G.1.1 What about their support of the free market?

Many, particularly on the "libertarian"-right, would dismiss claims that the Individualist Anarchists were socialists. By their support of the "free market" the Individualist Anarchists, they would claim,

followed Proudhon in this as he both proclaimed himself a socialist while also attacking it. The apparent contradiction is easily explained by noting there are two schools of socialism, state and libertarian. Thus it is possible to be both a (libertarian) socialist and condemn (state) socialist in the harshest terms.

So what, then, is socialism? Tucker stated that *"the bottom claim of Socialism"* was *"that labour should be put in possession of its own,"* that *"the natural wage of labour is its product"* and *"interest, rent, and profit . . . constitute the trinity of usury."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 78 and p. 80] This definition also found favour with Kropotkin who stated that socialism *"in its wide, generic, and true sense"* was an *"effort to **abolish** the exploitation of labour by capital."* [**Anarchism**, p. 169] For Kropotkin, anarchism was *"brought forth by the same critical and revolutionary protest which gave rise to Socialism in general"*, socialism aiming for *"the negation of Capitalism and of society based on the subjection of labour to capital."* Anarchism, unlike other socialists, extended this to oppose *"what constitutes the real strength of Capitalism: the State and its principle supports."* [**Environment and Evolution**, p. 19] Tucker, similarly, argued that Individualist anarchism was a form of socialism and would result in the *"emancipation of the workingman from his present slavery to capital."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 323]

The various schools of socialism present different solutions to this exploitation and subjection. From the nationalisation of capitalist property by the state socialists, to the socialisation of property by the libertarian communists, to the co-operatives of mutualism, to the free market of the individualist anarchists, all are seeking, in one way or the other, to ensure the end of the domination and exploitation of labour by capital. The disagreements between them all rest in whether their solutions achieve this aim and whether they will make life worth living and enjoyable (which also explains why individualist and social anarchists disagree so much!). For anarchists, state socialism is little more than state **capitalism**, with a state monopoly replacing capitalist monopolies and workers being exploited by one boss (the state) rather than many. So all anarchists would agree with Yarrows when he argued that *"[w]hile **State** Socialism removes the*

*disease by killing the patient, **no**-State Socialism offers him the means of recovering strength, health, and vigour."* [**Liberty**, no. 98, p. 5]

So, why are the individualist anarchists anti-capitalists? There are two main reasons.

Firstly, the Individualist Anarchists opposed profits, interest and rent as forms of exploitation (they termed these non-labour incomes ***"usury"***, but as Tucker stressed usury was *"but another name for the exploitation of labour."* [**Liberty**, no. 122, p. 4]). To use the words of Ezra Heywood, the Individualist Anarchists thought *"Interest is theft, Rent Robbery, and Profit Only Another Name for Plunder."* [quoted by Martin Blatt, *"Ezra Heywood & Benjamin Tucker,"*, pp. 28–43, **Benjamin R. Tucker and the Champions of Liberty**, Coughlin, Hamilton and Sullivan (eds.), p. 29] Non-labour incomes are merely *"different methods of levying tribute for the use of capital."* Their vision of the good society was one in which *"the usurer, the receiver of interest, rent and profit"* would not exist and Labour would *"secure its natural wage, its entire product."* [Tucker, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 80, p. 82 and p. 85] This would also apply to dividends, *"since no idle shareholders could continue in receipt of dividends were it not for the support of monopoly, it follows that these dividends are no part of the proper reward of ability."* [Tucker, **Liberty**, no. 282, p. 2]

In addition, as a means of social change, the individualists suggested that activists start *"inducing the people to steadily refuse the payment of rents and taxes."* [**Instead of a Book** pp. 299–300] These are hardly statements with which capitalists would agree. Tucker, as noted, also opposed interest, considering it usury (exploitation and a *"crime"*) pure and simple and one of the means by which workers were denied the full fruits of their labour. Indeed, he looked forward to the day when *"any person who charges more than cost for any product [will] . . . be regarded very much as we now regard a pickpocket."* This *"attitude of hostility to usury, in any form"* hardly fits into the capitalist mentality or belief system. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 155] Similarly, Ezra Heywood considered profit-taking *"an injustice which ranked second only to legalising titles to absolute ownership of land or raw-materials."* [James J. Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 111] Opposition to profits, rent or interest is hardly capitalistic — indeed, the reverse.

power now wielded by capital." [**Op. Cit.**, no. 39, p. 1] The *"capitalists and their tools, the legislatures, already begin to scent the impending dangers of trades-union socialism and initiatory steps are on foot in the legislatures of several states to construe labour combinations as conspiracies against commerce and industry, and suppress them by law."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 22, p. 3]

Some individualist anarchists, like Dyer Lum and Joseph Labadie, were union organisers while Ezra Heywood *"scoffed at supporters of the status quo, who saw no evidence of the tyranny on the part of capital, and who brought up the matter of free contract with reference to labourers. This argument was no longer valid. Capital controlled land, machinery, steam power, waterfalls, ships, railways, and above all, money and public opinion, and was in a position to wait out recalcitrancy at its leisure."* [Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 107] For Lum, *"behind the capitalist . . . privilege stands as support"* and so social circumstances matter. *"Does liberty exist,"* he argued, *"where rent, interest, and profit hold the employee in economic subjection to the legalised possessor of the means of life? To plead for individual liberty under the present social conditions, to refuse to abate one jot of control that legalised capital has over individual labour, and to assert that the demand for restrictive or class legislation comes only from the voluntary associations of workmen [i.e., trade unions] is not alone the height of impudence, but a barefaced jugglery of words."* [**Liberty**, no. 101, p. 5]

Likewise, Tucker advocated and supported many other forms of non-violent direct action as well as workplace strikes, such as boycotts and rent strikes, seeing them as important means of radicalising the working class and creating an anarchist society. However, like social anarchists the Individualist Anarchists did not consider labour struggle as an end in itself — they considered reforms (and discussion of a *"fair wage"* and *"harmony between capital and labour"*) as essentially *"conservative"* and would be satisfied with no less than *"the abolition of the monopoly privileges of capital and interest-taking, and the return to labour of the full value of its production."* [Victor Yarros, quoted by Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 206f]

Therefore, it is clear that both social and Individualist Anarchists share much in common, including an opposition to capitalism. The former may have been in favour of free exchange but between equally

to equality of liberty had been wantonly and continuously violated" by the capitalists using the state, for the *"capitalists . . . in denying [a free market] to [the workers] are guilty of criminal invasion."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 460 and p. 454] *"With our present economic system,"* Tucker stressed, *"almost every strike is just. For what is justice in production and distribution? That labour, which creates all, shall have **all**."* [**Liberty**, no. 19, p. 1]

Another important aspects of unions and strikes were that they represented both a growing class consciousness and the ability to change society. *"It is the power of the great unions to paralyse industry and **ignore** the government that has alarmed the political burglars,"* argued Victor Yarrows. This explained why unions and strikes were crushed by force as *"the State can have no rival, say the plutocrats, and the trades unions, with the sympathetic strike and boycott as weapons, are becoming too formidable."* Even defeated strikes were useful as they ensured that *"the strikers and their sympathisers will have acquired some additional knowledge of the essential nature of the beast, government, which plainly has no other purpose at present than to protect monopoly and put down all opposition to it." "There is such a thing as the solidarity of labour,"* Yarrows went on, *"and it is a healthy and encouraging sign that workmen recognise the need of mutual support and co-operation in their conflict with monopoly and its official and unofficial servants. Labour has to fight government as well as capital, 'law and order' as well as plutocracy. It cannot make the slightest movement against monopoly without colliding with some sort of 'authority', Federal, State, or municipal."* The problem was that the unions *"have no clear general aims and deal with results rather than causes."* [**Liberty**, no. 291, p. 3]

This analysis echoed Tucker's, who applauded the fact that *"[a]nother era of strikes apparently is upon us. In all trades and in all sections of the country labour is busy with its demands and its protests. Liberty rejoices in them. They give evidence of life and spirit and hope and growing intelligence. They show that the people are beginning to know their rights, and, knowing, dare to maintain them. Strikes, whenever and wherever inaugurated, deserve encouragement from all true friends of labour."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 19, p. 1] Even failed strikes were useful, for they exposed *"the tremendous and dangerous*

Thus the Individualist Anarchists, like the social anarchists, opposed the exploitation of labour and desired to see the end of capitalism by ensuring that labour would own what it produced. They desired a society in which there would no longer be capitalists and workers, only workers. The worker would receive the full product of his/her labour, so ending the exploitation of labour by capital. In Tucker's words, a free society would see *"each man reaping the fruits of his labour and no man able to live in idleness on an income from capital"* and so society would *"become a great hive of Anarchistic workers, prosperous and free individuals"* combining *"to carry on their production and distribution on the cost principle."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 276]

Secondly, the Individualist Anarchists favoured a new system of land ownership based on ***"occupancy and use."*** So, as well as this opposition to capitalist usury, the individualist anarchists also expressed opposition to capitalist ideas on property (particularly property in land). J.K. Ingalls, for example, considered that *"the private domination of the land"* originated in *"usurpation only, whether of the camp, the court or the market. Whenever such a domination excludes or deprives a single human being of his equal opportunity, it is a violation, not only of the public right, and of the social duty, but of the very principle of law and morals upon which property itself is based."* [quoted by Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 148f] As Martin comments, for Ingalls, *"[t]o reduce land to the status of a commodity was an act of usurpation, enabling a group to 'profit by its relation to production' without the expenditure of labour time."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 148] These ideas are identical to Proudhon's and Ingalls continues in this Proudhonian *"occupancy and use"* vein when he argues that possession *"remains **possession**, and can never become **property**, in the sense of absolute dominion, except by positive statue [i.e. state action]. Labour can only claim **occupancy**, and can lay no claim to more than the usufruct."* Current property ownership in land were created by *"forceful and fraudulent taking"* of land, which *"could give no justification to the system."* [quoted by Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 149]

The capitalist system of land ownership was usually termed the ***"land monopoly"***, which consisted of *"the enforcement by government*

of land titles which do not rest upon personal occupancy and cultivation." Under anarchism, individuals would *"no longer be protected by their fellows in anything but personal occupancy and cultivation of land"* and so *"ground rent would disappear."* [Tucker, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 85] This applied to what was on the land as well, such as housing:

> *"If a man exerts himself by erecting a building on land which afterward, by the operation of the principle of occupancy and use, rightfully becomes another's, he must, upon demand of the subsequent occupant, remove from this land the results of his self-exertion, or, failing so to do, sacrifice his property therein."* [**Liberty**, no. 331, p. 4]

This would apply to both the land and what was on it. This meant that *"tenants would not be forced to pay . . . rent"* nor would landlords *"be allowed to seize their property."* This, as Tucker noted, was a complete rejection of the capitalist system of property rights and saw anarchism being dependent on *"the Anarchistic view that occupancy and use should condition and limit landholding becom[ing] the prevailing view."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 162 and p. 159] As Joseph Labadie put it, socialism includes any theory *"which has for its object the* ***changing of the present status of property*** *and the relations one person or class holds to another. In other words, any movement which has for its aim the changing of social relations, of companionships, of associations, of powers of one class over another class, is Socialism."* [our emphasis, **Liberty**, no. 158, p. 8] As such, both social and individualist anarchists are socialists as both aimed at changing the present status of property.

It should also be noted here that the individualist anarchist ideal that competition in banking would drive interest to approximately zero is their equivalent to the social anarchist principle of free access to the means of life. As the only cost involved would be an administration charge which covers the labour involved in running the mutual bank, all workers would have access to "capital" for (in effect) free. Combine this with "occupancy and use" in terms of land use and it can be seen that both individualist and social anarchists

This has *"resulted in a grouping and consolidation of wealth which grows apace by attracting all property, no matter by whom produced, into the hands of the privileged, and hence property becomes a social power, an economic force destructive of rights, a fertile source of injustice, a means of enslaving the dispossessed."* [William Ballie, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 121]

Moreover, like the social anarchists, the Individualist Anarchists were aware that the state was not some neutral machine or one that exploited all classes purely for its own ends. They were aware that it was a vehicle of **class rule**, namely the rule of the capitalist class over the working class. Spooner thought that that *"holders of this monopoly [of the money supply] now rule and rob this nation; and the government, in all its branches, is simply their tool"* and that *"the employers of wage labour . . . are also the monopolists of money."* [Spooner, **A Letter to Grover Cleveland**, p. 42 and p. 48] Tucker recognised that *"capital had so manipulated legislation"* that they gained an advantage on the capitalist market which allowed them to exploit labour. [**The Individualist Anarchists**, pp. 82–3] He was quite clear that the state was a **capitalist** state, with *"Capitalists hav[ing] placed and kept on the statute books all sorts of prohibitions and taxes"* to ensure a "free market" skewed in favour of themselves. [**Instead of a Book**, p. 454] A.H. Simpson argued that the Individualist Anarchist *"knows very well that the present State . . . is simply the tool of the property-owning class."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 92] Thus both wings of the anarchist movement were united in their opposition to capitalist exploitation and their common recognition that the state was a tool of the capitalist class, used to allow them to exploit the working class.

Tucker, like other individualist anarchists, also supported labour unions, and although he opposed violence during strikes he recognised that it was caused by frustration due to an unjust system. Indeed, like social anarchists, he considered *"the labourer in these days [as] a soldier. . . His employer is . . . a member of an opposing army. The whole industrial and commercial world is in a state of internecine war, in which the proletaires are massed on one side and the proprietors on the other."* The cause of strikes rested in the fact that *"before . . . strikers violated the equal liberty of others, their own right*

As did Lysander Spooner, who pointed out that the *"wheel of fortune, in the present state of things, is of such enormous diameter"* and *"those on its top are on so showy a height"* wjile *"those underneath it are in such a pit of debt, oppression, and despair."* He argued that under his system *"fortunes could hardly be represented by a wheel; for it would present no such height, no such depth, no such irregularity of motion as now. It should rather be represented by an extended surface, varied somewhat by inequalities, but still exhibiting a general level, affording a safe position for all, and creating no necessity, for either force or fraud, on the part of anyone to secure his standing."* Thus Individualist anarchism would create a condition *"neither of poverty, nor riches; but of moderate competency — such as will neither enervate him by luxury, nor disable him by destitution; but which will at once give him and opportunity to labour, (both mentally and physically) and stimulate him by offering him all the fruits of his labours."* [quoted by Stephan L. Newman, **Liberalism at Wit's End**, p. 72 and p. 73]

As one commentator on individualist anarchism, Wm. Gary Kline, correctly tsummarised:

> *"Their proposals were designed to establish true equality of opportunity . . . and they expected this to result in a society without great wealth or poverty. In the absence of monopolistic factors which would distort competition, they expected a society of largely self-employed workmen with no significant disparity of wealth between any of them since all would be required to live at their own expense and not at the expense of exploited fellow human beings."* [**The Individualist Anarchists: A Critique of Liberalism**, pp. 103–4]

Hence, like social anarchists, the Individualist Anarchists saw their ideas as a means towards equality. By eliminating exploitation, inequality would soon decrease as wealth would no longer accumulate in the hands of the few (the owners). Rather, it would flow back into the hands of those who produced it (i.e. the workers). Until this occurred, society would see *"[o]n one side a dependent class of wage-workers and on the other a privileged class of wealth-monopolisers, each become more and more distinct from the other as capitalism advances."*

shared a common aim to make the means of life available to all without having to pay a tribute to an owner or be dependent on a ruling capitalist or landlord class.

For these reasons, the Individualist Anarchists are clearly anti-capitalist. While an Individualist Anarchy would be a market system, it would not be a capitalist one. As Tucker argued, the anarchists realised *"the fact that one class of men are dependent for their living upon the sale of their labour, while another class of men are relieved of the necessity of labour by being legally privileged to sell something that is not labour. . . And to such a state of things I am as much opposed as any one. But the minute you remove privilege. . . every man will be a labourer exchanging with fellow-labourers . . . What Anarchistic-Socialism aims to abolish is usury . . . it wants to deprive capital of its reward."* As noted above, the term *"usury,"* for Tucker, was simply a synonym for *"the exploitation of labour."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 404 and p. 396]

The similarities with social anarchism are obvious. Like them, the individualist anarchists opposed capitalism because they saw that profit, rent and interest were all forms of exploitation. As communist-anarchist Alexander Berkman noted, *"[i]f the worker would get his due — that is, the things he produces or their equivalent — where would the profits of the capitalist come from? If labour owned the wealth it produced, there would be no capitalism."* Like social anarchists they opposed usury, to have to pay purely for access/use for a resource. It ensured that a *"slice of their daily labour is taken from [the workers] for the privilege of **using** these factories"* [**What is Anarchism?**, p. 44 and p. 8] For Marx, abolishing interest and interest-bearing capital *"means the abolition of capital and of capitalist production itself."* [**Theories of Surplus Value**, vol. 3, p. 472] A position, incidentally, also held by Proudhon who maintained that *"reduction of interest rates to vanishing point is itself a revolutionary act, because it is destructive of capitalism."* [quoted by Edward Hyams, **Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: His Revolutionary Life, Mind and Works**, p. 188] Like many socialists, Individualist Anarchists used the term "interest" to cover all forms of surplus value: *"the use of money"* plus *"house-rent, dividends, or share of profits"* and having to *"pay a tax to somebody who owns the land." "In doing away with interest, the cause of inequality in material*

circumstances will be done away with." [John Beverley Robinson, **The Individualist Anarchists**, pp. 144–5]

Given that Individualist Anarchism aimed to abolish interest along with rent and profit it would suggest that it is a socialist theory. Unsurprisingly, then, Tucker agreed with Marx's analysis on capitalism, namely that it lead to industry concentrating into the hands of a few and that it robbed workers of the fruits of the toil (for Francis Tandy it was a case of *"the Marxian theory of surplus value, upon which all Socialistic philosophy — whether State or Anarchistic — is necessarily based"* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 312, p. 3]). Tucker quoted a leading Marxist's analysis of capitalism and noted that *"Liberty endorses the whole of it, excepting a few phrases concerning the nationalisation of industry and the assumption of political power by working people."* However, he was at pains to argue that this analysis was first expounded by Proudhon, *"that the tendency and consequences of capitalistic production . . . were demonstrated to the world time and time again during the twenty years preceding the publication of 'Das Kapital'"* by the French anarchist. This included *"the historical persistence of class struggles in successive manifestations"* as well as *"the theory that labour is the source and measure of value." "Call Marx, then, the father of State socialism, if you will,"* argued Tucker, *"but we dispute his paternity of the general principles of economy on which all schools of socialism agree."* [**Liberty**, no. 35, p. 2]

This opposition to profits, rent and interest as forms of exploitation and property as a form of theft clearly makes individualist anarchism anti-capitalist and a form of (libertarian) socialism. In addition, it also indicates well the common ground between the two threads of anarchism, in particular their common position to capitalism. The social anarchist Rudolf Rocker indicates well this common position when he argues:

> *"it is difficult to reconcile personal freedom with the existing economic system. Without doubt the present inequality of economic interests and the resulting class conflicts in society are a continual danger to the freedom of the individual . . . [T]he undisturbed natural development of human personality is impossible in a system which has its root in the shameless exploitation of the great mass of the members of society. One cannot be free either politically or personally so long as one is in economic servitude of another and cannot escape from this condition. This was recognised by men like Godwin, Warren, Proudhon, Bakunin, [and women like Goldman and de Cleyre, we must add!] and many others who subsequently reached the conviction that the domination of man over man will not disappear until there is an end of the exploitation of man by man."* [**Nationalism and Culture**, p. 167]

There are other, related, reasons why the individualist anarchists must be considered left-wing libertarians rather than right-wing ones. Given their opposition to non-labour income, they saw their proposals as having egalitarian implications. As regards equality, we discover that they saw their ideas as promoting it. Thus we find Tucker arguing that that the *"happiness possible in any society that does not improve upon the present in the matter of distribution of wealth, can hardly be described as beatific."* He was clearly opposed to *"the inequitable distribution of wealth"* under capitalism and equally clearly saw his proposals as a means of reducing it substantially. The abolition of those class monopolies which create interest, rent and profit would reduce income and wealth inequalities substantially. However, there was *"one exception, and that a comparatively trivial one"*, namely economic rent (the natural differences between different bits of land and individual labour). This *"will probably remain with us always. Complete liberty will very much lessen it; of that I have no doubt . . . At the worst, it will be a small matter, no more worth consideration in comparison with the liberty than the slight disparity that will always exist in consequence of inequalities of skill."* [*"Why I am an Anarchist"*, pp. 132–6, **Man!**, M. Graham (ed.), pp. 135–6] Another individualist anarchist, John Beverley Robinson, agreed:

> *"When privilege is abolished, and the worker retains all that he produces, then will come the powerful trend toward equality of material reward for labour that will produce substantial financial and social equality, instead of the mere political equality that now exists."* [**Patterns of Anarchy**, pp. 278–9]

violent as it was directed against corporate property, not people — unlike the police action). Unless the rebels simply did what they were told, then any non-violent protest could become violent — but only because private property ultimately rests on state violence, a fact which becomes obvious when people refuse to acknowledge it and its privileges (*"There is only one law for the poor, to wit: Obey the rich."* [Parsons, **Op. Cit.**, p. 97]). Thus Adolph Fischer, one of the Haymarket Martyrs:

> *"Would a peaceful solution of the social question be possible, the anarchists would be the first ones to rejoice over it.*
>
> *"But is it not a fact that on occasion of almost every strike the minions of the institutions of private property — militia, police, deputy sheriffs; yes, even federal troops — are being called to the scenes of conflict between capital and labour, in order to protect the interests of capital? . . . What peaceful means should the toilers employ? There is, for example, the strike? If the ruling classes want to enforce the 'law' they can have every striker arrested and punished for 'intimidation' and conspiracy. A strike can only be successful if the striking workingmen prevent their places being occupied by others. But this prevention is a crime in the eyes of the law. Boycott? In several states the 'courts of justice' have decided that the boycott is a violation of the law, and in consequence thereof, a number of boycotts have had the pleasure of examining the inner construction of penitentiaries 'for 'conspiracy' against the interests of capital."* [**The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs**, pp. 85–6]

Some individualist anarchists did agree with this position. Dyer Lum, for example, *"supported revolutionary violence on practical and historical grounds. Practically speaking, Lum did not believe that 'wage slavery' could be ended by non-violence because capitalists would surely use force to resist."* [Frank H. Brooks, *"Ideology, Strategy, and Organization: Dyer Lum and the American Anarchist Movement"*, pp. 57–83, **Labor History**, vol. 34, No. 1, p. 71] Spooner's rhetoric could be as violent sounding as Johann Most at his worse and he called upon the subjects of the British Empire to rise in revolt (see his pamphlet

to land. Here we discover him advocating *"occupancy and use"* and rejecting the "right" of land owners to bar the landless from any land they owned but did not **personally** use. Rent was *"due to that denial of liberty which takes the shape of land monopoly, vesting titles to land in individuals and associations which do not use it, and thereby compelling the non-owning users to pay tribute to the non-using owners as a condition of admission to the competitive market."* Anarchist opposition of rent did *"not mean simply the freeing of unoccupied land. It means the freeing of all land not occupied **by the owner**. In other words, it means land ownership limited by occupancy and use."* [Tucker, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 130 and p. 155] This would result in a *"system of occupying ownership . . . accompanied by no legal power to collect rent."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 325]

A similar position was held by John Beverley Robinson. He argued that there *"are two kinds of land ownership, proprietorship or property, by which the owner is absolute lord of the land, to use it or to hold it out of use, as it may please him; and possession, by which he is secure in the tenure of land which he uses and occupies, but has no claim upon it at all if he ceases to use it."* Moreover, *"[a]ll that is necessary to do away with Rent is to away with absolute property in land."* [**Patterns of Anarchy**, p. 272] Joseph Labadie, likewise, stated that *"the two great sub-divisions of Socialists"* (anarchists and State Socialists) both *"agree that the resources of nature — land, mines, and so forth — should not be held as private property and subject to being held by the individual for speculative purposes, that use of these things shall be the only valid title, and that each person has an equal right to the use of all these things. They all agree that the present social system is one composed of a class of slaves and a class of masters, and that justice is impossible under such conditions."* [**What is Socialism?**]

Thus the Individualist Anarchists definition of "property" differed considerably from that of the capitalist definition. As they themselves acknowledge. Robinson argued that *"the only real remedy is a change of heart, through which land using will be recognised as proper and legitimate, but land holding will be regarded as robbery and piracy."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 273] Tucker, likewise, indicated that his ideas on "property" were not the same as existing ones when he argued that *"the present system of land tenure should be changed to*

one of occupancy and use" and that *"no advocate of occupancy-and-use tenure of land believes that it can be put in force, until as a theory it has been as generally . . . seen and accepted as the prevailing theory of ordinary private property."* [**Occupancy and Use verses the Single Tax**] Thus, for Tucker, anarchism is dependent on *"the Anarchistic view that occupancy and use should condition and limit landholding becom[ing] the prevailing view."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 159]

Based on this theory of "property" Tucker opposed landlords and rent, arguing that anarchy *"means the freeing of all land not occupied* ***by the owner****"* that is, *"land ownership limited by occupancy and use."* He extended this principle to housing, arguing that *"Anarchic associations"* would *"not collect your rent, and might not even evict your tenant"* and *"tenants would not be forced to pay you rent, nor would you be allowed to seize their property. The Anarchic Associations would look upon your tenants very much as they would look upon your guests."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 155 and p. 162] In fact, individualist anarchism would *"accord the actual occupant and user of land the right to that which is upon the land, who left it there when abandoning the land."* [Tucker, **Liberty**, no. 350, p. 4]

In the case of land and housing, almost all Individualist Anarchists argued that the person who lives or works on it (even under lease) would be regarded *"as the occupant and user of the land on which the house stands, and as the owner of the house itself,"* that is they become *"the owner of both land and house as soon as he becomes the occupant."* [Tucker, **Occupancy and Use Versus the Single Tax**] For Tucker, occupancy and use was *"the Anarchistic solution of the land question"* as it allowed free access to land to all, to be *"enjoyed by the occupant without payment of tribute to a non-occupant."* This applied to what was on the land as well, for if A builds a house, and rents it to B, who lives or works in it under the lease then Tucker would *"regard B as the occupant and user of the land on which the house stands, and as* ***the owner of the house itself****."* [**Liberty**, no. 308, p. 4]

Needless to say, the individualist anarchists were just as opposed to that mainstay of modern capitalism, the corporation. For Greene corporations *"disarrange our social organisation, and make the just distribution of the products of labour impossible."* [quoted by Wm.

would attempt by brute force to stay the wheel of progress." [contained in Parsons, **Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis**, p. 55] Subsequent events have proven that Spies and Parsons had a point!

Thus arguments about violence should not result in the assumption that the individualist anarchists were pacifists as the subject usually is not violence as such but rather assassinations and attempts of minorities to use violence to create "anarchy" by destroying the state on behalf of the general population. *"To brand the policy of terrorism and assassination as immoral is ridiculously weak,"* argued Tucker. *"****Liberty*** *does not assume to set any limit on the right of an invaded individual to choose his own methods of defence. The invader, whether an individual or a government forfeits all claim to consideration from the invaded. This truth is independent of the character of the invasion."* This meant that the *"right to resist oppression by violence is beyond doubt. But its exercise would be unwise unless the suppression of free thought, free speech, and a free press were enforced so stringently that all other means of throwing it off had become hopeless."* Ultimately, though, the *"days of armed revolution have gone by. It is too easily put down."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 430, p. 439 and p. 440]

Except for a small group of hard-core insurrectionists, few social anarchists think that violence should be the first recourse in social struggle. The ultra-revolutionary rhetoric associated with the 1883–6 period is not feature of the anarchist movement in general and so lessons have been learned. As far as strategy goes, the tactics advocated by social anarchists involve the same ones that individualist anarchists support, namely refusal of obedience to all forms of authority. This would include workplace, rent and tax strikes, occupations, protests and such like. Violence has always been seen as the last option, to be used only in self-defence (or, sometimes, in revenge for greater acts of violence by oppressors). The problem is that any effective protest will result in the protesters coming into conflict with either the state or property owners. For example, a rent strike will see the agents of the property owner trying to evict tenants, as would a workers strike which occupied the workplace. Similarly, in the Seattle protests in 1999 the police used force against the non-violent protesters blocking the roads long before the Black Bloc started breaking windows (which is, in itself, non-

and unions. As we discuss more fully in section G.3.1, strikes were habitually repressed by violence (by the state or by the employer's private police). The massive 1877 strike wave, for example, saw the **Chicago Times** urge the use of hand grenades against strikers while employers organised *"private guards and bands of uniformed vigilantes"* which *"roamed the streets, attacking and dispersing groups of workers.* Business leaders concluded that *"the chief lesson of the strike as the need for a stronger apparatus of repression"* and presented the city of Chicago with two Gatling guns to aid that task. *"The erection of government armouries in the centres of American cities dates from this period."* This repression and the vitriolic ruling class rhetoric used *"set a pattern for the future and fuelled the hatreds and passions without which the Haymarket tragedy would not have occurred."* [Paul Avrich, **The Haymarket Tragedy**, p. 33 and p. 35]

Given this general infatuation with dynamite and violence which this state and employer violence provoked, the possibility for misunderstanding was more than likely (as well as giving the enemies of anarchism ample evidence to demonise it while allowing the violence of the system they support to be downplayed). Rather than seeing communist-anarchists as thinking a revolution was the product of mass struggle, it was easy to assume that by revolution they meant acts of violence or terrorism conducted by a few anarchists on behalf of everyone else (this false perspective is one which Marxists to this day tend to repeat when dismissing anarchism). In such a situation, it is easy to see why so many individualist anarchists thought that a small group of anarchists sought to impose communism by means of violence. However, this was not the case. According to Albert Parsons, the communist-anarchists argued that the working class *"will be driven to use [force] in self-defence, in self-preservation against those who are degrading, enslaving and destroying them."* [**The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs**, p. 46] As August Spies put it, *"[t]o charge us with an attempt to overthrow the present system on or about May 4th, and then establish anarchy, is too absurd a statement, I think, even for a political office-holder to make . . . Only mad men could have planned such a brilliant scheme."* Rather, *"we have predicted from the lessons history teaches, that the ruling classes of to-day would no more listen to the voice of reason than their predecessors; that they*

Gary Kline, **The Individualist Anarchists: A Critique of Liberalism**, p. 94] While opposing state attempts to limit trusts (it did not get to the root of the problem which lay in class privilege), Tucker took it for granted that *"corporate privileges are in themselves a wrong."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 129] Given that "occupancy and use" applies to what is on the land, it logically follows that for those workplaces with absentee owners (i.e., owners who hire managers to run them) then these are abandoned by their owners. By the "occupancy and use" criteria, the land and what is on it reverts to those actually using them (i.e., the workers in question). Corporations and shareowners, in other words, are extremely unlikely to exist in individualist anarchism.

Hence to claim that the Individualist Anarchists supported capitalist property rights is false. As can be seen, they advocated a system which differed significantly to the current system, indeed they urged the restriction of property rights to a form of possession. Unfortunately, by generally using the term "property" to describe this new system of possession they generated exactly the confusion that Proudhon foretold. Sadly, right-"libertarians" use this confusion to promote the idea that the likes of Tucker supported capitalist property rights and so capitalism. As Tucker argued, *"[d]efining it with Proudhon as the sum total of legal privileges bestowed upon the holder wealth, [individualist anarchism] agrees with Proudhon that property is robbery. But using the word in the commoner acceptation, as denoting the labour's individual possession of his product or of his proportional share of the joint product of himself and others, [it] holds that property is liberty."* [**Liberty**, no. 122, p. 4]

If, as it is sometimes suggested, the difference between a right "libertarian" is that they despise the state because it hinders the freedom of property while left libertarians condemn it because it is a bastion of property, it is worthwhile to note two important facts. Firstly, that individualist anarchism condemns the state because it protects the land monopoly, i.e., capitalist property rights in land and what is on it, rather than a system of "occupancy and use." Secondly, that all schools of anarchist oppose capitalism because it is based on the exploitation of labour, an exploitation which the state protects. Hence de Cleyre: *"I wish a sharp distinction made between*

the legal institution of property, and property in the sense that what a man definitely produces by his own labour is his own." The inequality and oppressions of capitalism are *"the inevitable result of the whole politico-economic lie that man can be free and the institution of property continue to exist."* [**Exquisite Rebel**, p. 297] Given this, given these bastions of property against which the both the individualist and social anarchists turn their fire, it is obvious that both schools are left libertarians.

For these reasons it is clear that just because the Individualist Anarchists supported (a form of) "property" does not mean they are capitalists. After all, as we note in the section G.2 communist-anarchists recognise the necessity of allowing individuals to own and work their own land and tools if they so desire yet no one claims that they support "private property." Equally, that many of the Individualist Anarchists used the term "property" to describe a system of possession (or *"occupancy-and-use"*) should not blind us to the non-capitalist nature of that "property." Once we move beyond looking at the words they used to what they meant by those words we clearly see that their ideas are distinctly different from those of supporters of capitalism. In fact, they share a basic commonality with social anarchism (*"Property will lose a certain attribute which sanctifies it now. The absolute ownership of it — 'the right to use or abuse' will be abolished — and possession, use, will be the only title."* [Albert R. Parsons, **Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis**, p. 173]). This should be unsurprising given the influence of Proudhon on both wings of the movement.

As Malatesta noted, recognising the *"the right of workers to the products of their own labour,"* demanding *"the abolition of interest"* and *"the division of land and the instruments of labour among those who wish to use them"* would be *"a socialist school different from [communist-anarchism], but it is still socialism."* It would be a *"mutualist"* socialism. [**At the Café**, p. 54 and p. 56] In other words, property need not be incompatible with socialism. It all depends on the type of property being advocated.

communist-anarchists (like all anarchists) the abolition of property does not mean the end of possession and so *"would not harm the independent worker whose real title is possession and the work done"* unlike capitalist property. [Malatesta, **Op. Cit.**, p. 103] Compare this with Yarros' comment that *"[s]mall owners would not suffer from the application of the 'personal use' principle, while large owners, who have come into possession of the landed property, or the capital with which they purchased the landed property, by means that equal liberty could not sanction, would have no principle to base any protest on."* [**Liberty**, no. 197, p. 2] In other words, **all** anarchists (as we argue in section B.3) oppose private property but support possession (we return to this issue in section I.6.2 as it is an all too common fallacy).

G.2.2 Is communist-anarchism violent?

Having shown that communist-anarchist is a valid form of anarchism even in terms of individualist anarchism in the last section, it is now necessary to discuss the issue of methods, i.e., the question of revolution and violence. This is related to the first objection, with Tucker arguing that *"their Communism is another State, while my voluntary cooperation is not a State at all. It is a very easy matter to tell who is an Anarchist and who is not. Do you believe in any form of imposition upon the human will by force?"* [**Liberty**, no. 94, p. 4] However, Tucker was well aware that the state imposed its will on others by force and so the question was whether revolution was the right means of ending its oppression.

To a large degree, discussion on the question of revolution was clouded by the fact it took place during the height of the *"propaganda by the deed"* period in anarchist history (see section A.2.18). As George Woodcock noted, a *"cult of violence . . . marked and marred"* the IWPA and alienated the individualist anarchists. [**Anarchism**, p. 393] Johann Most was the focus for much of this rhetoric (see Paul Avrich's **The Haymarket Tragedy**, particularly the chapter entitled *"Cult of Dynamite"*). However, the reason why talk of dynamite found an audience had nothing to do with anarchism but rather because of the violence regularly directed against striking workers

what Individualist Anarchism would "forbid" — property, not possession (i.e. any form of "ownership" not based on "occupancy and use").

Tucker, at times, admits that this is the case. For example, he once noted that *"Kropotkin says, it is true, that he would allow the individual access to the land; but he proposes to strip him of capital entirely, and as he declares a few pages further on that without capital agriculture is impossible, it follows that such access is an empty privilege not at all equivalent to the liberty of individual production."* [quoted by George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, **The Anarchist Prince**, p. 279] However, as two biographers of Kropotkin note, Tucker *"partly misinterprets his opponent, as when he suggests that the latter's idea of communist anarchism would **prevent** the individual from working on his own if he wished (a fact which Kropotkin always explicitly denied, since the basis of his theory was the voluntary principle)."* [Woodcock and Avakumovic, **Op. Cit.**, p. 280] To quote Kropotkin himself:

> *"when we see a Sheffield cutler, or a Leeds clothier working with their own tools or handloom, we see no use in taking the tools or the handloom to give to another worker. The clothier or cutler exploit nobody. But when we see a factory whose owners claim to keep to themselves the instruments of labour used by 1,400 girls, and consequently exact from the labour of these girls . . . profit . . . we consider that the people . . . are fully entitled to take possession of that factory and to let the girls produce . . . for themselves and the rest of the community . . . and take what they need of house room, food and clothing in return."* [**Act for Yourselves**, p. 105]

So Kropotkin argued that a communist-anarchist revolution would **not** expropriate the tools of self-employed workers who exploited no-one. Malatesta also argued that in an anarchist society *"the peasant [is free] to cultivate his piece of land, alone if he wishes; free is the shoe maker to remain at his last or the blacksmith in his small forge."* Thus these two very famous communist-anarchists also supported "property" but they are recognised as obviously socialists. This apparent contradiction is resolved when it is understood that for

G.1.3 What about their support for wage labour?

As we have argued in section A.2.8 and elsewhere, a consistent anarchist must oppose wage labour as this is a form of hierarchical authority. While social anarchism has drawn this logical conclusion from anarchist principles, individualist anarchism has not. While many of its supporters have expressed opposition to wage labour along with other forms hierarchical organisation, some (like Tucker) did not. The question is whether supporting wage labour disqualifies them from the socialist movement or not.

Within individualist anarchism, there are two different positions on this matter. Some of them clearly opposed wage labour as inherently exploitative and saw their socio-economic ideas as a means of ending it. Others argued that it was not wage labour **as such** which was the problem and, as a consequence, they did not expect it to disappear under anarchy. So opposition to exploitation of labour was a universal thread in Individualist Anarchist thought, as it was in the social anarchist movement. However, opposition to wage slavery was a common, but not universal, thread within the individualist anarchist tradition. As we discuss in section G.4, this is one of the key reasons why social anarchists reject individualist anarchism, arguing that this makes it both inconsistent in terms of general anarchist principles as well in the principles of individualist anarchism.

Voltairine de Cleyre in her overview of anarchism put the difference in terms of individualist anarchism and mutualist anarchism. As she put it, the *"extreme individualists"* held that the *"essential institutions of Commercialism are in themselves good, and are rendered vicious merely by the interference by the State."* This meant *"the system of employer and employed, buying and selling, banking, and all the other essential institutions of Commercialism"* would exist under their form of anarchism. Two key differences were that property in land would be modified so that it could be *"held by individuals or companies for such time and in such allotments as they use only"* and that *"wages would rise to the full measure of the individual production, and forever remain there"* as *"bosses would be hunting for men rather*

than men bosses." In other words, land would no longer owned as under capitalism and workers would no longer be exploited as profit, interest and rent could not exist and the worker would get the full product of his or her labour in wages. In contrast, mutualist anarchism *"is a modification of the program of Individualism, laying more emphasis upon organisation, co-operation and free federation of the workers. To these the trade union is the nucleus of the free co-operative group, which will obviate the necessity of an employer . . . The mutualist position on the land question is identical with that of the Individualists."* The *"material factor which accounts for such differences as there are between Individualists and Mutualists"* was due to the former being intellectual workers and so *"never know[ing] directly the oppressions of the large factory, nor mingled with workers' associations. The Mutualists had; consequently their leaning towards a greater Communism."* [*"Anarchism"*, **Exquisite Rebel**, p. 77 and p. 78]

Next, we must clarify what is meant by ***"wage labour"*** and the related term ***"wages system."*** They are not identical. Marx, for example, corrected the Gotha Programme's *"abolition of the wage system"* by saying *"it should read: system of wage labour"* (although that did not stop him demanding *"the ultimate abolition of the wages system"* elsewhere). [Marx and Engels, **Selected Works**, p. 324 and p. 226] The difference lies in whether there is communism (distribution according to need) or socialism (distribution according to work done), as in Marx's (in)famous difference between a lower and higher phase of communism. It is the difference between a distribution of goods based on deeds and one based on needs and Kropotkin famous polemic *"The collectivist Wages System"* rests on it. He argued that the wages system was based on *"renumeration to each according to the time spent in producing, while taking into account the productivity of his labour"*. In other words: *"To each according to his deeds."* [**The Conquest of Bread**, p. 162 and p. 167] Such a wages system could exist in different forms. Most obviously, and the focus of Kropotkin's critique, it could be a regime where the state owned the means of production and paid its subjects according to their labour (i.e., state socialism). It could also refer to a system of artisans, peasants and co-operatives which sold the product of their labour on a market or

> *free society. Another system, more simple . . . appears the most acceptable and likely to prevail. Members of the groups . . . if honest producers . . . will be honoured in any other group they may visit, and given whatever is necessary for their welfare and comfort."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 175]

As we discuss in section G.4, this was the same conclusion that Voltairine de Cleyre reached three decades later. This was rooted in a similar analysis of property as Proudhon and Tucker, namely *"possession"* or *"occupancy and use"*: *"The workshops will drop into the hands of the workers, the mines will fall to the miners, and the land and all other things will be controlled by those who posses and use them. There will be, there can then be no title to anything aside from its possession and use."* The likes of Parsons supported communism was not because of an opposition between "communism" and "occupancy and use" but rather, like Kropotkin, because of *"the utter impossibility of awarding to each an exact return for the amount of labour performed will render absolute communism a necessity sooner or later."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 105 and p. 176] So while capitalism *"expropriates the masses for the benefit of the privileged class . . . socialism teaches how all may possess property . . . [and] establish a universal system of co-operation, and to render accessible to each and every member of the human family the achievements and benefits of civilisation which, under capitalism, are being monopolised by a privileged class."* [August Spies, contained in Parsons, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 63–4]

All of which indicates that Tucker did not really understand communist-anarchism when he argued that communism is *"the force which compels the labourer to pool his product with the products of all and forbids him to sell his labour or his products."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 400] Rather, communist-anarchists argue that communism must be free and voluntary. In other words, a communist-anarchist society would not "forbid" anything as those who are part of it must be in favour of communism for it to work. The option of remaining outside the communist-anarchist society is there, as (to requote Kropotkin) expropriation would *"apply to everything that enables any man [or woman] . . . to appropriate the product of others' toil."* [**The Conquest of Bread**, p. 61] Thus communist-anarchism would "forbid" exactly

their labour will be free to do so; those who wish to hold the products of their labour as private property will be equally free to do so." [quoted by Wm. Gary Kline, **The Individualist Anarchists: A Critique of Liberalism**, p. 93] The similarities are as obvious as between Proudhon's and Kropotkin's arguments.

The same, it must be stressed, can be said of the *"Chicago Anarchists"* whom Tucker labelled as authoritarians. Thus we find Albert Parsons, for example, denouncing that kind of private property which allows exploitation to happen. The key problem was that *"the necessary means for the existence of all has been appropriated and monopolised by a few. The land, the implements of production and communication, the resources of life, are now held as private property, and its owners exact tribute from the propertyless"* (*"Wealth is power"*). The aim of communist-anarchism was to ensure the *"[f]ree access to the means of production [which] is the natural right of every man able and willing to work."* This implied that *"[a]ll organisation will be voluntary with the sacred right forever reserved for each individual 'to think and to rebel.'"* This meant that as far as the *"final outcome"* of social change was involved *"many disciples of anarchism believe [it] will be communism — the common possession of the resources of life and the productions of united labour. No anarchist is compromised by this statement, who does not reason out the future outlook in this way."* [**Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis**, p. 97, p. 99, p. 96 ,p. 174 and pp. 174–5] This did not exclude mutualism or individualist anarchism:

> *"Many expedients will be tried by which a just return may be awarded the worker for his exertions. The time check or labour certificate, which will be honoured at the store-houses hour for hour, will no doubt have its day. But the elaborate and complicated system of book-keeping this would necessitate, the impossibility of balancing one man's hour against another's with accuracy, and the difficulty in determining how much more one man owed natural resources, condition, and the studies and achievements of past generations, than did another, would, we believe, prevent this system from obtaining a thorough and permanent establishment. The mutual banking system . . . may be in operation in the future*

exchanged their goods with others based on labour-time notes (i.e., associational socialism).

This should not be confused with wage labour, in which a worker sells their labour to a boss. This results in a hierarchical social relationship being created in which the worker is the servant of the employer. The employer, as they own the labour of the worker, also keeps the product of said labour and as we argued in section C.2, this places the boss is in a position to get the worker to produce more than they get back in wages. In other words, wage labour is based on oppression and can result in exploitation as the bosses control both the production process (i.e., the labour of the workers) and the goods it produces. It is this which explains socialist opposition to wage labour — it is the means by which labour is exploited under capitalism (anarchist opposition to wage labour includes this but also extends it to include its denial of freedom to those subject to workplace hierarchy).

So for the purposes of this discussion ***"wage labour"*** refers to hierarchical social relationships **within** production while ***"wages system"*** refers to how goods are distributed once they are produced. Thus you can have a wages system without wage labour but not wage labour without a wages system. Communist-anarchists aim for the abolition of both wage labour and the wages system while mutualist-anarchists only aim to get rid of the first one.

The problem is that the terms are sometimes mixed up, with "wages" and "wages system" being confused with "wage labour." This is the case with the nineteenth century American labour movement which tended to use the term "wages system" to refer to wage labour and the expression *"abolition of the wages system"* to refer to the aim of replacing capitalism with a market system based on producer co-operatives. This is reflected in certain translations of Proudhon. Discussing the *"workmen's associations"* founded in France during the 1848 revolution, Proudhon noted that *"the workmen, in order to dispense with middlemen . . . , capitalists, etc., . . . have had to work a little more, and get along with less wages."* So he considered workers associations as paying "wages" and so, obviously, meant by "wages" labour income, **not** wage labour. The term "wage labour" was translated as "wages system," so we find Proudhon arguing that

the *"workmen's associations"* are *"a protest against the wage system"* and a *"denial of the rule of capitalists."* Proudhon's aim was *"Capitalistic and proprietary exploitation, stopped everywhere, the wage system abolished, equal and just exchange guaranteed."* [**The General Idea of the Revolution**, pp. 89–90, p. 98 and p. 281] This has been translated as *"Capitalist and landlord exploitation halted everywhere, wage-labour abolished."* [quoted by John Ehrenberg, **Proudhon and his Age**, p. 116]

We are sorry to belabour this point, but it is essential for understanding the anarchist position on wage labour and the differences between different schools of socialism. So before discussing the relation of individualist anarchism to wage labour we needed to clarify what is meant by the term, particularly as some people use the term wages to mean any kind of direct payment for labour and so wage labour is sometimes confused with the wages system. Similarly, the terms wage labour and wages systems are often used interchangeably when, in fact, they refer to different things and abolition the wages system can mean different things depending on who is using the expression.

So after this unfortunately essential diversion, we can now discuss the position of individualist anarchism on wage labour. Unfortunately, there is no consistent position on this issue within the tradition. Some follow social anarchism in arguing that a free society would see its end, others see no contradiction between their ideas and wage labour. We will discuss each in turn.

Joshua King Ingalls, for example, praised attempts to set up communities based on libertarian principles as *"a demonstration . . . that none need longer submit to the tyranny and exactions of the swindler and speculator in the products of others toil. The example would be speedily followed by others who would break away from the slavery of wages, and assert their independence of capital."* [*"Method of Transition for the Consideration of the True Friends of Human Rights and Human Progress,"* **Spirit of the Age**, Vol. I, No. 25, pp. 385–387] The *"present relation of 'Capital and Labor' is . . . really a mixed relation between contract and status; held by fiction of law as one of 'freedom of contract,' while it retains potentially all the essential features of serfdom. Industrially and economically, the relation is substantially the same as that*

Kropotkin's opposition to private appropriation of land can only be understood in context, namely from his discussion on the *"abolition of rent"* and the need for *"free dwellings"*, i.e. the end of landlordism. Kropotkin accepted that land could and would be occupied for personal use — after all, people need a place to live! In this he followed Proudhon, who also argued that *"Land cannot be appropriated"* (Chapter 3, part 1 of **What is Property?**). For the French anarchist, the land *"is limited in amount"* and so *"it ought not to be appropriated"* (*"let any living man dare change his right of territorial possession into the right of property, and I will declare war upon him, and wage it to the death!"*). This meant that *"the land is indispensable to our existence, — consequently a common thing, consequently insusceptible of appropriation."* Overall, *"labour has no inherent power to appropriate natural wealth."* [**What is Property?**, p. 106, p. 107 and p. 116] Proudhon, it is well known, supported the use of land (and other resources) for personal use. How, then, can he argue that the *"land cannot be appropriated"*? Is Proudhon subject to the same contradiction as Kropotkin? Of course not, once we take into account the fundamental difference between private property and possession, appropriation and use which underlies both individualist **and** communist anarchism. As Malatesta argued:

> *"Communism is a free agreement: who doesn't accept it or maintain it remains outside of it . . . Everyone has **the right to land, to the instruments of production** and all the advantages that human beings can enjoy in the state of civilisation that humanity has reached. If someone does not want to accept a communist life and the obligations that it supposes, it is their business. They and those of a like mind will come to an agreement . . . [They] will have **the same rights as the communists** over the natural wealth and accumulated products of previous generations . . . I have always spoken of free agreement, of free communism. How can there be liberty without a possible alternative?"* [our emphasis, **At the café**, pp. 69–70]

Compare this to individualist anarchist Stephen Byington's comment that *"[t]hose who wish to unite in the communistic enjoyment of*

And free and voluntary communism is ironical if one has not the right and the possibility to live in a different regime, collectivist, mutualist, individualist — as one wishes, always on condition that there is no oppression or exploitation of others." He agreed with Tucker that *"State communism, which is authoritarian and imposed, is the most hateful tyranny that has ever afflicted, tormented and handicapped mankind."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 21, p. 34, p. 103 and p. 34]

Therefore, arguing that the land and machinery should be common property does **not** preclude individuals possessing it independently of communes as both are rooted in individual possession (or "occupancy and use") rather than private property. The key anarchist difference between property and possession explains any perceived contradiction in the communist position. Thus we find Kropotkin arguing that a communist-anarchist society is one *"without having the soil, the machinery, the capital in short, in the hands of private owners. We all believe that free organisations of workers would be able to carry on production on the farm and on the factory, as well, and probably much better, than it is conducted now under the individual ownership of the capitalist."* The commune *"shall take into possession of all the soil, the dwelling-houses, the manufactures, the mines and the means of communication."* [**Act for Yourselves**, p. 103 and p. 104]

This in no way contradicts his argument that the individuals will not be forced to join a commune. This is because the aim of anarchist-communism is, to quote another of Kropotkin's works, to place *"the product reaped or manufactured at the disposal of all, leaving to each the liberty to consume them as he pleases in his own home."* [**The Place of Anarchism in the Evolution of Socialist Thought**, p. 7] Thus individual ownership meant individual ownership of resources used by others rather than individual possession of resources which individuals used. This can be seen from his comment that *"some poor fellow"* who *"has contrived to buy a house just large enough to hold his family"* would not be expropriated by the commune (*"by all means let him stay there"*) while also asserting *"[w]ho, then, can appropriate for himself the tiniest plot of ground in such a city, without committing a flagrant injustice?"* [**Conquest of Bread**, p. 90]

which existed between the chattel and his owner, and the serf and his lord." Ingalls pointed to *"the terrible fear of being 'out of a job,' which freedom of contract means to a wage-worker."* [*"Industrial Wars and Governmental Interference,"* **The Twentieth Century**, September 6, 1894, pp. 11–12] *"To reward capital,"* he argued, *"is a direct inversion of natural right, as the right of man must be acknowledged paramount to that of property . . . Any system, securing a premium to capital, however small, must result in the want, degradation and servitude of one class, and in bestowing unearned wealth and power upon another."* [*"Man and Property, their Rights and Relations,"* **Spirit of the Age**, vol. I, no. 8, pp. 114–116] Like Proudhon, he recognised that joint productive activity resulted in an output greater than that possible by the same number of people working in isolation, an output monopolised by those who owned the workplace or land in question:

> *"That the operation of any wealth increasing enterprise is co-operative needs only stating . . . and its logic in division of the product of the conjoint labour, can only be frustrated by the fiction that the worker has contracted away his share of the increase by accepting wages. But, being dispossessed of his common right to land, and to opportunity to use the common materials and forces, he can make no equitable contract and cannot be lawfully thus concluded . . . The only pretence which prevents this distribution, is the plea that the worker in accepting wages, has tacitly contracted away his share of the increase, has made a sale of his interest. Even this subterfuge fails logically however, whenever the operators reduce the rate of compensation without the full concurrence of the co-operative workers, and their just claim to joint ownership obtains again. It is altogether too late, to urge that this is a mere matter of exchange; so much money, so much labour-; and that the operator may lay off and take on whom he pleases. It never was, as economists teach, a matter of exchange, but one of co-operative endeavour."* [*"Industrial Wars and Governmental Interference,"* **The Twentieth Century**, September 6, 1894, pp. 11–12]

Unsurprisingly given this analysis he saw the need to replace wage labour (which he called *"false and immoral"*) with a better system:

"the adoption of honesty in our useful industries, and a reciprocal system of exchange, would unfold a grand and universal cooperative movement, seems so clear to me." [*"The Wage Question"*, **The American Socialist**, Vol. 2, No. 38, p. 298] This would result in a boost to economic activity:

> *"No one, say they, will do anything but for profits. But the man who works for wages has no profits; and is not only destitute of this stimulus, but his labour product is minus the profits of the capitalist, landlord, and forestaller. A rational economy would seem to require, that if any one received extra inducement to act, it should be that one who did the most labourious and repulsive work. It is thus seen, that while exorbitant profits afford an unnatural stimulus, in mere wages we have an inadequate motive to action."* [*"Labor, Wages, And Capital. Division Of Profits Scientifically Considered"*, **Brittan's Quarterly Journal**, No. I, pp. 66–79]

The land monopoly was *"the foundation of class dominion and of poverty and industrial subjection."* [quoted by Bowman N. Hall, *"Joshua K. Ingalls, American Individualist: Land Reformer, Opponent of Henry George and Advocate of Land Leasing, Now an Established Mode"*, pp. 383–96, **American Journal of Economics and Sociology**, Vol. 39, No. 4, p. 387] Without access to land, people would have no option to sell their liberty to others and, as such, the abolition of slavery and wage labour were related:

> *"The right to life involves the right to land to live and labour upon. Commercial ownership of land which enables one to exclude another from it, and thus enforces involuntary idleness, is as destructive of human freedom as ownership of the person, enforcing involuntary service . . . Liberation of the slaves would bring their labour in more direct competition with our over-crowded and poorly paid wage-workers. I did not offer this as a reason against the abolition of chattel slavery, but as a reason why the friends of emancipation from chattel slavery should unite with the friends for the emancipation of the wage worker, by restoring him the right to land, for the production of the means of life . . . The real*

large enough to hold his family. And we are going to deprive him of his hard-earned happiness, to turn him into the street! Certainly not . . . Let him work in his little garden, too." Anarchist-communism *"will make the lodger understand that he need not pay his former landlord any more rent. Stay where you are, but rent free."* [**The Conquest of Bread**, p. 61, p. 95, pp. 95–6 and p. 96]

Which, incidentally, was **exactly** the same position as Tucker (see section G.1.2) and so Kropotkin's analysis of the land monopoly was identical:

> *"when we see a peasant who is in possession of just the amount of land he can cultivate, we do not think it reasonable to turn him off his little farm. He exploits nobody, and nobody would have the right to interfere with his work. But if he possesses under the capitalist law more than he can cultivate himself, we consider that we must not give him the right of keeping that soil for himself, leaving it uncultivated when it might be cultivated by others, or of making others cultivate it for his benefit."* [**Act for Yourselves**, p. 104]

For Kropotkin, communism *"must be the work of all, a natural growth, a product of the constructive genius of the great mass. Communism cannot be imposed from above; it could not live even for a few months if the constant and daily co-operation of all did not uphold it. It must be free."* [**Anarchism**, p. 140]

Malatesta agreed. Anarchism, he stressed, *"cannot be imposed, both on moral grounds in regard to freedom, as well as because it is impossible to apply 'willy nilly' a regime of justice for all. It cannot be imposed on a minority by a majority. Neither can it be imposed by a majority on one or more minorities."* Thus *"anarchists who call themselves communists"* do so *"not because they wish to impose their particular way of seeing things on others"* but because *"they are convinced, until proved wrong, that the more human beings are joined in brotherhood, and the more closely they co-operate in their efforts for the benefit of all concerned, the greater is the well-being and freedom which each can enjoy." Imposed communism,"* he stressed, *"would be the most detestable tyranny that the human mind could conceive.*

This, it should be noted, is more than enough to disprove any claims that genuine anarchists cannot be communists.

So, the question is whether communist-anarchists are in favour of forcing people to be communists. If their communism is based on voluntary association then, according to the Individualist Anarchists themselves, it is a form of anarchism. Unsurprisingly, we discover that communist-anarchists have long argued that their communism was voluntary in nature and that working people who did not desire to be communists would be free not to be.

This position can be found in Kropotkin, from his earliest writings to his last. Thus we discover him arguing that an anarchist revolution *"would take care not to touch the holding of the peasant who cultivates it himself . . . without wage labour. But we would expropriate all land that was not cultivated by the hands of those who at present possess the land."* This was compatible with communism because libertarian communists aimed at *"the complete expropriation of all those who have the means of exploiting human beings; the return to the community of the nation of everything that in the hands of anyone can be used to exploit others."* Following Proudhon's analysis, private property was different from individual possession and as long as *"social wealth remains in the hands of the few who possess it today"* there would be exploitation. Instead, the aim was to see such social wealth currently monopolised by the capitalist class *"being placed, on the day of the revolution, at the free disposition of all the workers."* This would *"create the situation where each person may live by working freely, without being forced to sell his work and his liberty to others."* [**Words of a Rebel**, p. 214, pp. 207–8, p. 207 and p. 208] If someone desired to work outside of the commune, then that was perfectly compatible with this aim.

This position was followed in later works. The *"scope of Expropriation,"* Kropotkin argued was clear and would only *"apply to everything that enables any man — be he financier, mill-owner, or landlord — to appropriate the product of others' toil."* Thus only those forms of property based on wage labour would be expropriated. In terms of housing, the same general rule applies (*"the expropriation of dwellings contains the whole social revolution"*). Kropotkin explicitly discusses the man who *"by dint of privation has contrived to buy a house just*

issue was between the rights of labour and the rights of ownership." [quoted by Bowman N. Hall, **Op. Cit.**, p. 385]

This analysis was a common theme in pre-civil war libertarian circles. As historian James J. Martin noted, *"[t]o men like Warren and Evens chattel slavery was merely one side of a brutal situation, and although sympathetic with its opponents, refused to take part in the struggle [against slavery] unless it was extended to a wholesale attack on what they termed 'wage slavery' in the states where Negro slavery no longer existed."* [**Men Against the State**, p. 81] Such a view, we may add, was commonplace in radical working class journals and movements of the time. Thus we find George Henry Evans (who heavily influenced Individualist Anarchists like Warren and Ingalls with the ideas of land reform based on *"occupancy and use"*) writing:

> *"I was formally, like yourself, sir, a very warm advocate of the abolition of (black) slavery. This was before I saw that there was white slavery. Since I saw this, I have materially changed my views as to the means of abolishing Negro slavery. I now see clearly, I think, that to give the landless black the privilege of changing masters now possessed by the landless white, would hardly be a benefit to him in exchange for his surety of support in sickness and old age, although he is in a favourable climate."* [quoted by Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 81f]

Ingalls, likewise, *"considered the only 'intelligent' strike [by workers as] one which would be directed against wage work altogether."* For Lysander Spooner, liberty meant that the worker was entitled to *"all the fruits of his own labour"* and argued that this *"might be feasible"* only when *"every man [was] own employer or work for himself in a direct way, since working for another resulted in a portion being diverted to the employer."* [Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 153 and p. 172] To quote Spooner:

> *"When a man knows that he is to have **all** the fruits of his labour, he labours with more zeal, skill, and physical energy, than when he knows — as in the case of one labouring for wages — that a portion*

of the fruits of his labour are going to another. . . In order that each man may have the fruits of his own labour, it is important, as a general rule, that each man should be his own employer, or work directly for himself, and not for another for wages; because, in the latter case, a part of the fruits of his labour go to his employer, instead of coming to himself . . . That each man may be his own employer, it is necessary that he have materials, or capital, upon which to bestow his labour." [**Poverty: Its Illegal Causes and Legal Cure**, p. 8]

Wage labour had a negative impact on those subject to it in terms of their personal development. *"The mental independence of each individual would be greatly promoted by his pecuniary independence,"* Spooner argued. *"Freedom of thought, and the free utterance of thought, are, to a great degree, suppressed . . . by their dependence upon the will and favour of others, for that employment by which they must obtain their daily bread. They dare not investigate, or if they investigate, dare not freely avow and advocate those moral, social, religious, political, and economical truths, which alone calm rescue them from their degradation, lest they should thereby sacrifice their bread by stirring the jealousy of those out whom they are dependent, and who derive their power, wealth, and consequence from the ignorance and servitude of the poor."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 54] As we argued in section B.1, all forms of hierarchy (including wage labour) distorts the personality and harms the individual psychologically.

Spooner argued that it was state restrictions on credit and money (the *"money monopoly"* based on banks requiring specie to operate) as the reason why people sell themselves to others on the labour market. As he put it, *"a monopoly of money . . . put[s] it wholly out of the power of the great body of wealth-producers to hire the capital needed for their industries; and thus compel them . . . — by the alternative of starvation — to sell their labour to the monopolists of money . . . [who] plunder all the producing classes in the prices of their labour."* Spooner was well aware that it was capitalists who ran the state (*"the employers of wage labour . . . are also the monopolists of money"*). In his ideal society, the *"amount of money capable of being furnished . . . is so great that every man, woman, and child. . . could*

its principles. Thirdly, that distribution by need was based on altruism and, consequently, unlikely to succeed. Fourthly, that the communist-anarchists are determining how a free society would be organised which is authoritarian. Needless to say, communist-anarchists rejected these claims as being false and while we have already sketched these arguments, objections and replies in section A.3.1 it is worthwhile to repeat (and expand on) them here as these disagreements are sometimes highlighted by those who fail to stress what both schools have in common and, consequently, distort the debates and issues involved.

We will discuss these objections in the following sections.

G.2.1 Is communist-anarchism compulsory?

Some individualist anarchists argued that communist-anarchists wanted to force everyone to be communists and, as such, this proved they were not anarchists. This objection is, ironically, both the most serious **and** the easiest to refute. As Tucker noted, *"to eliminate the compulsory element from Communism is to remove, in the view of every man who values liberty above aught else, the **chief** objection to it."* [**Liberty**, no. 122, p. 5] For Henry Appleton, there was *"a class of ranting enthusiasts who falsely call themselves Anarchists"* who advocated both violence and *"levelling". "All Communism,"* he asserted, *"under whatever guise, is the natural enemy of Anarchism and a Communist sailing under the flag of Anarchism is as false a figure as could be invented."* Yet, ironically, A. H. Simpson disproved that particular claim for while attacking communism he ended by stating his *"argument applies only to aggressive Communists"* and that *"[v]oluntary Communism can exist and, if successful, flourish under Anarchy."* So, apparently, **some** kinds of communism are compatible with anarchism after all! Victor Yarrows, likewise, pointed to *"two different schools"* of communists, those who support *"voluntary Communism, which they intend to reach by the Anarchistic method"* and those who *"plot the forcible suppression of the entire system"* of private property. Only the former was *"voluntary or Anarchistic Communism."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, pp. 89–90, p. 94, p. 95 and p. 96]

"To be sure, there is a certain and very sincere comradeship that must exist between all honest antagonists of the exploitation of labour, but the word comrade cannot gloss over the vital difference between so-called Communist-Anarchism and Anarchism proper." [**Liberty**, no. 172, p. 1]

Social anarchists would agree with Tucker in part, namely the need not to gloss over vital differences between anarchist schools but most reject Tucker's attempts to exclude other tendencies from *"Anarchism proper."* Instead, they would agree with Kropotkin and, while disagreeing with certain aspects of the theory, refuse to excommunicate him from the anarchist movement. As we discuss in section G.2.5, few anarchists agreed with Tucker's sectarianism at the time and communist-anarchism was, and remains, the dominant tendency within anarchism.

It is these disagreements to which we now turn. It should be stressed, though, that the individualist anarchists, while tending to excommunicate social anarchism, also had many inclusive moments and so it makes these objections often seem petty and silly. Yes, there was certainly pettiness involved and it worked both ways and there was a certain amount of tit-for-tat, just as there is now (although to a much lesser degree these days). Anarchist-communist opposition to what some of them sadly called *"bourgeois anarchism"* was a fact, as was individualist anarchist opposition to communist-anarchism. Yet this should not blind us to what both schools had in common. However, if it were not for some opponents of anarchism (particularly those seeking to confuse libertarian ideas with propertarian ones) dragging these (mostly resolved) disagreements back into the light of day this section would be a lot shorter. As it is, covering these disagreements and showing how they could be resolved is a useful task — if only to show how individualist and communist anarchism are not as alien as some make out.

There were four main objections made to communist-anarchism by the individualists. Firstly, that communist-anarchism was compulsory and any compulsory system could not be anarchist. Secondly, that a revolution would be imposing anarchism and so contradicted

get it, and go into business for himself, or herself — either singly, or in partnerships — and be under no necessity to act as a servant, or sell his or her labour to others. All the great establishments, of every kind, now in the hands of a few proprietors, but employing a great number of wage labourers, would be broken up; for few, or no persons, who could hire capital, and do business for themselves, would consent to labour for wages for another." [**A Letter to Grover Cleveland**, p. 20, p. 48 and p. 41]

As Eunice Minette Schuster noted, Spooner's *"was a revolt against the industrial system"*, a ***"return** to **pre-industrial** society."* He *"would destroy the factory system, wage labour . . . by making every individual a small capitalist, an independent producer"* and *"turn the clock of time backwards, not forward."* This position seems to have been a common one, for *"the early American Individualists aimed to return . . . to an economic system where everyone would be a small, independent proprietor."* [**Native American Anarchism**, p. 148, pp. 151–2 and p. 157] As another commentator on individualist anarchism also noted, *"the dominant vision of the future was obviously that of a relatively modest scale of production . . . underpinned by individual, self-employed workers"* and so the individualist anarchists *"expected a society of largely self-employed workmen with no significant disparity of wealth between any of them."* [Wm. Gary Kline **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 95 and p. 104]

This is not to say that all the individualist anarchists ignored the rise of large scale industrial production. Far from it. Tucker, Greene and Lum all recognised that anarchism had to adjust to the industrial system and proposed different solutions for it. Greene and Lum followed Proudhon and advocated co-operative production while Tucker argued that mutual banks could result in a non-exploitative form of wage labour developing.

William Greene pronounced that *"[t]here is no device of the political economists so infernal as the one which ranks labour as a commodity, varying in value according to supply and demand . . . To speak of labour as merchandise is treason; for such speech denies the true dignity of man . . . Where labour is merchandise in fact . . . there man is merchandise also, whether in England or South Carolina."* This meant that, *"[c]onsidered from this point of view, the price of commodities is*

regulated not by the labour expended in their production, but by the distress and want of the labouring class. The greater the distress of the labourer, the more willing will he be to work for low wages, that is, the higher will be the price he is willing to give for the necessaries of life. When the wife and children of the labourer ask for bread, and he has none to give them, then, according to the political economists, is the community prosperous and happy; for then the rate of wages is low, and commodities command a high price in labour." [**Mutual Banking**, pp. 49–50 and p. 49]

Greene's alternative was co-operation in production, consumption and exchange. *"The triple formula of practical mutualism"*, he argued, was *"the associated workshop"* for production, the *"protective union store"* for consumption and the *"the Mutual Bank"* for exchange. All three were required, for *"the Associated Workshop cannot exist for a single day without the Mutual Bank and the Protective Union Store."* Without mutual banking, the productive co-operatives would not survive as it would not gain access to credit or at a high rate (*"How do you advance the cause of labour by putting your associated neck under the heel of capital? Your talk about 'the emancipation of labour' is wind and vapour; labour cannot be emancipated by any such process."*) Thus the *"Associated Workshop ought to be an organisation of personal credit. For what is its aim and purpose? Is it not the emancipation of the labourer from all dependence upon capital and capitalists?"* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 37, p. 34, p. 35 and p. 34] The example of the Mondragon co-operative complex in the Basque country confirms the soundness of Greene's analysis.

Here we see a similar opposition to the commodification of labour (and so labourers) within capitalism that also marks social anarchist thought. As Rocker notes, Greene *"emphasised more strongly the* ***principle of association*** *than did Josiah Warren and more so than Spooner had done."* He had a *"strong sympathy for the* ***principle of association****. In fact, the theory of Mutualism is nothing less that co-operative labour based on the cost principle."* He also *"rejected . . . the designation of labour as a* ***commodity****"* and *"constantly endeavoured to introduce his ideas into the youthful labour movement . . . so as to prevent the social problem being regarded by labour as only a question of wages."* [**Pioneers of American Freedom**,, p. 108, p.

G.2 Why do individualist anarchists reject social anarchism?

As noted in the last section, the individualist anarchists considered themselves as anti-capitalists and many called themselves mutualists and socialists. It may be objected that they opposed the more obviously socialist types of anarchism like communist-anarchism and, as a consequence, should be considered as supporters of capitalism. This is not the case as can be seen from **why** they rejected communist-anarchism. The key thing to remember is that capitalism does not equal the market. So while the individualist anarchists advocated a market economy, it *"is evident from their writings that they rejected both capitalism and communism — as did Proudhon."* [Brian Morris, *"Global Anti-Capitalism"*, pp. 170–6, **Anarchist Studies**, vol. 14, no. 2, p. 175]

It should noted that while Tucker came to excommunicate non-individualist forms of anarchism from the movement, his initial comments on the likes of Bakunin and Kropotkin were very favourable. He reprinted articles by Kropotkin from his paper **La Revolte**, for example, and discussed *"the Anarchistic philosophy, as developed by the great Proudhon and actively propagated by the heroic Bakunin and his successors on both sides of the Atlantic."* [**Liberty**, no. 26, p. 3] After the rise of the IWPA in the early 1880s and the Haymarket police riot of 1886, Tucker changed his position. Now it was a case that the *"Anarchistic social ideal"* was *"utterly inconsistent with that of those Communists who falsely call themselves Anarchists while at the same time advocating a* ***regime*** *of Archism fully as despotic as that of the State Socialists themselves."* For Tucker, real anarchists did not advocate, like communist anarchists, *"forcible expropriation"* nor *"force as a revolutionary agent and authority as a safeguard of the new social order."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, pp. 88–9] As will become clear, Tucker's summation of communist-anarchism leaves a lot to be desired. However, even after the break between individualist and communist anarchism in America, Tucker saw that both had things in common as both were socialists:

109, pp. 111–2 and p. 112] This support for producers' associations alongside mutual banks is identical to Proudhon's ideas — which is unsurprising as Greene was a declared follower of the French anarchist. Martin also indicates Greene's support for co-operation and associative labour and its relation to the wider labour movement:

> *"Coming at a time when the labour and consumer groups were experimenting with 'associated workshops' and 'protective union stores,' Greene suggested that the mutual bank be incorporated into the movement, forming what he called 'complementary units of production, consumption, and exchange . . . the triple formula of practical mutualism.'"* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 134–5]

Dyer Lum was another individualist anarchist who opposed wage labour and supported co-operative production. Like Greene, Lum took an active part in the labour movement and was a union organiser. As he put it, the Knights of Labor aimed to work for the *"abolishment of the wage-system"* as well as the right of life requiring the right to the means of living. Dyer, while rejecting their infatuation with political action, had *"the fullest sympathy"* for their aims and supported their economic measures. [**Liberty**, no. 82, p. 7] Unsurprisingly, as one historian notes, *"Lum began to develop an ideology that centred on the labour reformers' demand: 'The Wage System must go!'"* He joined *"the ideological path of labour reformers who turned to a radicalised laissez-faire explanation of wage slavery."* [Frank H. Brooks, *"Ideology, Strategy, and Organization: Dyer Lum and the American Anarchist Movement"*, pp. 57–83, **Labor History**, vol. 34, No. 1, p. 63 and p. 67] Like the communist-anarchists of the IWPA, for Lum trade unions were both the means of fighting capitalism and the way to abolish wage labour:

> *"Anarchists in Chicago tended to be much more sympathetic to class organisation, specifically unions, because they had many contacts to local unions and the Knights of Labor. The issue was not resolved at the founding conference of the IWPA, but the Chicago anarchists did manage to get a resolution passed stating that 'we view in trades unions based upon progressive principles — the*

abolition of the wages-system — the corner-stone of a better society structure than the present one.'

"Lum agreed wholeheartedly with this resolution, particularly the phrase 'abolition of the wages-system.' This phrase not only confirmed the ideological link between anarchism and labour reform, but also paralleled similar language in the declaration of principles of the Knights of Labor. By 1886, Lum had joined the Knights and he urged other anarchists, particularly individualists, to support their struggles. Lum continued to be involved with organised labour for the next seven years, seeing unions as a practical necessity in the struggle against class politics and state repression." [Brooks, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 70–1]

However, *"[d]espite the similarity between the evolution of Lum's strategy and that of the revolutionary anti-statist socialists in the IWPA, his analysis of 'wage slavery' was considerably more individualistic."* [Brooks, **Op. Cit.**, p. 66] Lum saw it as resulting primarily from state interference in the economy which reduced the options available to working class people. With a genuine free market based on free land and free credit workers would work for themselves, either as independent producers or in co-operatives (*"where capital seeks labour . . . where authority dissolves under the genial glow of liberty, and necessity for wage-labour disappears."* [Dyer D. Lum, contained in Albert Parsons, **Anarchism**, p. 153]). Thus a key element of *"Lum's anarchism was his mutualist economics, an analysis of 'wage slavery' and a set of reforms that would 'abolish the wage system.'"* [Brooks, **Op. Cit.**, p. 71] Voltairine de Cleyre, in her individualist anarchist days, concurred with her mentor Lum, arguing for a *"complete international federation of labour, whose constituent groups shall take possession of land, mines, factories, all the instruments of production, issue their own certificates of exchange, and, in short, conduct their own industry without regulative interference from law-makers or employers."* [**The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader**, p. 6]

European individualist anarchists, it should be noted had a similar perspective. As mentioned in section A.3.1, Frenchman E. Armand argued that *"ownership of the means of production and free disposal of his produce"* was *"the quintessential guarantee of the autonomy of the*

Faced with another form of anarchism which supported both, unsurprisingly communist-anarchism replaced it as the dominant form of anarchism by the start of the 20th century in America.

If these social conditions are not taken into account then the ideas of the likes of Tucker and Spooner will be distorted beyond recognition. Similarly, by ignoring the changing nature of socialism in the face of a changing society and economy, the obvious socialistic aspects of their ideas will be lost. Ultimately, to analyse the Individualist Anarchists in an a-historic manner means to distort their ideas and ideals. Moreover, to apply those ideas in a non-artisan economy without the intention of radically transforming the socio-economic nature of that society towards one based on artisan production one would mean to create a society distinctly different than one they envisioned (see section G.3 for further discussion).

predominantly anarchist world would make it statist. As Marx put it, in such socities *"the separation of the worker from the conditions of labour and from the soil . . . does not yet exist, or only sporadically, or on too limited a scale . . . Where, amongst such curious characters, is the 'field of abstinence' for the capitalists? . . . Today's wage-labourer is tomorrow's independent peasant or artisan, working for himself. He vanishes from the labour-market — but not into the workhouse."* There is a *"constant transformation of wage-labourers into independent producers, who work for themselves instead of for capital"* and so *"the degree of exploitation of the wage-labourer remain[s] indecently low."* In addition, the *"wage-labourer also loses, along with the relation of dependence, the feeling of dependence on the abstemious capitalist."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 935–6] Within such a social context, the anti-libertarian aspects of wage labour are minimised and so could be overlooked by otherwise sharp critics of authoritarianism as Tucker and Andrews.

Therefore Rocker was correct when he argued that Individualist Anarchism was *"above all . . . rooted in the peculiar social conditions of America which differed fundamentally from those of Europe."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 155] As these conditions changed, the viability of Individualist Anarchism's solution to the social problem decreased (as acknowledged by Tucker in 1911, for example — see section G.1.1). Individualist Anarchism, argued Morgan Edwards, *"appears to have dwindled into political insignificance largely because of the erosion of its political-economic base, rather than from a simple failure of strategy. With the impetus of the Civil War, capitalism and the State had too great a head start on the centralisation of economic and political life for the anarchists to catch up. This centralisation reduced the independence of the intellectual/professional and merchant artisan group that were the mainstay of the* ***Liberty*** *circle."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 85–6] While many of the individualist anarchists adjusted their own ideas to changing social circumstances, as can be seen by Greene's support for co-operatives (*"the principle of association"*) as the only means of ending exploitation of labour by capital, the main forum of the movement (**Liberty**) did not consistently subscribe to this position nor did their support for union struggles play a major role in their strategy.

individual" but only as long as *"the proprietor does not transfer it to someone else or reply upon the services of someone else in operating it."* [*"Mini-Manual of the Anarchist Individualist"*, pp. 145–9, **Anarchism**, Robert Graham (ed.), p. 147] Another French individualist anarchist, Ernest Lesigne, argued that in a free society, *"there should be no more proletaires"* as *"everybody"* would be *"proprietor."* This would result in *"The land to the cultivator. The mine to the miner. The tool to the labourer. The product to the producer."* [quoted approvingly by Tucker, **Instead of a Book**, p. 17 and p. 18] Lesigne considered *"co-operative production"* as *"a solution to the great problem of social economy, — the delivery of products to the consumer at cost"* and as a means of producers to *"receive the value of your product, of your effort, without having to deal with a mass of hucksters and exploiters."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 123]

In other words, many individualist anarchists envisioned a society without wage labour and, instead, based upon peasant, artisan and associated/co-operative labour (as in Proudhon's vision). In other words, a **non**-capitalist society or, more positively, a (libertarian) socialist one as the workers' own and control the means of production they use. Like social anarchists, they opposed capitalist exploitation, wage slavery and property rights. However, not all individualist anarchists held this position, a notable exception being Benjamin Tucker and many of his fellow contributors of **Liberty**. Tucker asserted against the common labour movement and social anarchist equation of capitalism with wage slavery that *"[w]ages is not slavery. Wages is a form of voluntary exchange, and voluntary exchange is a form of Liberty."* [**Liberty**, no. 3, p. 1]

The question how is, does this support of wage labour equate to support for capitalism? The answer to that depends on whether you see such a system as resulting in the exploitation of labour. If socialism is, to requote Kropotkin, *"understood in its wide, generic, and true sense"* as *"an effort to* ***abolish*** *the exploitation of labour by capital"* then even those Individualist Anarchists who support wage labour must be considered as socialists due to their opposition to usury. It is for this reason we discover Rudolf Rocker arguing that Stephan P. Andrews was *"one of the most versatile and significant exponents of libertarian socialism"* in the USA in spite of his belief that

"the specific cause of the economic evil [of capitalism] is founded not on the existence of the wage system" but, rather, on the exploitation of labour, *"on the unjust compensation of the worker"* and the usury that *"deprives him of a part of his labour."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 85 and pp. 77–8] His opposition to exploitation meant he was a socialist, an opposition which individualist anarchism was rooted in from its earliest days and the ideas of Josiah Warren:

> *"The aim was to circumvent the exploitation inherent in capitalism, which Warren characterised as a sort of 'civilised cannibalism,' by exchanging goods on co-operative rather than supply and demand principles."* [J.W. Baker, *"Native American Anarchism,"* pp. 43–62, **The Raven**, vol. 10, no. 1, p. 51]

So should not be implied that the term socialist is restricted simply to those who oppose wage labour. It should be noted that for many socialists, wage labour is perfectly acceptable — as long as the state is the boss. As Tucker noted, State Socialism's *"principle plank"* is *"the confiscation of **all** capital by the State"*, so stopping *"the liberty of those non-aggressive individuals who are thus prevented from carrying on business for themselves or assuming relations between themselves as employer and employee if they prefer, and who are obliged to become employees of the State against their will."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 378] Of course, such a position is not a very good form of socialism which is why anarchists have tended to call such schemes state-capitalism (an analysis which was confirmed once the Soviet Union was created, incidentally). If state bureaucrats own and control the means of production, it would not come as too great a surprise if they, like private bosses, did so to maximise their incomes and minimise that of their employees.

Which explains why the vast majority of anarchists do not agree with Tucker's position. Individualist anarchists like Tucker considered it as a truism that in their society the exploitation of labour could not exist. Thus even if some workers did sell their liberty, they would still receive the full product of their labour. As Tucker put it, *"when interest, rent and profit disappear under the influence of free money, free land, and free trade, it will make no difference whether*

desire to maintain and improve their relatively free positions, had also the incentive to oppose the growing encroachments of the capitalist State." [Morgan Edwards, *"Neither Bombs Nor Ballots: **Liberty** & the Strategy of Anarchism"*, pp. 65–91, **Benjamin R. Tucker and the Champions of Liberty**, Coughlin, Hamilton and Sullivan (eds.), p. 85]

Individualist anarchism is obviously an aspect of a struggle between the system of peasant and artisan production of early America and the state encouraged system of capitalism. Indeed, their analysis of the change in American society from one of mainly independent producers into one based mainly upon wage labour has many parallels with Karl Marx's analysis of *"primitive accumulation"* in the Americas and elsewhere presented in chapter 33 of **Capital** (*"The Modern Theory of Colonization"*). It is this process which Individualist Anarchism protested against, the use of the state to favour the rising capitalist class. So the social context the individualist anarchists lived in must be remembered. America at the times was a predominantly rural society and industry was not as developed as it is now wage labour would have been minimised. As Wm. Gary Kline argues:

> *"Committed as they were to equality in the pursuit of property, the objective for the anarchist became the construction of a society providing equal access to those things necessary for creating wealth. The goal of the anarchists who extolled mutualism and the abolition of all monopolies was, then, a society where everyone willing to work would have the tools and raw materials necessary for production in a non-exploitative system . . . the dominant vision of the future society . . . [was] underpinned by individual, self-employed workers."* [**The Individualist Anarchists: A Critique of Liberalism**, p. 95]

This social context helps explain why some of the individualist anarchists were indifferent to the issue of wage labour, unlike most anarchists. A limited amount of wage labour within a predominantly self-employed economy does not make a given society capitalist any more than a small amount of governmental communities within an

of course, the USA **was** catching up). For example, there was still vast tracks of unclaimed land (once the Native Americans had been removed, of course) available to workers. In the towns and cities, artisan production *"remained important . . . into the 1880s"* [David Montgomery, **The Fall of the House of Labour**, p. 52] Until the 1880s, the possibility of self-employment was a real one for many workers, a possibility being hindered by state action (for example, by forcing people to buy land via Homestead Acts, restricting banking to those with specie, suppressing unions and strikes and so on — see section F.8.5). Little wonder that Individualist Anarchism was considered a real solution to the problems generated by the creation of capitalism in the USA and that, by the 1880s, Communist Anarchist became the dominant form of anarchism. By that time the transformation of America was nearing completion and self-employment was no longer a real solution for the majority of workers.

This social context is essential for understanding the thought of people like Greene, Spooner and Tucker. For example, as Stephen L. Newman points out, Spooner *"argues that every man ought to be his own employer, and he envisions a world of yeoman farmers and independent entrepreneurs."* [**Liberalism at Wit's End**, p. 72] This sort of society was in the process of being destroyed when Spooner was writing. Needless to say, the Individualist Anarchists did not think this transformation was unstoppable and proposed, like other sections of US labour, various solutions to problems society faced. Given the commonplace awareness in the population of artisan production and its advantages in terms of liberty, it is hardly surprising that the individualist anarchists supported "free market" solutions to social problems. For, given the era, this solution implied workers' control and the selling of the product of labour, not the labourer him/herself. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the *"greatest part [of **Liberty**'s readers] proves to be of the professional/intellectual class: the remainder includes independent manufacturers and merchants, artisans and skilled workers . . . The anarchists' hard-core supporters were the socio-economic equivalents of Jefferson's yeoman-farmers and craftsworkers: a freeholder-artisan-independent merchant class allied with freethinking professionals and intellectuals. These groups — in Europe as well as in America — had socio-economic independence, and through their*

men work for themselves, or are employed, or employ others. In any case they can get nothing but that wage for their labour which free competition determines." [**Op. Cit.**, p. 274] Whether this could actually happen when workers sell their liberty to an employer is, of course, where other anarchists disagree. The owner of a workplace does not own simply his (labour) share of the total product produced within it. He (and it usually is a he) owns everything produced while workers get their wages. The employer, therefore, has an interest in getting workers to produce as much as they can during the period they are employed. As the future price of the commodity is unknown, it is extremely unlikely that workers will be able to accurately predict it and so it is unlikely that their wages will always equal the cost price of the product. As such, the situation that an individual worker would get his "natural" wage would be unlikely and so they would be exploited by their employer. At best, it could be argued that in the long run wages will rise to that level but, as Keynes noted, in the long run we are all dead and Tucker did not say that the free market would end exploitation eventually. So individual ownership of large-scale workplaces would not, therefore, end exploitation.

In other words, if (as Tucker argued) individualist anarchism desires *"[n]ot to abolish wages, but to make **every** man dependent upon wages and to secure every man his **whole** wages"* then this, logically, can only occur under workers control. We discuss this in more detail in section G.4.1, where we also indicate how social anarchists consider Tucker's position to be in a basic contradiction to anarchist principles. Not only that, as well as being unlikely to ensure that labour received its full product, it also contradicts his own principle of ***"occupancy and use"***. As such, while his support for non-exploitative wage labour does not exclude him from the socialist (and so anarchist) movement, it does suggest an inconsistent anarchism, one which can (fortunately) be easily made consistent by bringing it fully in line with its own stated ideals and principles.

Finally, we must note that there is a certain irony in this, given how keenly Tucker presented himself as a follower of Proudhon. This was because Proudhon agreed with Tucker's anarchist opponents, arguing continually that wage labour needed to be replaced by co-operative production to end exploitation and oppression in

production. Proudhon and his followers, in the words of one historian, thought workers *"should be striving for the abolition of salaried labour and capitalist enterprise."* This was by means of co-operatives and their *"perspective was that of artisan labour . . . The manager/employer (patron) was a superfluous element in the production process who was able to deny the worker just compensation for his labour merely by possessing the capital that paid for the workshop, tools, and materials."* [Julian P. W. Archer, **The First International in France, 1864–1872**, p. 45] As Frank H. Brooks put it, *"Lum drew from the French anarchist Proudhon . . . a radical critique of classical political economy and . . . a set of positive reforms in land tenure and banking . . . Proudhon paralleled the native labour reform tradition in several ways. Besides suggesting reforms in land and money, Proudhon urged producer cooperation."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 72] We discuss this aspect of Proudhon's ideas in section G.4.2.

So, to conclude, it can be seen that individualist anarchists hold two positions on wage labour. Some are closer to Proudhon and the mainstream anarchist tradition than others while a few veer extremely close to liberalism. While all are agreed that their system would end the exploitation of labour, some of them saw the possibility of a non-exploitative wage labour while others aimed for artisan and/or co-operative production to replace it. Suffice to say, while few social anarchists consider non-exploitative wage labour as being very likely it is the opposition to non-labour income which makes individualist anarchism socialist (albeit, an inconsistent and flawed version of libertarian socialism).

G.1.4 Why is the social context important in evaluating Individualist Anarchism?

When reading the work of anarchists like Tucker and Warren, we must remember the social context of their ideas, namely the transformation of America from a pre-capitalist to a capitalist society. The individualist anarchists, like other socialists and reformers, viewed

> *"The Proudhonist anarchy that Tucker represented was largely superseded in Europe by revolutionary collectivism and anarcho-communism. The same changeover occurred in the US, although mainly among subgroups of working class immigrants who were settling in urban areas. For these recent immigrants caught up in tenuous circumstances within the vortex of emerging corporate capitalism, a revolutionary anarchy had greater relevancy than go slow mutualism."* [**Libertarianism: Bogus Anarchy**]

Murray Bookchin argued that the development of communist-anarchism *"made it possible for anarchists to adapt themselves to the new working class, the industrial proletariat, . . . This adaptation was all the more necessary because capitalism was now transforming not only European [and American] society but the very nature of the European [and American] labour movement itself."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 259] In other words, there have been many schools of socialism, all influenced by the changing society around them. As Frank H. Brooks notes, *"before Marxists monopolised the term, socialism, was a broad concept, as indeed Marx's critique of the 'unscientific' varieties of socialism in the **Communist Manifesto** indicated. Thus, when Tucker claimed that the individualist anarchism advocated in the pages of **Liberty** was socialist, he was not engaged in obfuscation or rhetorical bravado."* [*"Libertarian Socialism"*, pp. 75–7, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 75]

Looking at the society in which their ideas developed (rather than ahistorically projecting modern ideas backward) we can see the socialist core of Individualist Anarchism. It was, in other words, an un-Marxian form of socialism (as was mutualism and communist-anarchism). Thus, to look at the Individualist Anarchists from the perspective of "modern socialism" (say, communist-anarchism or Marxism) means to miss the point. The social conditions which produced Individualist Anarchism were substantially different from those existing today (and those which produced communist-anarchism and Marxism) and so what was a possible solution to the *"social problem"* **then** may not be one suitable **now** (and, indeed, point to a different kind of socialism than that which developed later). Moreover, Europe in the 1870s was distinctly different than America (although,

with horror the rise of capitalism and its imposition on an unsuspecting American population, supported and encouraged by state action (in the form of protection of private property in land, restricting money issuing to state approved banks using specie, government orders supporting capitalist industry, tariffs, suppression of unions and strikes, and so on). In other words, the individualist anarchists were a response to the social conditions and changes being inflicted on their country by a process of *"primitive accumulation"* (see section F.8).

The non-capitalist nature of the early USA can be seen from the early dominance of self-employment (artisan and peasant production). At the beginning of the 19th century, around 80% of the working (non-slave) male population were self-employed. The great majority of Americans during this time were farmers working their own land, primarily for their own needs. Most of the rest were self-employed artisans, merchants, traders, and professionals. Other classes — employees (wage workers) and employers (capitalists) in the North, slaves and planters in the South — were relatively small. The great majority of Americans were independent and free from anybody's command — they owned and controlled their means of production. Thus early America was, essentially, a pre-capitalist society. However, by 1880, the year before Tucker started **Liberty**, the number of self-employed had fallen to approximately 33% of the working population. Now it is less than 10%. [Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, **Schooling in Capitalist America**, p. 59] As the US Census described in 1900, until about 1850 *"the bulk of general manufacturing done in the United States was carried on in the shop and the household, by the labour of the family or individual proprietors, with apprentice assistants, as contrasted with the present system of factory labour, compensated by wages, and assisted by power."* [quoted by Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello, **Common Sense for Hard Times**, p. 35] Thus the post-civil war period saw *"the factory system become general. This led to a large increase in the class of unskilled and semi-skilled labour with inferior bargaining power. Population shifted from the country to the city . . . It was this milieu that the anarchism of Warren-Proudhon wandered."* [Eunice Minette Schuster, **Native American Anarchism**, pp. 136–7]

So, in this evolution of socialism we can place the various brands of anarchism. Individualist anarchism is clearly a form of artisanal socialism (which reflects its American roots) while communist anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism are forms of industrial (or proletarian) socialism (which reflects its roots in Europe). Proudhon's mutualism bridges these extremes, advocating as it does artisan socialism for small-scale industry and agriculture and co-operative associations for large-scale industry (which reflects the state of the French economy in the 1840s to 1860s). With the changing social conditions in the US, the anarchist movement changed too, as it had in Europe. Hence the rise of communist-anarchism in addition to the more native individualist tradition and the change in Individualist Anarchism itself:

> *"Green emphasised more strongly the **principle of association** than did Josiah Warren and more so than Spooner had done. Here too Proudhon's influence asserts itself . . . In principle there is essentially no difference between Warren and Proudhon. The difference between them arises from a dissimilarity of their respective environments. Proudhon lived in a country where the sub-division of labour made co-operation in social production essential, while Warren had to deal with predominantly small individual producers. For this reason Proudhon emphasised the **principle of association** far more than Warren and his followers did, although Warren was by no means opposed to this view."* [Rudolf Rocker, **Pioneers of American Freedom**, p. 108]

As noted in section A.3, Voltairine de Cleyre subscribed to a similar analysis, as does another anarchist, Peter Sabatini, more recently:

> *"The chronology of anarchism within the United States corresponds to what transpired in Europe and other locations. An organised anarchist movement imbued with a revolutionary collectivist, then communist, orientation came to fruition in the late 1870s. At that time, Chicago was a primary centre of anarchist activity within the USA, due in part to its large immigrant population . . .*

It is **only** in this context that we can understand individualist anarchism, namely as a revolt against the destruction of working-class independence and the growth of capitalism, accompanied by the growth of two opposing classes, capitalists and proletarians. This transformation of society by the rise of capitalism explains the development of **both** schools of anarchism, social and individualist. *"American anarchism,"* Frank H. Brooks argues, *"like its European counterpart, is best seen as a nineteenth century development, an ideology that, like socialism generally, responded to the growth of industrial capitalism, republican government, and nationalism. Although this is clearest in the more collectivistic anarchist theories and movements of the late nineteenth century (Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta, communist anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism), it also helps to explain anarchists of early- to mid-century such as Proudhon, Stirner and, in America, Warren. For all of these theorists, a primary concern was the 'labour problem' — the increasing dependence and immiseration of manual workers in industrialising economies."* [*"Introduction"*, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 4]

The Individualist Anarchists cannot be viewed in isolation. They were part of a wider movement seeking to stop the capitalist transformation of America. As Bowles and Ginitis note, this *"process has been far from placid. Rather, it has involved extended struggles with sections of U.S. labour trying to counter and temper the effects of their reduction to the status of wage labour."* The rise of capitalism *"marked the transition to control of work by nonworkers"* and *"with the rise of entrepreneurial capital, groups of formerly independent workers were increasingly drawn into the wage-labour system. Working people's organisations advocated alternatives to this system; land reform, thought to allow all to become an independent producer, was a common demand. Worker co-operatives were a widespread and influential part of the labour movement as early as the 1840s . . . but failed because sufficient capital could not be raised."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 59 and p. 62] It is no coincidence that the issues raised by the Individualist Anarchists (land reform via *"occupancy-and-use"*, increasing the supply of money via mutual banks and so on) reflect these alternatives raised by working class people and their organisations. Little wonder Tucker argued that:

> *"Make capital free by organising credit on a mutual plan, and then these vacant lands will come into use . . . operatives will be able to buy axes and rakes and hoes, and then they will be independent of their employers, and then the labour problem will solved."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 321]

Thus the Individualist Anarchists reflect the aspirations of working class people facing the transformation of an society from a pre-capitalist state into a capitalist one. Changing social conditions explain why Individualist Anarchism must be considered socialistic. As Murray Bookchin noted:

> *"Th[e] growing shift from artisanal to an industrial economy gave rise to a gradual but major shift in socialism itself. For the artisan, socialism meant producers' co-operatives composed of men who worked together in small shared collectivist associations, although for master craftsmen it meant mutual aid societies that acknowledged their autonomy as private producers. For the industrial proletarian, by contrast, socialism came to mean the formation of a mass organisation that gave factory workers the collective power to expropriate a plant that no single worker could properly own. These distinctions led to two different interpretations of the 'social question' . . . The more progressive craftsmen of the nineteenth century had tried to form networks of co-operatives, based on individually or collectively owned shops, and a market knitted together by a moral agreement to sell commodities according to a 'just price' or the amount of labour that was necessary to produce them. Presumably such small-scale ownership and shared moral precepts would abolish exploitation and greedy profit-taking. The class-conscious proletarian . . . thought in terms of the complete socialisation of the means of production, including land, and even of abolishing the market **as such**, distributing goods according to needs rather than labour . . . They advocated **public** ownership of the means of production, whether by the state or by the working class organised in trade unions."* [**The Third Revolution**, vol. 2, p. 262]

emergence of wage-labour was based on the fact that workers had to purchase access to the land from those who monopolised it by means of state action — which was precisely what the individualist anarchists opposed. Wage labour, after all, first developed **on the land** not with the rise of the factory system. Even Rothbard, we hope, would not have been so crass as to say that landlordism was an enormous boon for those poor workers as it saved them from starvation for, after all, one of the great things about landlordism is that poor workers did not have to purchase their own land; that could be left to the landlords.

The landless workers, therefore, had little option but to seek work from those who monopolised the land. Over time, increasing numbers found work in industry where employers happily took advantage of the effects of the land monopoly to extract as much work for as little pay as possible. The profits of both landlord and capitalist exploitation were then used to accumulate capital, reducing the bargaining power of the landless workers even more as it became increasingly difficult to set-up in business due to natural barriers to competition. It should also be stressed that once forced onto the labour market, the proletariat found itself subjected to numerous state laws which prevented their free association (for example, the banning of unions and strikes as conspiracies) as well as their ability to purchase their own capital and tools. Needless to say, the individualist anarchists recognised this and considered the ability of workers to be able to purchase their own capital and tools as an essential reform and, consequently, fought against the money monopoly. They reasoned, quite rightly, that this was a system of class privilege designed to keep workers in a position of dependency on the landlords and capitalists, which (in turn) allowed exploitation to occur. This was also the position of many workers, who rather than consider capitalism a boon, organised to defend their freedom and to resist exploitation — and the state complied with the wishes of the capitalists and broke that resistance.

Significantly, Tucker and other individualist anarchists saw state intervention has a result of capital manipulating legislation to gain an advantage on the so-called free market which allowed them to exploit labour and, as such, it benefited the **whole** capitalist class (*"If,*

Revolution). Equally, many social anarchists are pacifists or believe that anarchism can come about by means of reform and not revolution. Thus the reform/revolution divide does not quite equal the individualist/social anarchist divide, although it is fair to say that most individualist anarchists were and are reformists.

So, it must be stressed that most individualist anarchists did not oppose revolution **as such**. Rather they considered it as both unlikely to succeed and unnecessary. They rejected revolutionary expropriation *"not because we deem such expropriation unjust, invasive, criminal, but solely because we are we are convinced that there is a better, safer, and wiser way for labour to pursue with a view to emancipation."* With mutual banks, they argued, it became possible *"for labour to gradually lift itself into the position to command its full share of wealth, and absorb in the shape of wages all that is now alienated from it in the forms of profit, interest proper, and monopoly rent."* [Yarrows, **Liberty**, no. 171, p. 5] As such, their aims were the same as communist-anarchism (namely to end exploitation of labour and the abolition of the state) but their means were different. Both, however, were well aware that the capitalism could not be ended by political action (i.e., voting). *"That the privileged class"*, argued William Bailie *"will submit to expropriation, even if demanded at the ballot-box, is a delusion possible only to him who knows not the actual situation confronting the people of this country."* [*"The Rule of the Monopolists"*, **Liberty**, no. 368, p. 4]

However, there was one area of life that was excluded from their opposition to expropriation: the land. As Yarros put it, *"the Anarchists' position on the land question, which involves the dispossession of present landlords and the entire abolition of the existing system of land tenure . . . They wish to expropriate the landlords, and allow the landless to settle on land which does not now belong to them."* This *"[o]ne exception . . . we are compelled to make"* involved *"believ[ing] that the landless **will**, individually and for the purpose of occupying ownership, take possession of the land not personally occupied and used by landlord, and **will** protect each other in the possession of such lands against any power hostile to them."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 171, p. 4 and p. 5]

Yet as subsequent history has shown, landlords are just as likely to organise and support violent counter-revolutionary movements

in the face of land reform as are industrial capitalists. Both sections of the capitalist class supported fascists like Mussolini, Franco and Pinochet in the face of even moderate attempts at expropriation by either reformist governments or the peasants themselves. So as the history of land reform shows, landlords are more than willing to turn to death squads and fascism to resist it. To suggest that squatting land would provoke less capitalist violence than, say, expropriating workplaces simply cannot be supported in the light of 20th century history. The choice, then, is simply to allow the landlords and capitalists to keep their property and try to but it back from them or use political or revolutionary means to expropriate them. Communist-anarchists thought that the mutual banks would not work and so supported expropriation by means of a mass revolt, a social revolution.

As such, communist-anarchists are not revolutionaries by choice but rather because they do not think capitalism can be reformed away nor that the ruling class will freely see their power, property and privileges taken from them. They reject the mutualist and individualist anarchist suggestion that mutual banks could provide enough credit to compete capitalism away and, even if it could, the state would simply outlaw it. This perspective does **not** imply, as many enemies of anarchist suggest, that social anarchists always seek to use violence but rather that we are aware that the state and capitalists will use violence against any effective protest. So, the methods social anarchists urge — strikes, occupations, protests, and so forth — are all inherently non-violent but resistance by the state and capitalist class to these acts of rebellion often results in violence (which is dutifully reported as violence by the rebels, not the powerful, in the media). That the capitalist class will use violence and force to maintain its position *"is demonstrated in every strike which threatens their power; by every lock-out, by every discharge; by every black-list."* [Parsons, **Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis**, p. 105] Ultimately, the workings of capitalism itself provokes resistance to it. Even if no anarchist participated in, or help organise, strikes and protests they would occur anyway and the state would inevitably intervene to defend "law and order" and "private property" — as the history of every class system proves. So communist-

and so was any capital bought with the profits made from such goods. But, as he says, this aspect of right-"libertarian" ideology *"sounds very radical"* but *"in practice it is less so."* Apparently, theft **is** property! Not to mention that nine tenths of property is currently possessed (i.e., used) not by its "rightful owners" but rather those who by economic necessity have to work for them. This is a situation the law was designed to protect, including (apparently) a so-called "libertarian" one.

This wider impact is key. As we indicated in section F.8, state coercion (particularly in the form of the land monopoly) was essential in the development of capitalism. By restricting access to land, working class people had little option but to seek work from landlords and capitalists. Thus the stolen land ensured that workers were exploited by the landlord and the capitalist and so the exploitation of the land monopoly was spread throughout the economy, with the resulting exploited labour being used to ensure that capital accumulated. For Rothbard, unlike the individualist anarchists, the land monopoly had limited impact and can be considered separately from the rise of capitalism:

> *"the emergence of wage-labour was an enormous boon for many thousands of poor workers and saved them from starvation. If there is no wage labour, as there was not in most production before the Industrial Revolution, then each worker must have enough money to purchase his own capital and tools. One of the great things about the emergence of the factory system and wage labour is that poor workers did not have to purchase their own capital equipment; this could be left to the capitalists."* [**Konkin on Libertarian Strategy**]

Except, of course, **before** the industrial revolution almost all workers did, in fact, have their own capital and tools. The rise of capitalism was based on what the exclusion of working people from the land by means of the land monopoly. Farmers were barred, by the state, from utilising the land of the aristocracy while their access to the commons was stripped from them by the imposition of capitalist property rights by the state. Thus Rothbard is right, in a sense. The

*toilers would be justified in expropriating, not alone the landlords, who notoriously have no equitable titles to their lands, but **all** the financial lords and rulers, all the millionaires and very wealthy individuals. . . Almost all possessors of great wealth enjoy neither what they nor their ancestors rightfully acquired (and if Mr. Herbert wishes to challenge the correctness of this statement, we are ready to go with him into a full discussion of the subject). . .*

"If he holds that the landlords are justly entitled to their lands, let him make a defence of the landlords or an attack on our unjust proposal." [quoted by Carl Watner, *"The English Individualists As They Appear In Liberty,"* pp. 191–211, **Benjamin R. Tucker and the Champions of Liberty**, Coughlin, Hamilton and Sullivan (eds.), pp. 199–200]

It could be argued, in reply, that some "anarcho"-capitalists do argue that stolen property should be returned to its rightful owners and, as a result, do sometimes argue for land reform (namely, the seizing of land by peasants from their feudal landlords). However, this position is, at best, a pale shadow of the individualist anarchist position or, at worse, simply rhetoric. As leading "anarcho"-capitalist Walter Block pointed out:

"While this aspect of libertarian theory sounds very radical, in practice it is less so. This is because the claimant always needs proof. Possession is nine tenths of the law, and to overcome the presumption that property is now in the hands of its rightful owners required that an evidentiary burden by overcome. The further back in history was the initial act of aggression (not only because written evidence is less likely to be available), the less likely it is that there can be proof of it." [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 54–5]

Somewhat ironically, Block appears to support land reform in Third World countries in spite of the fact that the native peoples have no evidence to show that they are the rightful owners of the land they work. Nor does he bother himself to wonder about the wider social impact of such theft, namely in the capital that was funded using it. If the land was stolen, then so was its products

anarchism does not produce the class war, the class war produces communist-anarchism.

In addition, Tucker thought that a violent revolution would not succeed for without an awareness of anarchist ideals in the general public, the old system would soon return. *"If government should be abruptly and entirely abolished tomorrow,"* he argued, *"there would probably ensue a series of physical conflicts about land and many other things, ending in reaction and a revival of the old tyranny."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 329] Almost all revolutionary anarchists would agree with his analysis (see section A.2.16). Such anarchists have always seen revolution as the end of a long process of self-liberation and self-education through struggle. All anarchists reject the idea that all that was required was to eliminate the government, by whatever means, and the world would be made right. Rather, we have seen anarchism as a social movement which, like anarchy itself, requires the participation of the vast majority to be viable. Hence anarchist support for unions and strikes, for example, as a means of creating more awareness of anarchism and its solutions to the social question (see section J.1). This means that communist-anarchists do not see revolution as imposing anarchism, but rather as an act of self-liberation by a people sick of being ruled by others and act to free themselves of tyranny.

So, in summary, in terms of tactics there is significant overlap between the strategies advocated by both social and individualist anarchists. The key difference is that the former do not think that the latter's mutual banks make expropriation unnecessary while the individualist anarchists think that expropriation of capital would provoke the state into attacking and it would be unlikely that the rebels would win. Both, however, can agree that violence should only be used in self-defence and that for most of the time it is not required as other forms of resistance are far more effective.

G.2.3 Does communist-anarchism aim to destroy individuality?

Then there is the desirability of communism as such. A. H. Simpson argued that *"Anarchism is egoism; Communism is altruism"* and altruism in any form will involve *"the duty of the individual to sacrifice himself to God, the State, the community, the 'cause' of anything, superstition that always makes for tyranny. This idea, whether under Theocracy or Communism, will result in the same thing — always authority."* He did, though, argue that in a free society people who *"desire to have their individuality submerged in the crowd"* would be free to set up their own communes. [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 92 and p. 94] This flows from Joshua Warren's experiences on Robert Owen's co-operative community **New Harmony** and the conclusions he drew from its collapse. Warren essentially began the individualist anarchist tradition by concluding that any sort of collective emphasis was bound to fail because it prevented people from sufficiently addressing individual concerns, since supposed collective concerns would inevitably take their place. The failure of these communities was rooted in a failure to understand the need for individual self-government. Thus, for Warren, it *"seemed that the differences of opinion, tastes, and purposes* ***increased*** *just in proportion to the demand for conformity"* and so it *"appeared that it was nature's own inherent law of diversity that had conquered us . . . Our 'united interests' were directly at war with the individualities of persons and circumstances."* [quoted by George Woodcock, **Anarchism**, p. 390] Thus, property within the limits of occupancy and use, and within an economy dominated by the cost principle or some close equivalent, had to be a necessary protection for the individual from both the potential tyranny of the group (communism) and from inequalities in wealth (capitalism).

In return, communist-anarchists would agree. *"Phalansteries,* argued Kropotkin, *"are repugnant to millions of human beings."* While most people feel *"the necessity of meeting his [or her] fellows for the pursue of common work . . . it is not so for the hours of leisure"* and such communities *"do not take this into account."* Thus a commune system

> *"Quite independently of these tendencies [of individualist anarchism] . . . the anti-state bourgeoisie (which is also anti-statist, being hostile to any social intervention on the part of the State to protect the victims of exploitation — in the matter of working hours, hygienic working conditions and so on), and the greed of unlimited exploitation, had stirred up in England a certain agitation in favour of pseudo-individualism, an unrestrained exploitation. To this end, they enlisted the services of a mercenary pseudo-literature . . . which played with doctrinaire and fanatical ideas in order to project a species of 'individualism' that was absolutely sterile, and a species of 'non-interventionism' that would let a man die of hunger rather than offend his dignity."* [Max Nettlau, **A Short History of Anarchism**, p. 39]

This perspective can be seen when Tucker denounced Herbert Spencer as a champion of the capitalistic class for his vocal attacks on social legislation which claimed to benefit working class people but staying strangely silent on the laws passed to benefit (usually indirectly) capital and the rich. "Anarcho"-capitalism is part of that tradition, the tradition associated with a capitalism which no longer needs obvious state intervention as enough wealth as been accumulated to keep workers under control by means of market power.

In other words, there is substantial differences between the victims of a thief trying to stop being robbed and be left alone to enjoy their property and the successful thief doing the same! Individualist Anarchist's were aware of this. For example, Victor Yarros stressed this key difference between individualist anarchism and the proto-"libertarian" capitalists of "voluntaryism":

> *"[Auberon Herbert] believes in allowing people to retain all their possessions, no matter how unjustly and basely acquired, while getting them, so to speak, to swear off stealing and usurping and to promise to behave well in the future. We, on the other hand, while insisting on the principle of private property, in wealth honestly obtained under the reign of liberty, do not think it either unjust or unwise to dispossess the landlords who have monopolised natural wealth by force and fraud. We hold that the poor and disinherited*

have been applied ensure that these contradictions would have been minimised. If they had been applied, a genuine anarchist society of self-employed workers would, in all likelihood, have been created (at least at first, whether the market would increase inequalities is a moot point between anarchists). Thus we find Tucker criticising Henry George by noting that he was *"enough of an economist to be very well aware that, whether it has land or not, labour which can get no capital — that is, which is oppressed by capital — cannot, without accepting the alternative of starvation, refuse to reproduce capital for the capitalists."* Abolition of the money monopoly will increase wages, so allowing workers to *"steadily lay up money, with which he can buy tools to compete with his employer or to till his bit of land with comfort and advantage. In short, he will be an independent man, receiving what he produces or an equivalent thereof. How to make this the lot of all men is the labour question. Free land will not solve it. Free money, supplemented by free land, will."* [**Liberty**, no. 99 , p. 4 and p. 5] Sadly, Rothbard failed to reach George's level of understanding (at least as regards his beloved capitalism).

Which brings us another source of disagreement, namely on the effects of state intervention and what to do about it. As noted, during the rise of capitalism the bourgeoisie were not shy in urging state intervention against the masses. Unsurprisingly, working class people generally took an anti-state position during this period. The individualist anarchists were part of that tradition, opposing what Marx termed *"primitive accumulation"* in favour of the pre-capitalist forms of property and society it was destroying.

However, when capitalism found its feet and could do without such obvious intervention, the possibility of an "anti-state" capitalism could arise. Such a possibility became a definite once the state started to intervene in ways which, while benefiting the system as a whole, came into conflict with the property and power of individual members of the capitalist and landlord class. Thus social legislation which attempted to restrict the negative effects of unbridled exploitation and oppression on workers and the environment were having on the economy were the source of much outrage in certain bourgeois circles:

does not imply communal living (although such arrangements *"can please some"*). Rather it was a case of *"isolated apartments . . . Isolation, alternating with time spent in society, is the normal desire of human nature."* [**The Conquest of Bread**, pp. 123–4] Kropotkin in his discussion on why intentional communities like that of Owen's failed repeated many of Warren's points and stressed that they were based on the authoritarian spirit and violated the need for individual liberty, isolation and diversity (see his **Small Communal Experiments and Why They Fail**). The aim of communist-anarchism is to create a communist society based on individual liberty and freely joined functional groups. It does not aim to burden individuals with communal issues beyond those required by said groupings. Thus self-managed communities involve managing only those affairs which truly rest in joint needs, with the interests of individuals and other groups only being discussed if they are harming others and other means of resolving disputes have failed. Whether this can actually happen, of course, will be discovered in a free society. If it did not, the communist-anarchists would be the first to seek alternative economic and social arrangements which guaranteed liberty.

It should also go without saying that no communist-anarchist sought a system by which individuals would have their personality destroyed. As Kropotkin stressed:

> *"Anarchist Communism maintains that most valuable of all conquests — individual liberty — and moreover extends it and gives it a solid basis — economic liberty — without which political liberty is delusive; it does not ask the individual who has rejected god, god the king, and god the parliament, to give himself unto himself a god more terrible than any of the preceding — god the Community, or to abdicate upon its alter his independence, his will, his tastes, and to renew the vow of asceticism which he formally made before the crucified god. It says to him, on the contrary, 'No society is free so long as the individual is not so! Do not seek to modify society by imposing upon it an authority which shall make everything right; if you do you will fail . . . abolish the conditions which allow some to monopolise the fruit of labour of others.'"* [**The Place of Anarchism in Socialistic Evolution**, pp. 14–5]

Of course, denying that communist-anarchists seek such a regime is not the same as saying that such a regime would not be created by accident. Unsurprisingly, communist-anarchists have spent some time arguing that their system would not be subject to such a degeneration as its members would be aware of the danger and act to stop it (see, for example, section I.5.6). The key to understanding communist-anarchism is to recognise that it is based on free access. It does not deny an individual (or even a group of individuals) the ability to work their own land or workplace, it simply denies them the ability to exclude others from it unless they agree to be their servant first. The sharing of the products of labour is considered as the means to reduce even more any authority in society as people can swap workplaces and communities with ease, without worrying about whether they can put food on their table or not.

Of course, there is slight irony to Simpson's diatribe against communism in that it implicitly assumes that private property is not a god and that individuals should respect it regardless of how it impacts on them and their liberty. Would it not be altruism of the worse kind if working class people did not simply take the land and capital they need to survive rather than sell their labour and liberty to its owners? So why exclude private property (even in a modified form) from individualist anarchist scorn? As we argue in section G.6 this was Max Stirner's position and, fundamentally, the communist-anarchist one too. Communist-anarchists oppose private property as it generates relationships of authority and these harm those subject to them and, as a consequence, they argue that it is in the **self**-interest of the individuals so oppressed to expropriate private property and share the whole world.

The issue of sharing and what it implied also caused some individualist anarchists to oppose it. Henry Appleton argued that *"all communism rests upon an artificial attempt to level things, as against a social development resting upon untrammelled individual sovereignty."* The *"true Anarchist . . . is opposed to all manner of artificial levelling machines. How pitiful the ignorance which accuses him of wanting to level everything, when the very integral thought of Anarchism is opposed to levelling!"* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 89] However, as we have indicated in section A.2.5, all genuine anarchists, **including**

There are, of course, overlaps between individualist anarchism and "anarcho"-capitalism, just as there are overlaps between it and Marxism (and social anarchism, of course). However, just as a similar analysis of capitalism does not make individualist anarchists Marxists, so apparent similarities between individualist anarchism and "anarcho"-capitalism does not make the former a forerunner of the latter. For example, both schools support the idea of "free markets." Yet the question of markets is fundamentally second to the issue of property rights for what is exchanged on the market is dependent on what is considered legitimate property. In this, as Rothbard noted, individualist anarchists and "anarcho"-capitalists differ and different property rights produce different market structures and dynamics. This means that capitalism is not the only economy with markets and so support for markets cannot be equated with support for capitalism. Equally, opposition to markets is **not** the defining characteristic of socialism. As such, it **is** possible to be a market socialist (and many socialist are) as "markets" and "property" do not equate to capitalism as we proved in sections G.1.1 and G.1.2 respectively.

One apparent area of overlap between individualist anarchism and "anarcho"-capitalism is the issue of wage labour. As we noted in section G.1.3, unlike social anarchists, some individualist anarchists were not consistently against it. However, this similarity is more apparent than real as the individualist anarchists were opposed to exploitation and argued (unlike "anarcho"-capitalism) that in their system workers bargaining powers would be raised to such a level that their wages would equal the full product of their labour and so it would not be an exploitative arrangement. Needless to say, social anarchists think this is unlikely to be the case and, as we discuss in section G.4.1, individualist anarchist support for wage labour is in contradiction to many of the stated basic principles of the individualist anarchists themselves. In particular, wage labour violates "occupancy and use" as well as having more than a passing similarity to the state.

However, these problems can be solved by consistently applying the principles of individualist anarchism, unlike "anarcho"-capitalism, and that is why it is a real (if inconsistent) school of anarchism. Moreover, the social context these ideas were developed in and would

and interest as valid incomes. In contrast, all Anarchists consider these as exploitation and agree with the Tucker when he argued that *"**[w]hoever** contributes to production is alone entitled. **What** has no rights that **who** is bound to respect. **What** is a thing. **Who** is a person. Things have no claims; they exist only to be claimed. The possession of a right cannot be predicted of dead material, but only a living person."* [quoted by Wm. Gary Kline, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 73]

This, we must note, is the fundamental critique of the capitalist theory that capital is productive. In and of themselves, fixed costs do not create value. Rather value is creation depends on how investments are developed and used once in place. Because of this the Individualist Anarchists, like other anarchists, considered non-labour derived income as usury, unlike "anarcho"-capitalists. Similarly, anarchists reject the notion of capitalist property rights in favour of possession (including the full fruits of one's labour). For example, anarchists reject private ownership of land in favour of a "occupancy and use" regime. In this we follow Proudhon's **What is Property?** and argue that *"property is theft"* as well as *"despotism"*. Rothbard, as noted in the section F.1, rejected this perspective.

As these ideas are an **essential** part of anarchist politics, they cannot be removed without seriously damaging the rest of the theory. This can be seen from Tucker's comments that *"**Liberty** insists . . . [on] the abolition of the State and the abolition of usury; on no more government of man by man, and no more exploitation of man by man."* [quoted by Eunice Schuster, **Native American Anarchism**, p. 140] Tucker indicates here that anarchism has specific economic **and** political ideas, that it opposes capitalism along with the state. Therefore anarchism was never purely a "political" concept, but always combined an opposition to oppression with an opposition to exploitation. The social anarchists made exactly the same point. Which means that when Tucker argued that *"**Liberty** insists on Socialism . . . — true Socialism, Anarchistic Socialism: the prevalence on earth of Liberty, Equality, and Solidarity"* he knew exactly what he was saying and meant it wholeheartedly. [**Instead of a Book**, p. 363] So because "anarcho"-capitalists embrace capitalism and reject socialism, they cannot be considered anarchists or part of the anarchist tradition.

communist-anarchists, are opposed to making or treating people as if they were identical. In fact, the goal of communist-anarchism has always been to ensure and protect the natural diversity of individuals by creating social conditions in which individuality can flourish. The fundamental principle of communism is the maxim ***"from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs."*** There is nothing there about *"levelling"* or (which amounts to the same thing), *"equality of outcome."* To make an obvious point: *"If one person need medical treatment and another is more fortunate, they are not to be granted an equal amount of medical care, and the same is true of other human needs.* Hence Chomsky talks of the *"authentic left"* who recognise that individuals *"will differ in their aspirations, their abilities, and their personal goals"* and seek a society which allows that diversity to fully flourish. [**The Chomsky Reader**, p. 191 and p. 192] In the words of Rudolf Rocker:

> *"a far greater degree of economic equality . . . would . . . be no guarantee against political and social oppression. Economic equality alone is not social liberation. It is just this which Marxism and all the other schools of authoritarian Socialism have never understood. Even in prison, in the cloister, or in the barracks one finds a fairly high degree of economic equality, as all the inmates are provided with the same dwelling, the same food, the same uniform, and the same tasks . . . [this was] the vilest despotism . . . the human being was merely the automation of a higher will, on whose decisions he had not the slightest influence. It was not without reason that Proudhon saw in a 'Socialism' without freedom the worst form of slavery. The urge for social justice can only develop properly and be effective, when it grows out of man's sense of personal freedom and is based on that. In other words **Socialism will be free, or it will not be at all**. In its recognition of this lies the genuine and profound justification for the existence of Anarchism."* [**Anarcho-Syndicalism**, p. 14]

Therefore, anarchists *"demand the abolition of all economic monopolies and the common ownership of the soil and all other means of*

production, the use of which must be available to all without distinction; for personal and social freedom is conceivable only on the basis of equal economic advantages for everybody. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 11] As Kropotkin stressed, anarchists recognise that there are two types of communism, libertarian and authoritarian and *"our communism, is not that of the authoritarian school: it is anarchist communism, communism without government, free communism. It is a synthesis of the two chief aims pursued by humanity since the dawn of its history — economic freedom and political freedom."* It is based on *"everybody, contributing for the common well-being to the full extent of his [or her] capacities . . . enjoy[ing] also from the common stock of society to the fullest possible extent of his [or her] needs."* Thus it is rooted in individual tastes and diversity, on *"putting the wants of the individual* ***above*** *the valuation of the services he [or she] has rendered, or might render, to society."* Thus communism was *"the best basis for individual development and freedom"* and so *"the full expansion of man's faculties, the superior development of what is original in him, the greatest fruitfulness of intelligences, feeling and will."* It would ensure the *"most powerful development of individuality, of individual originality."* The *"most powerful development of individuality, of individual originality . . . can only be produced when the first needs of food and shelter are satisfied"* and this was why *"communism and anarchism"* are *"a necessary complement to one another."* [**Anarchism**, p. 61, p. 59, p. 60 and p. 141]

So, communist-anarchists would actually agree with individualist anarchists like Simpson and oppose any notion of *"levelling"* (artificial or otherwise). The aim of libertarian communism is to increase diversity and individuality, **not** to end it by imposing an abstract equality of outcome or of consumption that would utter ignore individual tastes or preferences. Given that communist-anarchists like Kropotkin and Malatesta continually stressed this aspect of their ideas, Simpson was simply confusing libertarian and authoritarian forms of communism for polemical effect rather than presenting a true account of the issues at hand.

A firmer critique of communist-anarchism can be found when Tucker argued that *"Kropotkinian anarchism means the liberty to eat, but not to cook; to drink, but not to brew; to wear, but not to spin; to dwell,*

between the two systems for all the attempts of "anarcho"-capitalists to appropriate the legacy of the likes of Tucker.

G.3.2 What are the differences between "anarcho"-capitalism and individualist anarchism?

The key differences between individualist anarchism and "anarcho"-capitalism derive from the fact the former were socialists while the latter embrace capitalism with unqualified enthusiasm. Unsurprisingly, this leans to radically different analyses, conclusions and strategies. It also expresses itself in the vision of the free society expected from their respective systems. Such differences, we stress, all ultimately flow from fact that the individualist anarchists were/are socialists while the likes of Rothbard are wholeheartedly supporters of capitalism.

As scholar Frank H. Brooks notes, *"the individualist anarchists hoped to achieve socialism by removing the obstacles to individual liberty in the economic realm."* This involved making equality of opportunity a reality rather than mere rhetoric by ending capitalist property rights in land and ensuring access to credit to set-up in business for themselves. So while supporting a market economy *"they were also advocates of socialism and critics of industrial capitalism, positions that make them less useful as ideological tools of a resurgent capitalism."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 111] Perhaps unsurprisingly, most right-"libertarians" get round this problem by hiding or downplaying this awkward fact. Yet it remains essential for understanding both individualist anarchism and why "anarcho"-capitalism is not a form of anarchism.

Unlike both individualist and social anarchists, "anarcho"-capitalists support capitalism (a "pure" free market type, which has never existed although it has been approximated occasionally as in 19th century America). This means that they totally reject the ideas of anarchists with regards to property and economic analysis. For example, like all supporters of capitalists they consider rent, profit

between the two forms of anarchism has deepened with time," she asserts. This was *"[l]argely due to the path breaking work of Murray Rothbard"* and so, unlike genuine individualist anarchism, the new *"individualist anarchism"* (i.e., "anarcho"-capitalism) *"is no longer inherently suspicious of profit-making practices, such as charging interest. Indeed, it embraces the free market as the voluntary vehicle of economic exchange"* (does this mean that the old version of it did not, in fact, embrace *"the free market"* after all?) This is because it *"draws increasingly upon the work of Austrian economists such as Mises and Hayek"* and so *"it draws increasingly farther away from left anarchism"* and, she fails to note, the likes of Warren and Tucker. As such, it would be churlish to note that "Austrian" economics was even more of a *"foreign import"* much at odds with American anarchist traditions as communist anarchism, but we will! After all, Rothbard's support of usury (interest, rent and profit) would be unlikely to find much support from someone who looked forward to the development of *"an attitude of hostility to usury, in any form, which will ultimately cause any person who charges more than cost for any product to be regarded very much as we now regard a pickpocket."* [Tucker, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 155] Nor, as noted above, would Rothbard's support for an *"Archist"* (capitalist) land ownership system have won him anything but dismissal nor would his judge, jurist and lawyer driven political system have been seen as anything other than rule by the few rather than rule by none.

Ultimately, it is a case of influences and the kind of socio-political analysis and aims it inspires. Unsurprisingly, the main influences in individualist anarchism came from social movements and protests. Thus poverty-stricken farmers and labour unions seeking monetary and land reform to ease their position and subservience to capital all plainly played their part in shaping the theory, as did the Single-Tax ideas of Henry George and the radical critiques of capitalism provided by Proudhon and Marx. In contrast, "anarcho"-capitalism's major (indeed, predominant) influence is "Austrian" economists, an ideology developed (in part) to provide intellectual support against such movements and their proposals for reform. As we will discuss in the next section, this explains the quite fundamental differences

but not to build; to give, but not to sell or buy; to think, but not to print; to speak, but not to hire a hall; to dance, but not to pay the fiddler." [quoted by George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, **Op. Cit.**, p. 279] Yet even this contains a distortion, as it is clear that communist-anarchism is based on the assumption that members of a communist society **would** have to contribute (if physically able, of course) to the common resources in order to gain access to them. The notion that Kropotkin thought that a communist society would only take into account *"to each according to their needs"* while ignoring *"from each according to their abilities"* seems hard to square with his published arguments. While it is true that individual contributions would not be exactly determined, it is false to suggest that communist-anarchism ignores the obvious truism that in order to consume you first need to produce. Simply put, if someone seeks to live off the work of others in a free society those within it would be asked to leave and provide for themselves. By their actions, they have shown that they do not want to live in a communist commune and those who do wish to live as communists would feel no particular need to provide for those who do not (see section I.4.14).

This can be seen when Tucker quoted **Freedom** saying that *"in the transitional revolutionary period communities and individuals may be obliged in self-defence to make it their rule that 'He who will not work neither shall he eat.' It is not always possible for us to act up to our principles and . . . expediency may force us to confine our Communism to those who are willing to be our brothers and equals."* Somewhat incredibly, Tucker stated *"I am not quite clear as to the meaning of this, and would ask to be enlightened on the question whether those objectionable individuals are to be let alone to live in their own way, or whether the State Socialistic plan would be pursued in dealing with them."* [**Liberty**, no. 149, p. 1] Clearly, his anti-communism got in the way of any attempt to build bridges or acknowledge that communist-anarchists had no desire (as noted above) to force people to be communists nor to have the "communism" of those unwilling (rather than unable) to contribute imposed on them!

G.2.4 What other reasons do individualists give for rejecting communist-anarchism?

The other differences are not as major. Some individualist anarchists took umbrage because the communist-anarchists predicted that an anarchist society would take a communal form, so prescribing the future development of a free society in potentially authoritarian ways. As James Martin summarised, it was Tucker's *"belief that 'in all subsequent social co-operation no manner of organisation or combination whatsoever shall be binding upon any individual without his consent,' and to decide in advance upon a communal structure violated this maxim from the start."* [**Men Against the State**, p. 222] Others took umbrage because the communist-anarchists refused to spell out in sufficient detail exactly how their vision would work.

Communist-anarchists reply in four main ways. Firstly, the individualist anarchists themselves predicted roughly how they thought a free society would look and function, namely one on individual ownership of production based around mutual banks. Secondly, communist-anarchists presented any vision as one which was consistent with libertarian principles, i.e., their suggestions for a free society was based on thinking about the implication of anarchist principles in real life. There seemed little point in advocating anarchism if any future society would be marked by authority. To not discuss how a free society could work would result in authoritarian solutions being imposed (see section I.2.1). Thirdly, they were at pains to link the institutions of a free society to those already being generated within capitalism but in opposition to its hierarchical nature (see section I.2.3). Fourthly, presenting more than a sketch would be authoritarian as it is up to a free people to create their own society and solve their problems themselves (see section I.2).

Clearly, A. H. Simpson was wrong when he asserted that communist-anarchists argued thusly: *"Abolish private property by instituting compulsory Communism, and the State will go."* No communist-anarchist has ever argued for compulsory communism. Somewhat ironically, Simpson went on to argue that *"difference between Communism and Anarchy is plainly observable in their methods. Abolish*

a mockery of individual freedom. In other words, that while the market may be free the individuals within it would not be.

McElroy partly admits this, saying that *"the two schools of anarchism had enough in common to shake hands when they first met. To some degree, they spoke a mutual language. For example, they both reviled the State and denounced capitalism. But, by the latter, individualist anarchists meant 'state-capitalism' the alliance of government and business."* Yet this *"alliance of government and business"* has been the only kind of capitalism that has ever existed. They were well aware that such an alliance made the capitalist system what it was, i.e., a system based on the exploitation of labour. William Bailie, in an article entitled *"The Rule of the Monopolists"* simply repeated the standard socialist analysis of the state when he talked about the *"gigantic monopolies, which control not only our industry, but all the machinery of the State, — legislative, judicial, executive, — together with school, college, press, and pulpit."* Thus the *"preponderance in the number of injunctions against striking, boycotting, and agitating, compared with the number against locking-out, blacklisting, and the employment of armed mercenaries."* The courts could not ensure justice because of the *"subserviency of the judiciary to the capitalist class . . . and the nature of the reward in store for the accommodating judge."* Government *"is the instrument by means of which the monopolist maintains his supremacy"* as the law-makers *"enact what he desires; the judiciary interprets his will; the executive is his submissive agent; the military arm exists in reality to defend **his** country, protect **his** property, and suppress **his** enemies, the workers on strike."* Ultimately, *"when the producer no longer obeys the State, his economic master will have lost his power."* [**Liberty**, no. 368, p. 4 and p. 5] Little wonder, then, that the individualist anarchists thought that the end of the state and the class monopolies it enforces would produce a radically different society rather than one essentially similar to the current one but without taxes. Their support for the "free market" implied the end of capitalism and its replacement with a new social system, one which would end the exploitation of labour.

She herself admits, in a roundabout way, that "anarcho"-capitalism is significantly different that individualist anarchism. *"The schism*

It goes without saying that almost all "anarcho"-capitalists follow Rothbard in being totally opposed to labour unions, strikes and other forms of working class protest. As such, the individualist anarchists, just as much as the "left" anarchists McElroy is so keen to disassociate them from, argued that *"[t]hose who made a profit from buying or selling were class criminals and their customers or employees were class victims. It did not matter if the exchanges were voluntary ones. Thus, left anarchists hated the free market as deeply as they hated the State."* [McElroy, **Op. Cit.**] Yet, as any individualist anarchist of the time would have told her, the "free market" did not exist because the capitalist class used the state to oppress the working class and reduce the options available to choose from so allowing the exploitation of labour to occur. Class analysis, in other words, was not limited to *"foreign"* anarchism, nor was the notion that making a profit was a form of exploitation (usury). As Tucker continually stressed: *"Liberty will abolish interest; it will abolish profit; it will abolish monopolistic rent; it will abolish taxation; it will abolish the exploitation of labour."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 157]

It should also be noted that the "left" anarchist opposition to the individualist anarchist "free market" is due to an analysis which argues that it will not, in fact, result in the anarchist aim of ending exploitation nor will it maximise individual freedom (see section G.4). We do not "hate" the free market, rather we love individual liberty and seek the best kind of society to ensure free people. By concentrating on markets being free, "anarcho"-capitalism ensures that it is wilfully blind to the freedom-destroying similarities between capitalist property and the state (as we discussed in section F.1). An analysis which many individualist anarchists recognised, with the likes of Dyer Lum seeing that replacing the authority of the state with that of the boss was no great improvement in terms of freedom and so advocating co-operative workplaces to abolish wage slavery. Equally, in terms of land ownership the individualist anarchists opposed any voluntary exchanges which violated *"occupancy and use"* and so they, so, *"hated the free market as deeply as they hated the State."* Or, more correctly, they recognised that voluntary exchanges can result in concentrations of wealth and so power which made

the State . . . that bulwark of the robber system . . . says the Anarchist. Abolish private property, the source of all evil and injustice, parent of the State, says the Communist." [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 92] Yet communist-anarchists do **not** subscribe to the position of abolishing private property first, **then** the state. As we note when refuting the opposite assertion by Marxists in section H.2.4, anarchists like Kropotkin and Malatesta followed Bakunin in arguing that **both** needed to be abolished at the same time. Kropotkin, for example, did not divide economic and political issues, for him it was a case of *"the political and economic principles of Anarchism."* [**Anarchism**, p. 159]

This unity of economic and political aspects of anarchism exists within Individualist Anarchism too, but it is hidden by the unfortunately tendency of its supporters of discussing certain forms of private property as state enforced monopolies. So to a large degree many of the disagreements between the two schools of anarchism were rooted in semantics. Thus we find William Bailie arguing that the anarchist-communist *"assumption that rent and interest are due to private property is not proven"* as *"both rent and interest are the result of monopoly, of restricted individual liberty."* [**Liberty**, no. 261, p. 1] In other words, rent is caused because the state enforces property rights which the individualist anarchists disagree with. Thus when individualist anarchists argue they seek to get rid of the state, they **also** mean the end of capitalist property rights (particularly in land). That this can lead to confusion is obvious as, in the usual sense of the word, rent **is** caused by private property. The communists-anarchists, in contrast, generally used the term "private property" and "property" in the same way that Proudhon used it in 1840, namely property which allows its owner to exploit the labour of another. As such, they had no problem with those who laboured by themselves on their own property.

The lack of a market in communist-anarchism led some individualist anarchists like William Bailie to argue that it *"ignores the necessity for any machinery to adjust economic activities to their ends."* Either its supporters *"exalt a chaotic and unbalanced condition"* or they will produce an *"insufferable hierarchy."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 116] Thus, to use modern terms, either communist-anarchists

embrace central planning or their system simply cannot produce goods to meet demand with over-production of unwanted goods and under-production of desired ones. Needless to say, communist-anarchists argue that it is possible to bring the demand and production of goods into line without requiring centralised planning (which would be inefficient and a dire threat to individual freedom — Kropotkin's arguments against state capitalism were proved right in Soviet Russia). It would require a system of horizontal links between self-managed workplaces and the transmission of appropriate information to make informed decisions (see section I for a discussion of some possibilities).

Another objection to communist-anarchism was raised by Proudhon during his debates with the state communists of his time who also raised the slogan *"from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs."* For Proudhon, wages in the sense of payment for labour would still exist in a anarchist society. This was because of two main reasons. Firstly, rewarding labour for its actual work done would be a great incentive in ensuring that it was efficiently done and meet the consumers requirements. Secondly, he considered communism as being potentially authoritarian in that society would determine what an individual should contribute and consume. As he put it:

> *"Who then shall determine the capacity? who shall be the judge of the needs?*
>
> *"You say that my capacity is 100: I maintain that it is only 90. You add that my needs are 90: I affirm that they are 100. There is a difference between us of twenty upon needs and capacity. It is, in other words, the well-known debate between* ***demand*** *and* ***supply****. Who shall judge between the society and me?*
>
> *"If the society persists, despite my protests, I resign from it, and that is all there is to it. The society comes to an end from lack of associates.*
>
> *"If, having recourse to force, the society undertakes to compel me; if it demands from me sacrifice and devotion, I say to it: Hypocrite! you promised to deliver me from being plundered by capital and*

Berkman *"would like to live on terms of equality with his fellows, doing his share of work for not more than his share of pay."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, pp. 307–8] Clearly, Tucker was well aware of the class struggle and why, while not supporting such actions, violence occurred when fighting it.

As Victor Yarros summarised, for the individualist anarchists the *"State is the servant of the robbers, and it exists chiefly to prevent the expropriation of the robbers and the restoration of a free and fair field for legitimate competition and wholesome, effective voluntary cooperation."* [*"Philosophical Anarchism: Its Rise, Decline, and Eclipse"*, pp. 470–483, **The American Journal of Sociology**, vol. 41, no. 4, p. 475] For "anarcho"-capitalists, the state exploits all classes subject to it (perhaps the rich most, by means of taxation to fund welfare programmes and legal support for union rights and strikes).

So when McElroy states that, *"Individualist anarchism rejects the State because it is the institutionalisation of force against peaceful individuals"*, she is only partly correct. While it may be true for "anarcho"-capitalism, it fails to note that for the individualist anarchists the modern state was the institutionalisation of force by the capitalist class to deny the working class a free market. The individualist anarchists, in other words, like social anarchists also rejected the state because it imposed certain class monopolies and class legislation which ensured the exploitation of labour by capital — a significant omission on McElroy's part. *"Can it be soberly pretended for a moment that the State . . . is purely a defensive institution?"* asked Tucker. *"Surely not . . . you will find that a good nine-tenths of existing legislation serves . . . either to prescribe the individual's personal habits, or, worse still, to create and sustain commercial, industrial, financial, and proprietary monopolies which deprive labour of a large part of the reward that it would receive in a perfectly free market."* [Tucker, **Instead of a Book**, pp. 25–6] In fact:

> *"As long as a portion of the products of labour are appropriated for the payment of fat salaries to useless officials and big dividends to idle stockholders, labour is entitled to consider itself defrauded, and all just men will sympathise with its protest."* [Tucker, **Liberty**, no. 19, p. 1]

anarchists were simply acknowledging the reality of the situation — as did, it must be stressed, the individualist anarchists. As we noted in section G.1, the individualist anarchists were well aware that there was a class war going on, one in which the capitalist class used the state to ensure its position (the individualist anarchist *"knows very well that the present State is an historical development, that it is simply the tool of the property-owning class; he knows that primitive accumulation began through robbery bold and daring, and that the freebooters then organised the State in its present form for their own self-preservation."* [A.H. Simpson, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 92]). Thus workers had a right to a genuinely free market for *"[i]f the man with labour to sell has not this free market, then his liberty is violated and his property virtually taken from him. Now, such a market has constantly been denied . . . to labourers of the entire civilised world. And the men who have denied it are . . . Capitalists . . . [who] have placed and kept on the statue-books all sorts of prohibitions and taxes designed to limit and effective in limiting the number of bidders for the labour of those who have labour to sell."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 454] For Joshua King Ingalls, *"[i]n any question as between the worker and the holder of privilege, [the state] is certain to throw itself into the scale with the latter, for it is itself the source of privilege, the creator of class rule."* [quoted by Bowman N. Hall, *"Joshua K. Ingalls, American Individualist: Land Reformer, Opponent of Henry George and Advocate of Land Leasing, Now an Established Mode,"* pp. 383–96, **American Journal of Economics and Sociology**, Vol. 39, No. 4, p. 292] Ultimately, the state was *"a police force to regulate the people in the interests of the plutocracy."* [Ingalls, quoted by Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 152]

Discussing Henry Frick, manager of the Homestead steelworkers who was shot by Berkman for using violence against striking workers, Tucker noted that Frick did not *"aspire, as I do, to live in a society of mutually helpful equals"* but rather it was *"his determination to live in luxury produced by the toil and suffering of men whose necks are under his heel. He has deliberately chosen to live on terms of hostility with the greater part of the human race."* While opposing Berkman's act, Tucker believed that he was *"a man with whom I have much in common, — much more at any rate than with such a man as Frick."*

> *power; and now, in the name of equality and fraternity, in your turn, you plunder me. Formerly, in order to rob me, they exaggerated my capacity and minimised my needs. They said that products cost me so little, that I needed so little to live! You are doing the same thing. What difference is there then between fraternity and the wage system?"* [**The General Idea of the Revolution**, pp. 96–7]

Yet even here Proudhon shows the libertarian communist solution to this possible problem, namely free association. If there were a conflict between individuals within a free commune in terms of their contributions and consumption then the individual is free to leave (and, conversely, the commune is free to expel an individual). Said individuals can seek another communist commune and join it or, conversely, work for themselves in their present location. Ultimately, free association means the freedom **not** to associate and libertarian communism is rooted in that truism. Thus, communist-anarchists would agree with the French anarchism when he *"conclude[d] that a single association can never include all the workmen in one industry, nor all industrial corporations, nor, **a fortiori**, a nation of 36 millions of men; therefore that the principle of association does not offer the required solution."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 85] Like Proudhon, communist-anarchists base their anarchism on federations of associations and communes, with these federations and associations formed as and when they were required for joint activity. Thus the federation of communist communes and workplaces would play a similar role as Proudhon's *"agro-industrial federation,"* namely to end *"wage labour or economic servitude"* and *"to protect"* against *"capitalist and financial feudalism, both within them and from the outside"* as well as ensuring *"increasing equality"* and the *"application of application on the largest possible scale of the principles of mutualism"* and *"economic solidarity."* [**The Principle of Federation**, p. 70 and p. 71]

The key difference, of course, between Proudhon's mutualism and Kropotkin's communism was (as latter stressed) that the former supported payment for labour in terms of money or labour-cheques while the latter argued that this would be a modification of the wages system rather than its total abolition. Yet by divorcing payment for

labour from its consumption, Proudhon argued that communism, like monopoly, made it difficult to determine exactly the costs involved in producing goods. The French anarchist argued that there was no way of knowing the real cost of anything produced outside the market. This could be seen from monopolies within capitalism:

> *"How much does the tobacco sold by the administration cost? How much is it worth? You can answer the first of these questions: you need only call at the first tobacco shop you see. But you can tell me nothing about the second, because you have no standard of comparison and are forbidden to verify by experiment the items of cost of administration . . . Therefore the tobacco business, made into a monopoly, necessarily costs society more than it brings in; it is an industry which, instead of subsisting by its own product, lives by subsidies."* [**System of Economical Contradictions**, pp. 232–3]

Communist-anarchists reply by noting that the price of something is not independent of the degree of monopoly of an industry and so natural barriers to competition can skew prices. Equally, competition can be a race to the bottom and that competitors can undermine their own working conditions and enjoyment of life in order to gain an advantage (or, more often, simply survive) on the market. As we argue in section I.1.3, markets have a tendency to undermine equality and solidarity and, over time, erode the basis of a free society.

As an aside, Proudhon's argument has obvious similarities with von Mises' much later attack on communism which is usually called the "socialist calculation argument" (see section I.1.1). As discussed in section I.1.2, von Mises' argument was question begging in the extreme and our critique of that applies equally to Proudhon's claims. As such, communist-anarchists argue that market prices usually do **not** reflect the real costs (in terms of their effects on individuals, society and the planet's ecology) — even those prices generated by non-capitalist markets. Moreover, due to Proudhon's opposition to rent and interest, his own argument could be turned against mutualism and individualist anarchism as followers of von Mises have done. Without rent and interest, they argue, there is no way of identifying

union ought to have its company of sharpshooters." [quoted by Richard Jules Oestreicher, **Solidarity and Fragmentation**, p. 200 and p. 135]

While the violent rhetoric of the Chicago anarchists was used at their trial and is remembered (in part because enemies of anarchism take great glee in repeating it), the state and employer violence which provoked it has been forgotten or ignored. Unless this is mentioned, a seriously distorted picture of both communist-anarchism **and** capitalism are created. It is significant, of course, that while the **words** of the Martyrs are taken as evidence of anarchism's violent nature, the actual violence (up to and including murder) against strikers by state and private police apparently tells us nothing about the nature of the state or capitalist system (Ward Churchill presents an excellent summary such activities in his article *"From the Pinkertons to the PATRIOT Act: The Trajectory of Political Policing in the United States, 1870 to the Present"* [**CR: The New Centennial Review**, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 1–72]).

So, as can be seen, McElroy distorts the context of anarchist violence by utterly ignoring the far worse capitalist violence which provoked it. Like more obvious statists, she demonises the resistance to the oppressed while ignoring that of the oppressor. Equally, it should also be noted Tucker rejected violent methods to end class oppression not out of principle, but rather strategy as there *"was no doubt in his mind as to the righteousness of resistance to oppression by recourse to violence, but his concern now was with its expedience . . . he was absolutely convinced that the desired social revolution would be possible only through the utility of peaceful propaganda and passive resistance."* [James J. Martin, **Men Against the State**, p. 225] For Tucker *"as long as freedom of speech and of the press is not struck down, there should be no resort to physical force in the struggle against oppression."* [quoted by Morgan Edwards, *"Neither Bombs Nor Ballots: Liberty & the Strategy of Anarchism"*, pp. 65–91, **Benjamin R. Tucker and the Champions of Liberty**, Coughlin, Hamilton and Sullivan (eds.), p. 67] Nor should we forget that Spooner's rhetoric could be as bloodthirsty as Johann Most's at times and that American individualist anarchist Dyer Lum was an advocate of insurrection.

As far as class analysis does, which *"divided society into economic classes that were at war with each other"*, it can be seen that the "left"

firing indiscriminately in the panic after the explosion. [Paul Avrich, **The Maymarket Tragedy**, pp. 32–4, p. 189, p. 210, and pp. 208–9] As for Berkman's assassination attempt, this was provoked by the employer's Pinkerton police opening fire on strikers, killing and wounding many. [Emma Goldman, **Living My Life**, vol. 1, p. 86]

In other words, it was **not** foreign anarchists or alien ideas which associated anarchism with violence but, rather, the reality of American capitalism. As historian Eugenia C. Delamotte puts it, *"the view that anarchism stood for violence . . . spread rapidly in the mainstream press from the 1870s"* because of *"the use of violence against strikers and demonstrators in the labour agitation that marked these decades — struggles for the eight-hour day, better wages, and the right to unionise, for example. Police, militia, and private security guards harassed, intimidated, bludgeoned, and shot workers routinely in conflicts that were just as routinely portrayed in the media as worker violence rather than state violence; labour activists were also subject to brutal attacks, threats of lynching, and many other forms of physical assault and intimidation . . . the question of how to respond to such violence became a critical issue in the 1870s, with the upswelling of labour agitation and attempts to suppress it violently."* [**Voltairine de Cleyre and the Revolution of the Mind**, pp. 51–2]

Joseph Labadie, it should be noted, thought the *"Beastly police"* got what they deserved at Haymarket as they had attempted to break up a peaceful public meeting and such people should *"go at the peril of their lives. If it is necessary to use dynamite to protect the rights of free meeting, free press and free speech, then the sooner we learn its manufacture and use . . . the better it will be for the toilers of the world."* The radical paper he was involved in, the **Labor Leaf**, had previously argued that *"should trouble come, the capitalists will use the regular army and militia to shoot down those who are not satisfied. It won't be so if the people are equally ready."* Even reformist unions were arming themselves to protect themselves, with many workers applauding their attempts to organise union militias. As worker put it, *"[w]ith union men well armed and accustomed to military tactics, we could keep Pinkerton's men at a distance . . . Employers would think twice, too, before they attempted to use troops against us . . . Every*

how much land or credit is worth and so resource use will be inefficient. Of course, this assumes that capitalist definitions of efficiency and "cost" are the only valid ones which is not the case. So, arguing that markets are required to correctly value goods and services is a two-edged sword, argue communist-anarchists.

One of the joys of Proudhon is that he provides material to critique both Kropotkin's communist-anarchism **and** Tucker's individualist anarchism for while opposed to communism he was equally opposed to wage labour, as we indicate in section G.4.2 (as such, those who quote Proudhon's attacks on communism but fail to note his attacks on wage slavery are extremely dishonest). Under mutualism, there would not be wage labour. Rather than employers paying wages to workers, workers would form co-operatives and pay themselves a share of the income they collectively produced. As Robert Graham put it, *"[t]hat both Tucker and Bakunin could claim Proudhon as their own illustrates the inherent ambiguity and elusiveness of his thought . . . With his death, that synthesis broke down into its conflicting parts."* [*"Introduction"*, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, **The General idea of the Revolution**, p. xxxi] Social anarchism emphasised the self-management, associational and federalist aspects of Proudhon's ideas along with his critique of private property while individualist anarchism tended to stress his support for possession, "wages" (i.e., labour income), competition and markets.

G.2.5 Do most anarchists agree with the individualists on communist-anarchism?

No, far from it. Most anarchists in the late nineteenth century recognised communist-anarchism as a genuine form of anarchism and it quickly replaced collectivist anarchism as the dominant tendency.

So few anarchists found the individualist solution to the social question or the attempts of some of them to excommunicate social anarchism from the movement convincing. Across the world, including in America itself, communist anarchism became the bulk of the

movement (social anarchism is the *"mainstream of anarchist theory"* and in the *"historical anarchist movement"* where anarcho-communism and anarcho-syndicalism have been *"predominating."* [John Clark, **The Anarchist Moment**, p. 143]). That is still the situation to this day, with individualist anarchism being a small part of the movement (again, it mostly exists in America and, to an even lesser degree, Britain). Moreover, with the notable exception of Johann Most, most leading communist-anarchists refused to respond in kind and recognised individualist anarchism as a form of anarchism (usually one suited to conditions in pre-industrial America). Kropotkin, for example, included Individualist Anarchism in his 1911 account of Anarchism for the **Encyclopaedia Britannica** as well as his pamphlet **Modern Science and Anarchism**.

It should also be stressed that not all individualist anarchists followed Tucker's lead in refusing to call communist anarchism a form of anarchism. Joseph Labadie, Dyer Lum and Voltairine de Cleyre (when she was an individualist), for example, recognised the likes of Albert and Lucy Parsons, Kropotkin, Goldman and Berkman as fellow anarchists even if they disagreed with some of their methods and aspects of their preferred solution to the social problem. For Labadie, *"[o]ne may want liberty to advance the interests of Communism, another to further the cause of individualism"* and so nothing can *"stand in the way of uniting with other Anarchists who believe in Communism to get more liberty"* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 260 and p. 262] Today, few (if any) individualist anarchists try to excommunicate other anarchists from the movement, thankfully leaving the diatribes and sectarianism of a few individuals in the nineteenth century where they belong.

Suffice to say, an account of anarchism which excluded social anarchism would be a very short work indeed and, unsurprisingly, all serious accounts of anarchism concentrate on social anarchism, its thinkers and its organisations. Which, unfortunately, ensures that the diversity and richness of individualist anarchism is somewhat lost, as are its social roots and context (which, in turn, allows some academics to confuse individualist anarchism with "anarcho"-capitalism based on a superficial analysis of words like "property" and

such as *"propaganda by deed"* as well as a class analysis which *"divided society into economic classes that were at war with each other."* Taking the issue of *"propaganda by the deed"* first, it should be noted that use of violence against person or property was hardly alien to American traditions. The Boston Tea Party was just as *"lamentable"* an attack on *"property of individuals"* as the window breaking at Seattle while the revolution and revolutionary war were hardly fought using pacifist methods or respecting the *"person or property of individuals"* who supported imperialist Britain. Similarly, the struggle against slavery was not conducted purely by means Quakers would have supported (John Brown springs to mind), nor was (to use just one example) Shay's rebellion. So *"attacking the person or property of individuals"* was hardly alien to American radicalism and so was definitely **not** imported by *"foreign"* anarchists.

Of course, anarchism in American became associated with terrorism (or *"propaganda by the deed"*) due to the Haymarket events of 1886 and Berkman's assassination attempt against Frick during the Homestead strike. Significantly, McElroy makes no mention of the substantial state and employer violence which provoked many anarchists to advocate violence in self-defence. For example, the great strike of 1877 saw the police opened fire on strikers on July 25th, killing five and injuring many more. *"For several days, meetings of workmen were broken up by the police, who again and again interfered with the rights of free speech and assembly."* The **Chicago Times** called for the use of hand grenades against strikers and state troops were called in, killing a dozen strikers. *"In two days of fighting, between 25 and 50 civilians had been killed, some 200 seriously injured, and between 300 and 400 arrested. Not a single policeman or soldier had lost his life."* This context explains why many workers, including those in reformist trade unions as well as anarchist groups like the IWPA, turned to armed self-defence ("violence"). The Haymarket meeting itself was organised in response to the police firing on strikers and killing at least two. The Haymarket bomb was thrown after the police tried to break-up a peaceful meeting by force: *"It is clear then that . . . it was the police and not the anarchists who were the perpetrators of the violence at the Haymarket."* All but one of the deaths and most of the injuries were caused by the police

G.3.1 Is "anarcho"-capitalism American anarchism?

Unlike Rothbard, some "anarcho"-capitalists are more than happy to proclaim themselves "individualist anarchists" and so suggest that their notions are identical, or nearly so, with the likes of Tucker, Ingalls and Labadie. As part of this, they tend to stress that individualist anarchism is uniquely American, an indigenous form of anarchism unlike social anarchism. To do so, however, means ignoring not only the many European influences on individualist anarchism itself (most notably, Proudhon) but also downplaying the realities of American capitalism which quickly made social anarchism the dominant form of Anarchism in America. Ironically, such a position is deeply contradictory as "anarcho"-capitalism itself is most heavily influenced by a European ideology, namely "Austrian" economics, which has lead its proponents to reject key aspects of the indigenous American anarchist tradition.

For example, "anarcho"-capitalist Wendy McElroy does this in a short essay provoked by the Seattle protests in 1999. While Canadian, her rampant American nationalism is at odds with the internationalism of the individualist anarchists, stating that after property destruction in Seattle which placed American anarchists back in the media social anarchism *"is not American anarchism. Individualist anarchism, the indigenous form of the political philosophy, stands in rigorous opposition to attacking the person or property of individuals."* Like an ideological protectionist, she argued that *"Left [sic!] anarchism (socialist and communist) are foreign imports that flooded the country like cheap goods during the 19th century."* [**Anarchism: Two Kinds**] Apparently Albert and Lucy Parsons were un-Americans, as was Voltairine de Cleyre who turned from individualist to communist anarchism. And best not mention the social conditions in America which quickly made communist-anarchism predominant in the movement or that individualist anarchists like Tucker proudly proclaimed their ideas socialist!

She argued that *"[m]any of these anarchists (especially those escaping Russia) introduced lamentable traits into American radicalism"*

"markets"). This predominance of social anarchism is reflected in the movements journals.

While some of its admirers stress that **Liberty** was the longest lasting American anarchist paper, in fact a social anarchist paper has that claim to fame. **Fraye Arbeter Shtime** (**The Free Voice of Labour**) was a Yiddish language anarchist periodical which was first published in 1890 and lasted until 1977. This was followed by the Italian anarchist paper **L'Adunata dei Refrattari** which was published between 1922 and 1971. So when James Martin stated that **Liberty** was *"the longest-lived of any radical periodical of economic or political nature in the nation's history"* in 1953 he was wrong. [**Men Against the State**, p. 208] In terms of the English language, the London based communist-anarchist journal **Freedom** has existed (in various forms) from 1886 and so beats any claim made for **Liberty** as being the longest lasting English language anarchist journal by several decades. The anarcho-syndicalist **Black Flag**, another British based journal, began publication in 1971 and was still being published over 30 years later. As far as the longest running US-based anarchist journal, that title now goes to the social anarchist magazine **Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed** which was founded in 1980 and is still going strong. This is, we stress, not to diminish **Liberty** and its achievement but simply to put it into the context of the wider movement and the fact that, outside of America, social anarchism **is** the anarchist movement (and even within America, social anarchism was and is the bulk of it).

In summary, then, while individualist anarchism opposed communist-anarchism much of this opposition was rooted in misunderstandings and, at times, outright distortion. Once these are corrected, it becomes clear that both schools of anarchism share significant ideas in common. This is unsurprisingly, given the impact of Proudhon on both of them as well as their common concerns on the social question and participation in the labour and other popular movements. As both are (libertarian) socialists inspired by many of the same intellectual and social influences, this should come as no surprise. That a few individualist and communist anarchists tried to deny those common influences should not blind us to them or the fact that both schools of anarchism are compatible.

Ultimately, though, anarchism should be wide enough and generous enough to include both communist and individualist anarchism. Attempts to excommunicate one or the other seem petty given how much each has in common and, moreover, given that both are compatible with each other as both are rooted in similar perspectives on possession, capitalist property rights and voluntary association. Once the differences in terminology are understood, the differences are not impossible to reconcile.

they didn't. From this it will be seen that I am no[t] . . . a stickler for absolute equal liberty under all circumstances." Needless to say, he considered this outcome as unlikely and was keen to *"[t]ry freedom first."* [**Liberty**, no. 267, p. 2 and p. 3]

The real question is why Rothbard considered this a **political** difference rather than an economic one. Unfortunately, he did not explain. Perhaps because of the underlying **socialist** perspective behind the anarchist position? Or perhaps the fact that feudalism and monarchism was based on the owner of the land being its ruler suggests a political aspect to propertarian ideology best left unexplored? Given that the idea of grounding rulership on land ownership receded during the Middle Ages, it may be unwise to note that under "anarcho"-capitalism the landlord and capitalist would, likewise, be sovereign over the land **and** those who used it? As we noted in section F.1, this is the conclusion that Rothbard does draw. As such, there **is** a political aspect to this difference, namely the difference between a libertarian social system and one rooted in authority.

Ultimately, *"the expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil forms the basis of the capitalist mode of production."* [Marx, **Capital**, vol. 1, p. 934] For there are *"two ways of oppressing men: either directly by brute force, by physical violence; or indirectly by denying them the means of life and this reducing them to a state of surrender."* In the second case, government is *"an organised instrument to ensure that dominion and privilege will be in the hands of those who . . . have cornered all the means of life, first and foremost the land, which they make use of to keep the people in bondage and to make them work for their benefit."* [Malatesta, **Anarchy**, p. 21] Privatising the coercive functions of said government hardly makes much difference.

As such, Rothbard was right to distance himself from the term individualist anarchism. It is a shame he did not do the same with anarchism as well!

liberty rather than the formal "liberty" associated with capitalism which, in practice, means selling your liberty to the rich.

Somewhat ironically, Rothbard bemoaned that it *"seems to be a highly unfortunate trait of libertarian and quasi-libertarian groups to spend the bulk of their time and energy emphasising their most fallacious or unlibertarian points."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 14] He pointed to the followers of Henry George and their opposition to the current land holding system and the monetary views of the individualist anarchists as examples (see section G.3.6 for a critique of Rothbard's position on mutual banking). Of course, both groups would reply that Rothbard's positions were, in fact, both fallacious and unlibertarian in nature. As, indeed, did Tucker decades before Rothbard proclaimed his private statism a form of "anarchism." Yarros' critique of those who praised capitalism but ignored the state imposed restrictions that limited choice within it seems as applicable to Rothbard as it did Herbert Spencer:

> *"A system is voluntary when it is voluntary all round . . . not when certain transactions, regarded from certain points of view, appear Voluntary. Are the circumstances which compel the labourer to accept unfair terms law-created, artificial, and subversive of equal liberty? That is the question, and an affirmative answer to it is tantamount to an admission that the present system is not voluntary in the true sense."* [**Liberty**, no. 184, p. 2]

So while "anarcho"-capitalists like Walter Block speculate on how starving families renting their children to wealthy paedophiles is acceptable *"on libertarian grounds"* it is doubtful that any individualist anarchist would be so blasé about such an evil. [*"Libertarianism vs. Objectivism: A Response to Peter Schwartz,"* pp. 39–62, **Reason Papers**, Vol. 26, Summer 2003, p. 20] Tucker, for example, was well aware that liberty without equality was little more than a bad joke. *"If,"* he argued, *"after the achievement of all industrial freedoms, economic rent should prove to be the cause of such inequalities in comfort that an effective majority found themselves at the point of starvation, they would undoubtedly cry, 'Liberty be damned!' and proceed to even up; and I think that at that stage of the game they would be great fools if*

G.3 Is "anarcho"-capitalism a new form of individualist anarchism?

No. As Carole Pateman once pointed out, *"[t]here has always been a strong radical individualist tradition in the USA. Its adherents have been divided between those who drew anarchist, egalitarian conclusions, and those who reduced political life to the capitalist economy writ large, to a series of exchanges between unequally situated individuals."* [**The Problem of Political Obligation**, p. 205] What right-"libertarians" and "anarcho"-capitalists do is to confuse these two traditions, ignoring fundamental aspects of individualist anarchism in order to do so. Thus anarchist Peter Sabatini:

> *"in those rare moments when [Murray] Rothbard (or any other [right-wing] Libertarian) does draw upon individualist anarchism, he is always highly selective about what he pulls out. Most of the doctrine's core principles, being decidedly anti-Libertarianism, are conveniently ignored, and so what remains is shrill anti-statism conjoined to a vacuous freedom in hackneyed defence of capitalism. In sum, the 'anarchy' of Libertarianism reduces to a liberal fraud."* [**Libertarianism: Bogus Anarchy**]

As class struggle anarchist Benjamin Franks notes individualist anarchism *"has similarities with, but is not identical to, anarcho-capitalism."* [**Rebel Alliances**, p. 44] For Colin Ward, while the *"mainstream"* of anarchist propaganda *"has been **anarchist-communism**"* there are *"several traditions of **individualist anarchism**"*, including that associated with Max Stirner and *"a remarkable series of 19th-century American figures"* who *"differed from free-market liberals in their absolute mistrust of American capitalism, and in their emphasis on mutualism."* Ward was careful to note that by the *"late 20th century the word 'libertarian' . . . was appropriated by a new group of American thinkers"* and so *"it is necessary to examine the modern individualist 'libertarian' response from the standpoint of the anarchist tradition."* It was found to be wanting, for while Rothbard

was *"the most aware of the actual anarchist tradition among the anarcho-capitalist apologists"* he may have been *"aware of a tradition, but he is singularly unaware of the old proverb that freedom for the pike means death for the minnow."* The individualist anarchists were *"busy social inventors exploring the potential of autonomy."* The *"American 'libertarians' of the 20th century are academics rather than social activists, and their inventiveness seems to be limited to providing an ideology for untrammelled market capitalism."* [**Anarchism: A Short Introduction**, pp. 2–3, p. 62, p. 67, and p. 69]

In this section we will sketch these differences between the genuine libertarian ideas of Individualist Anarchism and the bogus "anarchism" of right-"libertarian" ideology. This discussion builds upon our general critique of "anarcho"-capitalism we presented in section F. However, here we will concentrate on presenting individualist anarchist analysis of "anarcho"-capitalist positions rather than, as before, mostly social anarchist ones (although, of course, there are significant overlaps and similarities). In this way, we can show the fundamental differences between the two theories for while there are often great differences between specific individualist anarchist thinkers all share a vision of a free society distinctly at odds with the capitalism of their time as well as the "pure" system of economic textbooks and right-"libertarian" dreams (which, ironically, so often reflects the 19th century capitalism the individualist anarchists were fighting).

First it should be noted that some "anarcho"-capitalists shy away from the term, preferring such expressions as "market anarchist" or "individualist anarchist." This suggests that there is some link between their ideology and that of Tucker and his comrades. However, the founder of "anarcho"-capitalism, Murray Rothbard, refused that label for, while *"strongly tempted,"* he could not do so because *"Spooner and Tucker have in a sense pre-empted that name for their doctrine and that from that doctrine I have certain differences."* Somewhat incredibly Rothbard argued that on the whole politically *"these differences are minor,"* economically *"the differences are substantial, and this means that my view of the consequences of putting our more of less common system into practice is very far from theirs."* [*"The Spooner-Tucker*

Clearly a position which Rothbard had no sympathy for, unlike landlords. Strange, though, that Rothbard did not consider the obvious liberty destroying effects of the monopolisation of land and natural resources as *"rational grounds"* for opposing landlords but, then, as we noted in section F.1 when it came to private property Rothbard simply could not see its state-like qualities — even when he pointed them out himself! For Rothbard, the individualist anarchist position involved a *"hobbling of land sites or of optimum use of land ownership and cultivation and such arbitrary misallocation of land injures all of society."* [Rothbard, **Op. Cit.**, p. 9] Obviously, those subject to the arbitrary authority of landlords and pay them rent are not part of *"society"* and it is a strange coincidence that the interests of landlords just happen to coincide so completely with that of *"all of society"* (including their tenants?). And it would be churlish to remind Rothbard's readers that, as a methodological individualist, he was meant to think that there is no such thing as *"society"* — just individuals. And in terms of these individuals, he clearly favoured the landlords over their tenants and justifies this by appealing, like any crude collectivist, to an abstraction (*"society"*) to which the tenants must sacrifice themselves and their liberty. Tucker would not have been impressed.

For Rothbard, the nineteenth century saw *"the establishment in North America of a truly libertarian land system."* [**The Ethics of Liberty**, p. 73] In contrast, the Individualist Anarchists attacked that land system as the *"land monopoly"* and looked forward to a time when *"the libertarian principle to the tenure of land"* was actually applied [Tucker, **Liberty**, no. 350, p. 5] So given the central place that "occupancy and use" lies in individualist anarchism, it was extremely patronising for Rothbard to assert that *"it seems . . . a complete violation of the Spooner-Tucker 'law of equal liberty' to prevent the legitimate owner from selling his land to someone else."* [*"The Spooner-Tucker Doctrine: An Economist's View"*, **Op. Cit.**, p. 9] Particularly as Tucker had explicitly addressed this issue and indicated the logical and common sense basis for this so-called "violation" of their principles. Thus "occupancy and use" was *"the libertarian principle to the tenure of land"* because it stopped a class of all powerful landlords developing, ensuring a real equality of opportunity and

get rich). Rather than a *"minor"* difference, the question of land use fundamentally changes the nature of the society built upon it and whether it counts as genuinely libertarian or not.

Tucke was well aware of the implications of such differences. Supporting a scheme like Rothbard's meant *"departing from Anarchistic ground,"* it was *"Archism"* and, as he stressed in reply to one supporter of such property rights, it opened the door to other authoritarian positions: *"Archism in one point is taking him to Archism is another. Soon, if he is logical, he will be an Archist in all respects."* It was a *"fundamentally foolish"* position, because it *"starts with a basic proposition that must be looked upon by all consistent Anarchists as obvious nonsense." "What follows from this?"* asked Tucker. *"Evidently that a man may go to a piece of vacant land and fence it off; that he may then go to a second piece and fence that off; then to a third, and fence that off; then to a fourth, a fifth, a hundredth, a thousandth, fencing them all off; that, unable to fence off himself as many as he wishes, he may hire other men to do the fencing for him; and that then he may stand back and bar all other men from using these lands, or admit them as tenants at such rental as he may choose to extract."* It was *"a theory of landed property which all Anarchists agree in viewing as a denial of equal liberty."* It is *"utterly inconsistent with the Anarchistic doctrine of occupancy and use as the limit of property in land."* [**Liberty**, No. 180, p. 4 and p. 6] This was because of the dangers to liberty capitalist property rights in land implied:

> *"I put the right of occupancy and use above the right of contract . . . principally by my interest in the right of contract. Without such a preference the theory of occupancy and use is utterly untenable; without it . . . it would be possible for an individual to acquire, and hold simultaneously, virtual titles to innumerable parcels of land, by the merest show of labour performed thereon . . . [This would lead to] the virtual ownership of the entire world by a small fraction of its inhabitants . . . [which would see] the right of contract, if not destroyed absolutely, would surely be impaired in an intolerable degree."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 350, p. 4]

Doctrine: An Economist's View", pp. 5–15, **Journal of Libertarian Studies**, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 7]

What an understatement! Individualist anarchists advocated an economic system in which there would have been very little inequality of wealth and so of power (and the accumulation of capital would have been minimal without profit, interest and rent). Removing this social and economic basis would result in **substantially** different political regimes. In other words, politics is not isolated from economics. As anarchist David Wieck put it, Rothbard *"writes of society as though some part of it (government) can be extracted and replaced by another arrangement while other things go on before, and he constructs a system of police and judicial power without any consideration of the influence of historical and economic context."* [**Anarchist Justice**, p. 227]

Unsurprisingly, the political differences he highlights **are** significant, namely *"the role of law and the jury system"* and *"the land question."* The former difference relates to the fact that the individualist anarchists *"allow[ed] each individual free-market court, and more specifically, each free-market jury, totally free rein over judicial decision."* This horrified Rothbard. The reason is obvious, as it allows real people to judge the law as well as the facts, modifying the former as society changes and evolves. For Rothbard, the idea that ordinary people should have a say in the law is dismissed. Rather, *"it would not be a very difficult task for Libertarian lawyers and jurists to arrive at a rational and objective code of libertarian legal principles and procedures."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 7–8] Of course, the fact that *"lawyers"* and *"jurists"* may have a radically different idea of what is just than those subject to their laws is not raised by Rothbard, never mind answered. While Rothbard notes that juries may defend the people against the state, the notion that they may defend the people against the authority and power of the rich is not even raised. That is why the rich have tended to oppose juries as well as popular assemblies. Unsurprisingly, as we indicated in section F.6.1, Rothbard wanted laws to be made by judges, lawyers, jurists and other "libertarian" experts rather than jury judged and driven. In other words, to exclude the general population from any say in the law and how it changes. This hardly a *"minor"* difference! It is like a supporter of the state

saying that it is a *"minor"* difference if you favour a dictatorship rather than a democratically elected government. As Tucker argued, *"it is precisely in the tempering of the rigidity of enforcement that one of the chief excellences of Anarchism consists . . . under Anarchism all rules and laws will be little more than suggestions for the guidance of juries, and that all disputes . . . will be submitted to juries which will judge not only the facts but the law, the justice of the law, its applicability to the given circumstances, and the penalty or damage to be inflicted because of its infraction . . . under Anarchism the law . . . will be regarded as **just** in proportion to its flexibility, instead of now in proportion to its rigidity."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, pp. 160–1] In others, the law will evolve to take into account changing social circumstances and, as a consequence, public opinion on specific events and rights. Tucker's position is fundamentally **democratic** and evolutionary while Rothbard's is autocratic and fossilised.

This is particularly the case if you are proposing an economic system which is based on inequalities of wealth, power and influence and the means of accumulating more. As we note in section G.3.3, one of individualist anarchists that remained pointed this out and opposed Rothbard's arguments. As such, while Rothbard may have subscribed to a system of competing defence companies like Tucker, he expected them to operate in a substantially different legal system, enforcing different (capitalist) property rights and within a radically different socio-economic system. These differences are hardly *"minor"*. As such, to claim that "anarcho"-capitalism is simply individualist anarchism with "Austrian" economics shows an utter lack of understanding of what individualist anarchism stood and aimed for.

On the land question, Rothbard opposed the individualist position of *"occupancy and use"* as it *"would automatically abolish all rent payments for land."* Which was precisely **why** the individualist anarchists advocated it! In a predominantly rural economy, as was the case during most of the 19th century in America, this would result in a significant levelling of income and social power as well as bolstering the bargaining position of non-land workers by reducing the numbers forced onto the labour market (which, as we note in section F.8.5, was the rationale for the state enforcing the land monopoly

in the first place). He bemoans that landlords cannot charge rent on their *"justly-acquired private property"* without noticing that is begging the question as anarchists deny that this is *"justly-acquired"* land in the first place. Unsurprising, Rothbard considered *"the proper theory of justice in landed property can be found in John Locke"*, ignoring the awkward fact that the first self-proclaimed anarchist book was written **precisely** to refute that kind of theory and expose its anti-libertarian implications. His argument simply shows how far from anarchism his ideology is. For Rothbard, it goes without saying that the landlord's *"freedom of contract"* tops the worker's freedom to control their own work and live and, of course, their right to life. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 8 and p. 9]

For anarchists, *"the land is indispensable to our existence, consequently a common thing, consequently insusceptible of appropriation."* [Proudhon, **What is Property?**, p. 107] Tucker looked forward to a time when capitalist property rights in land were ended and *"the Anarchistic view that occupancy and use should condition and limit landholding becomes the prevailing view."* This *"does not simply mean the freeing of unoccupied land. It means the freeing of all land not occupied **by the owner**"* and *"tenants would not be forced to pay you rent, nor would you be allowed to seize their property. The Anarchic associations would look upon your tenants very much as they would look upon your guests."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 159, p. 155 and p. 162] The ramifications of this position on land use are significant. At its most basic, what counts as force and coercion, and so state intervention, are fundamentally different due to the differing conceptions of property held by Tucker and Rothbard. If we apply, for example, the individualist anarchist position on land to the workplace, we would treat the workers in a factory as the rightful owners, on the basis of occupation and use; at the same time, we could treat the share owners and capitalists as aggressors for attempting to force their representatives as managers on those actually occupying and using the premises. The same applies to the landlord against the tenant farmer. Equally, the outcome of such differing property systems will be radically different — in terms of inequalities of wealth and so power (with having others working for them, it is unlikely that would-be capitalists or landlords would

Once the reality of "group issues" is acknowledged, as most individualist anarchists do, then the issue of collective decision making automatically arises. There are two ways of having a group. You can be an association of equals, governing yourselves collectively as regards collective issues. Or you can have capitalists and wage slaves, bosses and servants, government and governed. Only the first, for obvious reasons, is compatible with anarchist principles. Freedom, in other words, is a product of how we interact with each other, not of isolation. Simply put, anarchism is based on self-management of group issues, not in their denial. Free association is, in this perspective, a necessary but not sufficient to guarantee freedom. Therefore, social anarchists reject the individualists' conception of anarchy, simply because it can, unfortunately, allow hierarchy (i.e. government) back into a free society in the name of "liberty" and "free contracts." Freedom is fundamentally a social product, created in and by community. It is a fragile flower and does not fare well when bought and sold on the market.

Moreover, without communal institutions, social anarchists argue, it would be impossible to specify or supply group or public goods. In addition, occupancy and use would, on the face of it, preclude such amenities which are utilised by members of a community such as parks, roads or bridges — anything which is used but not occupied continually. In terms of roads and bridges, who actually occupies and uses them? The drivers? Those who maintain it? The occupiers of the houses which it passes? Those who funded it construction? If the last, then why does this not apply to housing and other buildings left on land? And how are the owners to collect a return on their investment unless by employing police to bar access to non-payers? And would such absentee owners not also seek to extend their appropriations to other forms of property? Would it not be far easier to simply communalise such forms of commonly used "property" rather than seek to burden individuals and society with the costs of policing and restricting access to them?

After all, social anarchists note, for Proudhon there was a series of industries and services that he had no qualms about calling *"public works"* and which he considered best handled by communes and their federations. Thus *"the control undertaking such works will belong to*

then, the capitalist, by abolishing the free market, compels other men to procure their tools and advantages of him on less favourable terms than they could get before, while it may be better for them to come to his terms than to go without the capital, does he not deduct from their earnings?" [Tucker, **Liberty**, no. 109, p. 4]). Rothbard, at best, acknowledges that **some** sections of big business benefit from the current system and so fails to have a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of capitalism as a **system** (rather as an ideology). This lack of understanding of capitalism as a historic and dynamic system rooted in class rule and economic power is important in evaluating "anarcho"-capitalist claims to anarchism.

Then there is the issue of strategy, with Rothbard insisting on *"political action,"* namely voting for the Libertarian Party (or least non-"libertarian" party). *"I see no other conceivable strategy for the achievement of liberty than political action,"* he stated. Like Marxists, voting was seen as the means of achieving the abolition of the state, as *"a militant and abolitionist [Libertarian Party] in control of Congress could wipe out all the [non-'libertarian'] laws overnight . . . No other strategy for liberty can work."* [**Op**. **Cit**.] The individualist anarchists, like other anarchists, rejected such arguments as incompatible with genuine libertarian principles. As Tucker put it, voting could not be libertarian as it would make the voter *"an accomplice in aggression."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 305]

Rothbard's position indicates an interesting paradox. Rothbard wholeheartedly supported *"political action"* as the only means of achieving the end of the state. Marxists (when not excommunicating anarchism from the socialist movement) often argue that they agree with the anarchists on the ends (abolition of the state) but only differed on the means (i.e., political action over direct action). Obviously, no one calls Marx an anarchist and this is precisely because he aimed to use political action to achieve the abolition of the state. Yet, for some reason, Rothbard's **identical** position on tactics makes some call him an anarchist. So, given Rothbard's argument that the state must be seized first by a political party by means of *"political action"* in order to achieve his end, the question must be raised why he is considered an anarchist at all. Marx and Engels, like Lenin, all made identical arguments against anarchism, namely that

political action was essential so that the Socialist Party could seize state power and implement the necessary changes to ensure that the state withered away. No one has ever considered them anarchists in spite of the common aim of ending the state yet many consider Rothbard to be an anarchist despite advocating the same methods as the Marxists. As we noted in section F.8, a better term for "anarcho"-capitalism could be "Marxist-capitalism" and Rothbard's argument for "political action" confirms that suggestion.

Needless to say, other strategies favoured by many individualists anarchists were rejected by "anarcho"-capitalists. Unlike Tucker, Lum and others, Rothbard was totally opposed to trade unions and strikes, viewing unions as coercive institutions which could not survive under genuine capitalism (given the powers of property owners and the inequalities of such a society, he may well have been right in thinking workers would be unable to successfully defend their basic freedoms against their masters but that is another issue). The individualist anarchists were far more supportive. Henry Cohen, for example, considered the union as a *"voluntary association formed for the mutual benefit of its members, using the boycott and other passive weapons in its fight against capitalism and the State."* This was *"very near the Anarchist idea."* Some individualists were more critical of unions than others. One, A.H. Simpson, argued that the trade unions *"are as despotic and arbitrary as any other organisation, and no more Anarchistic than the Pullman or Carnegie companies."* In other words, the unions were to be opposed because they were like capitalist corporations! [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 285 and p. 288] For Tucker, as we note in section G.5, unions were *"a movement for self-government on the part of the people"* and it was *"in supplanting"* the state *"by an intelligent and self-governing socialism that the trades unions develop their chief significance."* [**Liberty**, no. 22, p. 3]

So the claims that "anarcho"-capitalism is a new form of individualist anarchism can only be done on the basis of completely ignoring the actual history of capitalism as well as ignoring the history, social context, arguments, aims and spirit of individualist anarchism. This is only convincing if the actual ideas and aims of individualist anarchism are unknown or ignored and focus is placed on certain

the anarchist policeman that has driven me out of the individualist's camp, wherein I for some time resided." [quoted by Eugenia C. Delamotte, **Gates of Freedom**, p. 25] This outcome can only be avoided by consistently applying "occupancy and use" in such as way as to eliminate wage labour totally. Only this can achieve a society based on freedom **of** association as well as freedom **within** association.

As we noted in section G.2, one of the worries of individualist anarchists is that social anarchism would subject individuals to group pressures and concerns, violating individual autonomy in the name of collective interests. Thus, it is argued, the individual will become of slave of the group in practice if not in theory under social anarchism. However, an inherent part of our humanity is that we associate with others, that we form groups and communities. To suggest that there are no group issues within anarchism seems at odds with reality. Taken literally, of course, this implies that such a version of "anarchy" there would be no forms of association at all. No groups, no families, no clubs: nothing bar the isolated individual. It implies no economic activity beyond the level of peasant farming and one-person artisan workplaces. Why? Simply because any form of organisation implies "group issues." Two people deciding to live together or one hundred people working together becomes a group, twenty people forming a football club becomes a group. And these people have joint interests and so group issues. In other words, to deny group issues is implying a social situation that has never existed nor ever will. Thus Kropotkin:

> *"to reason in this way is to pay . . . too large a tribute to metaphysical dialectics, and to ignore the facts of life. It is impossible to conceive a society in which the affairs of any one of its members would not concern many other members, if not all; still less a society in which a continual contact between its members would not have established an interest of every one towards all others, which would render it* ***impossible*** *to act without thinking of the effects which our actions may have on others."* [**Evolution and Environment**, p. 85]

include them as members of the association (i.e. they exercise their ownership rights to exclude others). As Proudhon argued:

> *"I have shown the contractor, at the birth of industry, negotiating on equal terms with his comrades, who have since become his workmen. It is plain, in fact, that this original equality was bound to disappear through the advantageous position of the master and the dependent position of the wage-workers. In vain does the law assure the right of each to enterprise . . . When an establishment has had leisure to develop itself, enlarge its foundations, ballast itself with capital, and assure itself a body of patrons, what can a workman do against a power so superior?"* [**System of Economical Contradictions**, p. 202]

Voltairine de Cleyre also came to this conclusion. Discussing the limitations of the Single Tax land reform, she noted that *"the stubborn fact always came up that no man would employ another to work for him unless he could get more for his product than he had to pay for it, and that being the case, the inevitable course of exchange and re-exchange would be that the man having received less than the full amount, could buy back less than the full amount, so that eventually the unsold products must again accumulate in the capitalist's hands; and again the period of non-employment arrives."* This obviously applied to individualist anarchism. In response to objections like this, individualists tend to argue that competition for labour would force wages to equal output. Yet this ignores natural barriers to competition: *"it is well enough to talk of his buying hand tools, or small machinery which can be moved about; but what about the gigantic machinery necessary to the operation of a mine, or a mill? It requires many to work it. If one owns it, will he not make the others pay tribute for using it?"* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 60 and p. 61]

As such, a free market based on wage labour would be extremely unlikely to produce a non-exploitative society and, consequently, it would not be socialist and so not anarchist. Moreover, the successful business person would seek to secure his or her property and power and so employ police to do so. *"I confess that I am not in love with all these little states,"* proclaimed de Cleyre, *"and it is . . . the thought of*

words used (like "markets" and "property") rather than the specific meanings provided to them by its supporters. Sadly, this extremely superficial analysis is all too common — particularly in academic circles and, of course, in right-"libertarian" ones.

Finally, it may be objected that "anarcho"-capitalism is a diverse, if small, collection of individuals and some of them are closer to individualist anarchism than others. Which is, of course, true (just as some Marxists are closer to social anarchism than others). A few of them do reject the notion than hundreds of years of state-capitalist intervention has had little impact on the evolution of the economy and argue that a genuinely free economy would see the end of the current form of property rights and non-labour income as well as the self-employment and co-operatives becoming the dominant form of workplace organisation (the latter depends on the former, of course, for without the necessary social preconditions a preference for self-employment will remain precisely that). As Individualist Anarchist Shawn Wilbur put, there is a difference between those "anarcho"-capitalists who are ideologues for capitalism first and foremost and the minority who are closer to traditional anarchist aspirations. If the latter manage to jettison the baggage they have inherited from "Austrian" economics as well as the likes of Murray Rothbard and realise that they are, in fact, free market socialists and **not** in favour of capitalism then few anarchists would hold their past against them any more than they would a state socialist or left-liberal who realised the error of their ways. Until they do, though, few anarchists would accept them as anarchists.

G.3.3 What about "anarcho"-capitalists' support of "defence associations"?

It would be fair to say that "anarcho"-capitalist interest in individualist anarchism rests on their argument that, to quote Tucker, *"defense is a service, like any other service"*, and that such a service could and should be provided by private agencies paid for like any other commodity on the market. [**Liberty**, no. 104, p. 4] Therefore:

"Anarchism means no government, but it does not mean no laws and no coercion. This may seem paradoxical, but the paradox vanishes when the Anarchist definition of government is kept in view. Anarchists oppose government, not because they disbelieve in punishment of crime and resistance to aggression, but because they disbelieve in compulsory protection. Protection and taxation without consent is itself invasion; hence Anarchism favours a system of voluntary taxation and protection." [**Op. Cit.**, no. 212, p. 2]

While most of the rest of the theory is ignored or dismissed as being the product of "bad" economics, this position is considered the key link between the two schools of thought. However, it is not enough to say that both the individualist anarchists and "anarcho"-capitalists support a market in protection, you need to look at what forms of property are being defended and the kind of society within which it is done. Change the social context, change the kinds of property which are being defended and you change the nature of the society in question. In other words, defending capitalist property rights within an unequal society is radically different in terms of individual liberty than defending socialistic property rights within an equal society — just as a market economy based on artisan, peasant and co-operative production is fundamentally different to one based on huge corporations and the bulk of the population being wage slaves. Only the most superficial analysis would suggest that they are the same and label both as being "capitalist" in nature.

It should, therefore, not be forgotten that the individualist anarchists advocated a system rooted in individual possession of land and tools plus the free exchange of the products of labour between self-employed people or wage workers who receive the full equivalent of their product. This means that they supported the idea of a market in "defence associations" to ensure that the fruits of an individual's labour would not be stolen by others. Again, the social context of individualist anarchism — namely, an egalitarian economy without exploitation of labour (see section G.3.4) — is crucial for understanding these proposals. However, as in their treatment of Tucker's

associations would recognise the right of individual occupants to combine their holdings and work them under any system they might agree upon, the arrangement being always terminable at will, with reversion to original rights" then we have the unfortunate situation where inequalities will undermine anarchism and defence associations arising which will defend them against attempts by those subject to them to use direct action to rectify the situation. [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 25 and p. 162]

Kropotkin saw the danger, arguing that such an idea *"runs against the feelings of equality of most of us"* and *"brings the would-be 'Individualists' dangerously near to those who imagine themselves to represent a 'superior breed' — those to whom we owe the State . . . and all other forms of oppression."* [**Evolution and Environment**, p. 84] As we discuss in the next section, it is clear that wage labour (like any hierarchical organisation) is not consistent with general anarchist principles and, furthermore, in direct contradiction to individualist anarchist principles of "occupancy and use." Only if "occupancy and use" is consistently applied and so wage labour replaced by workers associations can the inequalities associated with market exchanges not become so great as to destroy the equal freedom of all required for anarchism to work.

Individualist anarchists reply to this criticism by arguing that this is derived from a narrow reading of Stirner's ideas and that they are in favour of universal egoism. This universal egoism and the increase in competition made possible by mutual banking will ensure that workers will have the upper-hand in the market, with the possibility of setting up in business themselves always available. In this way the ability of bosses to become autocrats is limited, as is their power to exploit their workers as a result. Social anarchists argue, in response, that the individualists tend to underestimate the problems associated with natural barriers to entry in an industry. This could help generate generalised wage labour (and so a new class of exploiters) as workers face the unpleasant choice of working for a successful firm, being unemployed or working for low wages in an industry with lower barriers to entry. This process can be seen under capitalism when co-operatives hire wage workers and not

the holders of workplaces can exclude others from the means of life they possess and only allow them access only under conditions which create hierarchical social relationships between them. Thus we could have a situation in which the owners who actually manage their own workplaces are, in effect, working capitalists who hire others to do specific tasks in return for a wage.

The problem is highlighted in Tucker's description of what would replace the current system of statism (and note he calls it *"scientific socialism"* thus squarely placing his ideas in the anti-capitalist camp):

> *"we have something very tangible to offer , . . We offer non-compulsive organisation. We offer associative combination. We offer every possible method of voluntary social union by which men and women may act together for the furtherance of well-being. In short, we offer voluntary scientific socialism in place of the present compulsory, unscientific organisation which characterises the State and all of its ramifications."* [quoted by Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 218]

Yet it is more than possible for voluntary social unions to be authoritarian and exploitative (we see this every day under capitalism). In other words, not every form of non-compulsive organisation is consistent with libertarian principles. Given Tucker's egoism, it is not hard to conclude that those in stronger positions on the market will seek to maximise their advantages and exploit those who are subject to their will. As he put it, *"[s]o far as inherent right is concerned, might is the only measure. Any man . . . and any set of men . . . have the right, if they have the power, to kill or coerce other men and to make the entire world subservient to their ends. Society's right to enslave the individual and the individual's right to enslave society are only unequal because their powers are unequal."* In the market, all contracts are based ownership of resources which exist before any specific contracts is made. If one side of the contract has more economic power than the other (say, because of their ownership of capital) then it staggers belief that egoists will not seek to maximise said advantage and so the market will tend to increase inequalities over time rather than reduce them. If, as Tucker argued, *"Anarchic*

support for contract theory, "anarcho"-capitalists remove the individualist anarchists' ideas about free-market defence associations and courts from the social context in which they were proposed, using those ideas in an attempt to turn the individualists into defenders of capitalism.

As indicated in section G.1.4, the social context in question was one in which an economy of artisans and peasant farmers was being replaced by a state-backed capitalism. This context is crucial for understanding the idea of the "defence associations" that Tucker suggested. For what he proposed was clearly **not** the defence of capitalist property relations. This can be seen, for example, in his comments on land use. Thus:

> *"'The land for the people' . . . means the protection by . . . voluntary associations for the maintenance of justice . . . of all people who desire to cultivate land in possession of whatever land they personally cultivate . . . and the positive refusal of the protecting power to lend its aid to the collection of any rent, whatsoever."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 299]

There is no mention here of protecting **capitalist** farming, i.e. employing wage labour; rather, there is explicit mention that only land being used for **personal** cultivation — thus **without** employing wage labour — would be defended. In other words, the defence association would defend *"occupancy and use"* (which is a clear break with capitalist property rights) and not the domination of the landlord over society or those who use the land the landlord claims to own. This means that certain contracts were not considered valid within individualist anarchism even if they were voluntarily agreed to by the parties involved and so would not be enforceable by the "defence associations." As Tucker put it:

> *"A man cannot be allowed, merely by putting labour, to the limit of his capacity and beyond the limit of his personal use, into material of which there is a limited supply and the use of which is essential to the existence of other men, to withhold that material from other men's use; and any contract based upon or involving*

such withholding is lacking in sanctity or legitimacy as a contract to deliver stolen goods." [**Liberty**, No. 321, p. 4]

Refusal to pay rent on land is a key aspect of Tucker's thought, and it is significant that he explicitly rejects the idea that a defence association can be used to collect it. In addition, as a means towards anarchy, Tucker suggests *"inducing the people to steadily refuse the payment of rent and taxes."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 299] It is hard to imagine that a landowner influenced by Murray Rothbard or David Friedman would support such an arrangement or a "defence association" that supported it. As such, the individualist anarchist system would impose restrictions on the market from an "anarcho"-capitalist perspective. Equally, from an individualist anarchist perspective, "anarcho"-capitalism would be enforcing a key class monopoly by force and so would simply be another kind of state. As Tucker put it in reply to the proto-right-"libertarian" Auberon Herbert:

> *"It is true that Anarchists . . . do, in a sense, propose to get rid of ground-rent by force. That is to say, if landlords should try to evict occupants, the Anarchists advice the occupants to combine to maintain their ground by force . . . But it is also true that the Individualists . . . propose to get rid of theft by force . . . The Anarchists justify the use of machinery (local juries, etc.) to adjust the property question involved in rent just as the Individualists justify similar machinery to adjust the property question involved in theft."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 172, p. 7]

It comes as no surprise to discover that Tucker translated Proudhon's **What is Property?** and subscribed to its conclusion that *"property is robbery"*!

This opposition to the *"land monopoly"* was, like all the various economic proposals made by the individualist anarchists, designed to eliminate the vast differences in wealth accruing from the *"usury"* of industrial capitalists, bankers, and landlords. For example, Josiah Warren *"proposed like Robert Owen an exchange of notes based on labour time . . . He wanted to establish an 'equitable commerce' in which all goods are exchanged for their cost of production . . . In this*

> *must be left to his own conscience, and the pressure exercised upon him by the moral sense and distinct interests of his neighbours."* [Charlotte Wilson, **Anarchist Essays**, p. 24]

To use an appropriate example, public libraries are open to all local residents and they are free to borrow books from the stock available. When the book is borrowed, others cannot come along and take the books from a person's home. Similarly, an individual in a communist society can take what they like from the common stocks and use it as they see fit. They do not need permission from others to do so, just as people freely go to public parks without requiring a vote by the local community on whether to allow access or not. Communism, in other words, does not imply community control of personal consumption nor the denial of individuals to appropriate and use the common stock of available goods. Socialised consumption does **not** mean "society" telling people what to consume but rather ensuring that all individuals have free access to the goods produced by all. As such, the issue is not about "property" in the sense of personal property but rather "property" in the sense of access to the means of life by those who use them. Will owner occupiers be able to exclude others from, say, their land and workplaces unless they agree to be their servants?

Which brings us to a key issue between certain forms of individualist anarchism and social anarchism, namely the issue of wage labour. As capitalism has progressed, the size of workplaces and firms have increased. This has lead to a situation were ownership and use has divorced, with property being used by a group of individuals distinct from the few who are legally proclaimed to be its owners. The key problem arises in the case of workplaces and how do non-possessors gain access to them. Under social anarchism, any new members of the collective automatically become part of it, with the same rights and ability to participate in decision making as the existing ones. In other words, socialised production does **not** mean that "society" will allocate individuals work tasks but rather it ensures that all individuals have free access to the means of life. Under individualist anarchism, however, the situation is not as clear with some (like Tucker) supporting wage labour. This suggests that

the professors themselves, as to the nature of value, and the representation of value, and the unit of value, and the numberless multiplications and divisions of the subject, that the best thing ordinary workingmen or women could do was to organise their industry so as to get rid of money altogether. I figured it this way: I'm not any more a fool than the rest of ordinary humanity; I've figured and figured away on this thing for years, and directly I thought myself middling straight, there came another money reformer and showed me the hole in that scheme, till, at last , it appears that between 'bills of credit,' and 'labour notes' and 'time checks,' and 'mutual bank issues,' and 'the invariable unit of value,' none of them have any sense. How many thousands of years is it going to get this sort of thing into people's heads by mere preaching of theories. Let it be this way: Let there be an end of the special monopoly on securities for money issues. Let every community go ahead and try some member's money scheme if it wants; — let every individual try it if he pleases. But better for the working people let them all go. Let them produce together, co-operatively rather than as employer and employed; let them fraternise group by group, let each use what he needs of his own product, and deposit the rest in the storage-houses, and let those others who need goods have them as occasion arises." [**Exquisite Rebel**, p. 62]

And, obviously, it must be stressed that "property" in the sense of personal possessions would still exist in communist-anarchism. As the co-founder of **Freedom** put it:

*"Does Anarchism, then, it may be asked, acknowledge no **Meum** or **Tuum**, no personal property? In a society in which every man is free to take what he requires, it is hardly conceivable that personal necessaries and conveniences will not be appropriated, and difficult to imagine why they should not . . . When property is protected by no legal enactments, backed by armed force, and is unable to buy personal service, it resuscitation on such a scale as to be dangerous to society is little to be dreaded. The amount appropriated by each individual, and the manner of his appropriation,*

way profit and interest would be eradicated and a highly egalitarian order would emerge." [Peter Marshall, **Demanding the Impossible**, p. 385] Given that the Warrenites considered that both workers and managers would receive equal payment for equal hours worked (the manager may, in fact earn less if it were concluded that their work was less unpleasant than that done on the shopfloor), the end of a parasitic class of wealthy capitalists was inevitable.

In the case of Benjamin Tucker, he was a firm adherent of socialist economic analysis, believing that a free market and interest-free credit would reduce prices to the cost of production and increase demand for labour to the point where workers would receive the full value of their labour. In addition, recognising that gold was a rare commodity, he rejected a gold-backed money supply in favour of a land-backed one, as land with *"permanent improvements on"* it is *"an excellent basis for currency."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 198] Given that much of the population at the time worked on their own land, such a money system would have ensured easy credit secured by land. Mutualism replaced the gold standard (which, by its very nature would produce an oligarchy of banks) with money backed by other, more available, commodities.

Such a system, the individualist anarchists argued, would be unlikely to reproduce the massive inequalities of wealth associated with capitalism and have a dynamic utterly different to that system. They did not consider the state as some alien body grafted onto capitalism which could be removed and replaced with "defence associations" leaving the rest of society more or less the same. Rather, they saw the state as being an essential aspect of capitalism, defending key class monopolies and restricting freedom for the working class. By abolishing the state, they automatically abolished these class monopolies and so capitalism. In other words, they had political **and** economic goals and ignoring the second cannot help but produce **different** results. As Voltairine de Cleyre put it in her individualist days, Anarchism *"means not only the denial of authority, not only a new economy, but a revision of the principles of morality. It means the development of the individual as well as the assertion of the individual."* [**The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader**, p. 9]

Right-"libertarians" reject all of this, the social context of Tucker's ideas on "defence associations." They do not aim for a *"new economy"*, but simply the existing one without a public state. They have no critique of capitalist property rights nor any understanding of how such rights can produce economic power and limit individual freedom. In fact, they attack what they consider the "bad economics" of the individualists without realising it is **precisely** these "bad" (i.e. anti-capitalist) economics which will minimise, if not totally eliminate, any potential threat to freedom associated with "defence associations." Without the accumulations of wealth inevitable when workers' do not receive the full product of their labour, it is unlikely that a "defence association" would act like the private police forces American capitalists utilised to break unions and strikes both in Tucker's time and now. Unless this social context exists, any defence associations will soon become mini-states, serving to enrich the elite few by protecting the usury they gain from, and their power and control (i.e. government) over, those who toil. In other words, the "defence associations" of Tucker and Spooner would not be private states, enforcing the power of capitalists and landlords upon wage workers. Instead, they would be like insurance companies, protecting possessions against theft (as opposed to protecting capitalist theft from the dispossessed as would be the case in "anarcho"-capitalism — an important difference lost on the private staters). Where social anarchists disagree with individualist anarchists is on whether a market system will actually produce such equality, particularly one without workers' self-management replacing the authority inherent in the capitalist-labourer social relationship. As we discuss in section G.4, without the equality and the egalitarian relationships of co-operative and artisan production there would be a tendency for capitalism and private statism to erode anarchy.

In addition, the emphasis given by Tucker and Lysander Spooner to the place of juries in a free society is equally important for understanding how their ideas about defence associations fit into a non-capitalist scheme. For by emphasising the importance of trial by jury, they knock an important leg from under the private statism associated with "anarcho"-capitalism. Unlike a wealthy judge, a jury made up mainly of fellow workers would be more inclined to give

thing in any society based on joint labour (*"which it would be difficult to imagine could exist in any society where there is the least complexity of production."* [George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, **Op. Cit.**, p. 280]).

This was the crux of Kropotkin's critique of the various schemes of "labour money" and "labour vouchers" raised by other schools of socialism (like mutualism, collectivism and various state socialist systems). They may abolish wage labour (or, at worse, create state capitalism) but they did not abolish the wages system, i.e., payment according to work done. This meant that a system of individualist distribution was forced upon a fundamentally co-operative system of production and so was illogical and unjust (see Kropotkin's *"The Collectivist Wage System"* in **The Conquest of Bread**). Thus Daniel Guérin:

> *"This method of remuneration, derived from modified individualism, is in contradiction to collective ownership of the means of production, and cannot bring about a profound revolutionary change in man. It is incompatible with anarchism; a new form of ownership requires a new form of remuneration. Service to the community cannot be measured in units of money. Needs will have to be given precedence over services, and all the products of the labour of all must belong to all, each to take his share of them freely.* ***To each according to his need*** *should be the motto of libertarian communism."* [**Anarchism**, p. 50]

Simply put, wages rarely reflect the actual contribution of a specific person to social well-being and production nor do they reflect their actual needs. To try and get actual labour income to reflect the actual contribution to society would be, communist-anarchists argued, immensely difficult. How much of a product's price was the result of better land or more machinery, luck, the willingness to externalise costs, and so on? Voltairine de Cleyre summarised this problem and the obvious solution:

> *"I concluded that as to the question of exchange and money, it was so exceedingly bewildering, so impossible of settlement among*

a society. While Proudhon was the social anarchist most in favour of competition, he was well aware of the need for self-managed workplaces to federate together to protect themselves from its negative aspects — aspects he discussed at length. His *"agro-industrial federation"* was seen as a means of socialising the market, of ensuring that competition would not reach such levels as to undermine the freedom and equality of those within it. Individualist anarchists, in contrast, tended not to discuss the negative effects of markets in any great depth (if at all), presumably because they thought that most of the negative effects would disappear along with capitalism and the state. Other anarchists are not so optimistic.

So, two key issues between social and individualist anarchism are the related subjects of property and competition. As Voltairine de Cleyre put it when she was an individualist anarchist:

> *"She and I hold many differing views on both Economy and Morals . . . Miss Goldmann [sic!] is a communist; I am an individualist. She wishes to destroy the right of property, I wish to assert it. I make my war upon privilege and authority, whereby the right of property, the true right in that which is proper to the individual, is annihilated. She believes that co-operation would entirely supplant competition; I hold that competition in one form or another will always exist, and that it is highly desirable it should."* [**The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader**, p. 9]

The question of "property" is subject to much confusion and distortion. It should be stressed that both social and individualist anarchists argue that the only true property is that produced by labour (mental and physical) and capitalism results in some of that being diverted to property owners in the form of interest, rent and profits. Where they disagree is whether it is possible and desirable to calculate an individual's contribution to social production, particularly within a situation of joint labour. For Tucker, it was a case of creating *"the economic law by which every man may get the equivalent of his product."* [quoted by George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, **The Anarchist Prince**, p. 279] Social anarchists, particularly communist ones, question whether it is possible in reality to discover such a

verdicts in favour of workers struggling against bosses or of peasants being forced off their land by immoral, but legal, means. As Lysander Spooner argued in 1852, *"[i]f a jury have not the right to judge between the government and those who disobey its laws, and resist its oppressions, the government is absolute, and the people, legally speaking, are slaves. Like many other slaves they may have sufficient courage and strength to keep their masters somewhat in check; but they are nevertheless known to the law only as slaves."* [**Trial by Jury**] It is hardly surprising that Rothbard rejects this in favour of a legal system determined and interpreted by lawyers, judges and jurists. Indeed, as we noted in section F.6.1, Rothbard explicitly rejected the idea that juries should be able to judge the law as well as the facts of a case under his system. Spooner would have had no problem recognising that replacing government imposed laws with those made by judges, jurists and lawyers would hardly change the situation much. Nor would he have been too surprised at the results of a free market in laws in a society with substantial inequalities in income and wealth.

Individualist Anarchist Laurance Labadie, the son of Tucker associate Joseph Labadie, argued in response to Rothbard as follows:

> *"Mere common sense would suggest that any court would be influenced by experience; and any free-market court or judge would in the very nature of things have some precedents guiding them in their instructions to a jury. But since no case is exactly the same, a jury would have considerable say about the heinousness of the offence in each case, realising that circumstances alter cases, and prescribing penalty accordingly. This appeared to Spooner and Tucker to be a more flexible and equitable administration of justice possible or feasible, human beings being what they are . . .*
>
> *"But when Mr. Rothbard quibbles about the jurisprudential ideas of Spooner and Tucker, and at the same time upholds* ***presumably in his courts*** *the very economic evils which are at bottom the very reason for human contention and conflict, he would seem to be a man who chokes at a gnat while swallowing a camel."* [quoted by Mildred J. Loomis and Mark A. Sullivan, *"Laurance Labadie: Keeper Of The Flame"*, pp. 116–30, **Benjamin R. Tucker and the**

Champions of Liberty, Coughlin, Hamilton and Sullivan (eds.), p. 124]

As we argued in detail in section F.6, a market for "defence associations" within an unequal system based on extensive wage labour would simply be a system of private states, enforcing the authority of the property owner over those who use but do not own their property. Such an outcome can only be avoided within an egalitarian society where wage-labour is minimised, if not abolished totally, in favour of self-employment (whether individually or co-operatively). In other words, the kind of social context which the individualist anarchists explicitly or implicitly assumed and aimed for. By focusing selectively on a few individualist proposals taken out of their social context, Rothbard and other "anarcho"-capitalists have turned the libertarianism of the individualist anarchists into yet another ideological weapon in the hands of (private) statism and capitalism.

When faced with the actual visions of a good society proposed by such people as Tucker and Spooner, "anarcho"-capitalists tend to dismiss them as irrelevant. They argue that it does not matter what Tucker or Spooner thought would emerge from the application of their system, it is the fact they advocated the "free market", "private property" and "defence associations" that counts. In response anarchists note three things. Firstly, individualist anarchists generally held radically different concepts of what a "free market" and "private property" would be in their system and so the tasks of any "defence association" would be radically different. As such, anarchists argue that "anarcho"-capitalists simply look at the words people use rather than what they meant by them and the social context in which they are used. Secondly, it seems a strange form of support to rubbish the desired goals of people you claim to follow. If someone claimed to be a Marxist while, at the same time, arguing that Marx was wrong about socialism people would be justified in questioning their use of that label. Thirdly, and most importantly, no one advocates a means which would not result in their desired ends. If Tucker and Spooner did not think their system would result in their goals they would have either changed their goals or changed their method. As noted in section G.1.1, Tucker explicitly argued that concentrations

> *who has a piece of fertile and well sited land?" Of between the inhabitant of a village lost in the mountains or in the middle of a marshy area, with the inhabitants of a city which hundreds of generations of man have enriched with all the skill of human genius and labour?* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, pp. 31–2]

The social anarchist opposition to individualist anarchism, therefore, resolves around the issues of inequality, the limitations and negative impact of markets and whether wage-labour is consistent with anarchist principles (both in general and in terms of individualist anarchism itself). We discuss the issue of wage labour and anarchist principles in the next section and argue in section G.4.2 that Tucker's support for wage-labour, like any authoritarian social relationship, ensures that this is an inconsistent form of anarchism. Here we concentration on issues of inequality and markets.

First, we must stress that individualist anarchism plays an important role in reminding all socialists that capitalism does **not** equal the market. Markets have existed before capitalism and may, if we believe market socialists like David Schweickart and free market socialists like Benjamin Tucker and Kevin Carson, even survive it. While some socialists (particularly Leninists echoing, ironically, supporters of capitalism) equate capitalism with the market, this is not the case. Capitalism is a specific form of market economy based on certain kinds of property rights which result in generalised wage labour and non-labour incomes (exploitation). This means that the libertarian communist critique of capitalism is to a large degree independent of its critique of markets and their negative impact. Equally, the libertarian communist critique of markets, while applicable to capitalism, applies to other kinds of economy. It is fair to say, though, that capitalism tends to intensify and worsen the negative effects of markets.

Second, we must also note that social anarchists are a diverse grouping and include the mutualism of Proudhon, Bakunin's collectivism and Kropotkin's communism. All share a common hostility to wage labour and recognise, to varying degrees, that markets tend to have negative aspects which can undermine the libertarian nature of

"The individualists assume, or speak as if they assumed, that the (anarchist) communists wish to impose communism, which of course would put them right outside the ranks of anarchism.

"The communists assume, or speak as if they assumed, that the (anarchist) individualists reject every idea of association, want the struggle between men, the domination of the strongest — and this would put them not only outside the anarchist movement but outside humanity.

"In reality those who are communists are such because they see in communism freely accepted the realisation of brotherhood, and the best guarantee for individual freedom. And individualists, those who are really anarchists, are anti-communist because they fear that communism would subject individuals nominally to the tyranny of the collectivity and in fact to that of the party or caste which, with the excuse of administering things, would succeed in taking possession of the power to dispose of material things and thus of the people who need them. Therefore they want each individual, or each group, to be in a position to enjoy freely the product of their labour in conditions of equality with other individuals and groups, with whom they would maintain relations of justice and equity.

"In which case it is clear that there is no basic difference between us. But, according to the communists, justice and equity are, under natural conditions impossible of attainment in an individualistic society, and thus freedom too would not be attained.

"If climatic conditions throughout the world were the same, if the land were everywhere equally fertile, if raw materials were evenly distributed and within reach of all who needed them, if social development were the same everywhere in the world . . . then one could conceive of everyone . . . finding the land, tools and raw materials needed to work and produce independently, without exploiting or being exploited. But natural and historical conditions being what they are, how is it possible to establish equality and justice between he who by chance finds himself with a piece of arid land which demands much labour for small returns with him

of wealth under capitalism had reached such levels that his system of free competition would not end it. Clearly, then, outcomes were important to individualist anarchists.

The lack of commonality can also be seen from the right-"libertarian" response to Kevin Carson's excellent **Studies in Mutualist Political Economy**, an impressive modern restatement of the ideas of Tucker and other individualist anarchists. Leading "anarcho"-capitalist Walter Block dismissed *"Marxists like Carson"* and labelled him *"a supposed anarchist"* who on many issues *"is out there, way, way out there in some sort of Marxist never-never land."* [*"Kevin Carson as Dr. Jeryll and Mr. Hyde"*, pp. 35–46, **Journal of Libertarian Studies**, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 40, p. 43 and p. 45] Another right-"libertarian", George Reisman, concurred stated that for the most part *"Carson is a Marxist"*, while arguing that *"the 'individualist' anarchist shows himself to be quite the collectivist, attributing to the average person qualities of independent thought and judgement that are found only in exceptional individuals."* Carson's *"views on the nature of ownership give full support to the conception of anarchy . . . as being nothing but chaos."* Overall, *"Carson is essentially a Marxist and his book filled with ignorant Marxist diatribes against capitalism."* [*"Freedom is Slavery: Laissez-Faire capitalism is government intervention"*, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 47–86, p. 47, p. 55, p. 61 and p. 84] Needless to say, all the issues which Block and Geisman take umbridge at can be found in the works of individualist anarchists like Tucker (Carson's excellent dissection of these remarkably ignorant diatribes is well worth reading [*"Carson's Rejoinders"*, pp. 97–136, **Op. Cit.**]).

So the notion that a joint support for a market in "defence services" can allow the social and theoretical differences between "anarcho"-capitalism and individualist anarchism to be ignored is just nonsense. This can best be seen from the fate of any individualist anarchist defence association within "anarcho"-capitalism. As it would not subscribe to Rothbard's preferred system of property rights it would be in violation of the *"general libertarian law code"* drawn up and implemented by right-"libertarian" jurists, judges and lawyers. This would, by definition, make such an association *"outlaw"* when it defended tenants against attempts to extract rents from them or to evict them from the land or buildings they used but did not own.

As it is a judge-run system, no jury would be able to judge the law as well as the crime, so isolating the capitalist and landlord class from popular opposition. Thus the ironic situation arises that the ***"Benjamin Tucker defence association"*** would be declared an outlaw organisation under "anarcho"-capitalism and driven out of business (i.e., destroyed) as it broke the land monopoly which the law monopoly enforces. Even more ironically, such an organisation would survive in an communist anarchist society (assuming it could find enough demand to make it worthwhile).

If the world had had the misfortune of having "anarcho"-capitalism imposed on it in the nineteenth century, individualist anarchists like Warren, Tucker, Labadie, Ingalls and Lum would have joined Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Parsons and Goldman in prison for practising *"occupancy and use"* in direct violation of the *"general libertarian law code."* That it was private police, private courts and private prisons which were enforcing such a regime would not have been considered that much of an improvement.

Unsurprisingly, Victor Yarros explicitly distanced himself from those *"want liberty to still further crush and oppress the people; liberty to enjoy their plunder without fear of the State's interfering with them . . . liberty to summarily deal with impudent tenants who refuse to pay tribute for the privilege of living and working on the soil."* [**Liberty**, no. 102, p. 4] He would have had little problem recognising "anarcho"-capitalism as being a supporter of *"that particular kind of freedom which the* ***bourgeoisie*** *favours, and which is championed by the* ***bourgeoisie's*** *loyal servants, [but] will never prove fascinating to the disinherited and oppressed."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 93, p. 4]

G.3.4 Why is individualist anarchist support for equality important?

Another another key difference between genuine individualist anarchism and "anarcho"-capitalism is the former's support for equality and the latter's a lack of concern for it.

G.4 Why do social anarchists reject individualist anarchism?

As James J. Martin notes, *"paralleling"* European social anarchism *"chronologically was a kindred but nearly unconnected phenomenon in America, seeking the same ends through individualistic rather than collectivistic dynamics."* [**Men Against the State**, p. ix]

When the two movements meet in American in the 1880s, the similarities and differences of both came into sharp relief. While both social and individualist anarchists reject capitalism as well as the state and seek an end to the exploitation of labour by capital (i.e. to usury in all its forms), both schools of anarchism rejected each others solutions to the social problem. The vision of the social anarchists was more communally based, urging social ownership of the means of life. In contrast, reflecting the pre-dominantly pre-capitalist nature of post-revolution US society, the Individualist Anarchists urged possession of the means of life and mutual banking to end profit, interest and rent and ensure every worker access to the capital they needed to work for themselves (if they so desired). While social anarchists placed co-operatives (i.e., workers' self-management) at the centre of their vision of a free society, many individualist anarchists did not as they thought that mutual banking would end exploitation by ensuring that workers received the full product of their labour.

Thus their vision of a free society and the means to achieve it were somewhat different (although, we stress, **not** mutually exclusive as communist anarchists supported artisan possession of the means of possession for those who rejected communism and the Individualist Anarchists supported voluntary communism). Tucker argued that a communist could not be an anarchist and the communist-anarchists argued that Individualist Anarchism could not end the exploitation of capital by labour. Here we indicate why social anarchists reject individualist anarchism (see section G.2 for a summary of why Individualist Anarchists reject social anarchism).

Malatesta summarises the essential points of difference as well as the source of much of the misunderstandings:

and although Keynes did not subscribe to Proudhon's desire to use free credit to fund *"independent producers and workers' syndicates"* as a means create an economic system *"without exploitation"* he did share the Frenchman's *"attack upon the payment of interest"* and wish to see the end of the rentier. [**Marx and Keynes**, p. 5 and p. 6]

Undoubtedly, given the "Austrian" hatred of Keynes and his economics (inspired, in part, by the defeat inflicted on Hayek's business cycle theory in the 1930s by the Keynesians) this will simply confirm their opinion that the Individualist Anarchists did not have a sound economic analysis! As Rothbard noted, the individualist anarchist position was *"simply pushing to its logical conclusion a fallacy adopted widely by preclassical and by current Keynesian writers."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 10] However, Keynes was trying to analyse the economy as it is rather than deducing logically desired conclusions from the appropriate assumptions needed to confirm the prejudices of the assumer (like Rothbard). In this, he did share the same method if not exactly the same conclusions as the Individualist Anarchists and Mutualists.

Needless to say, social anarchists do not agree that mutual banking can reform capitalism away. As we discuss in section G.4, this is due to many factors, including the nature barriers to competition capital accumulation creates. However, this critique is based on the real economy and does not reflect Rothbard's abstract theorising based on pre-scientific methodology. While other anarchists may reject certain aspects of Tucker's ideas on money, we are well aware, as one commentator noted, that his *"position regarding the State and money monopoly derived from his Socialist convictions"* where socialism *"referred to an intent to fundamentally reorganise the societal systems so as to return the full product of labour to the labourers."* [Don Werkheiser, *"Benjamin R. Tucker: Champion of Free Money"*, pp. 212–221, **Benjamin R. Tucker and the Champions of Liberty**, Coughlin, Hamilton and Sullivan (eds.), p. 212]

In stark contrast to anarchists of all schools, inequality is not seen to be a problem with "anarcho"-capitalists (see section F.3). However, it is a truism that not all "traders" are equally subject to the market (i.e., have the same market power). In many cases, a few have sufficient control of resources to influence or determine price and in such cases, all others must submit to those terms or not buy the commodity. When the commodity is labour power, even this option is lacking — workers have to accept a job in order to live. As we argued in section C.9, workers are usually at a disadvantage on the labour market when compared to capitalists, and this forces them to sell their liberty in return for making profits for others. These profits increase inequality in society as the property owners receive the surplus value their workers produce. This increases inequality further, consolidating market power and so weakens the bargaining position of workers further, ensuring that even the freest competition possible could not eliminate class power and society (something Tucker eventually recognised as occurring with the development of trusts within capitalism — see section G.1.1).

By removing the underlying commitment to abolish non-labour income, any "anarchist" capitalist society would have vast differences in wealth and so power. Instead of a government imposed monopolies in land, money and so on, the economic power flowing from private property and capital would ensure that the majority remained in (to use Spooner's words) *"the condition of servants"* (see sections F.2 and F.3.1 for more on this). The Individualist Anarchists were aware of this danger and so supported economic ideas that opposed usury (i.e. rent, profit and interest) and ensured the worker the full value of her labour. While not all of them called these ideas "socialist" it is clear that these ideas **are** socialist in nature and in aim (similarly, not all the Individualist Anarchists called themselves anarchists but their ideas are clearly anarchist in nature and in aim). This combination of the political and economic is essential as they mutually reinforce each other. Without the economic ideas, the political ideas would be meaningless as inequality would make a mockery of them. As Spooner argued, inequality lead to many social evils:

"Extremes of difference, in their pecuniary circumstances, divide society into castes; set up barriers to personal acquaintance; prevent or suppress sympathy; give to different individuals a widely different experience, and thus become the fertile source of alienation, contempt, envy, hatred, and wrong. But give to each man all the fruits of his own labour, and a comparative equality with others in his pecuniary condition, and caste is broken down; education is given more equally to all; and the object is promoted of placing each on a social level with all: of introducing each to the acquaintance of all; and of giving to each the greatest amount of that experience, which, being common to all, enables him to sympathise with all, and insures to himself the sympathy of all. And thus the social virtues of mankind would be greatly increased." [**Poverty: Its Illegal Causes and Legal Cure**, pp. 46–7]

Because of the evil effects of inequality on freedom, both social and individualist anarchists desire to create an environment in which circumstances would not drive people to sell their liberty to others at a disadvantage. In other words, they desired an equalisation of market power by opposing interest, rent and profit and capitalist definitions of private property. Kline summarises this by saying *"the American [individualist] anarchists exposed the tension existing in liberal thought between private property and the ideal of equal access. The Individual Anarchists were, at least, aware that existing conditions were far from ideal, that the system itself working against the majority of individuals in their efforts to attain its promises. Lack of capital, the means to creation and accumulation of wealth, usually doomed a labourer to a life of exploitation. This the anarchists knew and they abhorred such a system."* [**The Individualist Anarchists: A critique of liberalism**, p. 102]

And this desire for bargaining equality is reflected in their economic ideas and by removing these underlying economic ideas of the individualist anarchists, "anarcho"-capitalism makes a mockery of any ideas they do appropriate. Essentially, the Individualist Anarchists agreed with Rousseau that in order to prevent extreme inequality of fortunes you deprive people of the means to accumulate in the first place and **not** take away wealth from the rich. An

call for a 100% gold standard for banks? Why would a mutual bank be excluded from a law on banking? Is there a difference between a mutual bank issuing credit on the basis of a secured loan rather than gold and a normal bank doing so? Needless to say, Rothbard never did address the fact that the customers of the banks **know** that they practised fractional reserve banking and still did business with them. Nor did he wonder why no enterprising banker exploited a market niche by advertising a 100% reserve policy. He simply assumed that the general public subscribed to his gold-bug prejudices and so would not frequent mutual banks. As for other banks, the full might of the law would be used to stop them practising the same policies and freedoms he allowed for mutual ones. So rather than give people the freedom to choose whether to save with a fractional reserve bank or not, Rothbard simply outlawed that option. Would a regime inspired by Rothbard's goldbug dogmas really allow mutual banks to operate when it refuses other banks the freedom to issue credit and money on the same basis? It seems illogical for that to be the case and so would such a regime not, in fact, simply be a new form of the money monopoly Tucker and his colleagues spent so much time combating? One thing is sure, though, even a 100% gold standard will not stop credit expansion as firms and banks would find ways around the law and it is doubtful that private defence firms would be in a position to enforce it.

Once we understand the absurd examples used to refute mutual banking plus the real reasons for inflation (i.e., *"a symptom of a struggle over the distribution of income."* [Davidson, **Op. Cit.**, p. 89]) and how credit-money actually works, it becomes clear that the case against mutual banking is far from clear. Somewhat ironically, the post-Keynesian school of economics provides a firm understanding of how a real credit system works compared to Rothbard's logical deductions from imaginary events based on propositions which are, at root, identical with Walrasian general equilibrium theory (an analysis "Austrians" tend to dismiss). It may be ironic, but not unsurprising as Keynes praised Proudhon's follower Silvio Gesell in **The General Theory** (also see Dudley Dillard's essay *"Keynes and Proudhon"* [**The Journal of Economic History**, vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 63–76]). Libertarian Marxist Paul Mattick noted Keynes debt to Proudhon,

skewing the economy back towards the bosses and profits — so making working people pay for capitalism's crisis. Which, essentially, is what the Thatcher and Reagan governments did in the early 1980s. Finding it impossible to control the money supply, they raised interest rates to dampen down the demand for credit, which provoked a deep recession. Faced with massive unemployment, workers' market power decreased and their bosses increased, causing a shift in power and income towards capital.

So, obviously, in a capitalist economy the increasing of credit is a source of instability. While not causing the business cycle, it does increase its magnitude. As the boom gathers strength, banks want to make money and increase credit by lowering interest rates below what they should be to match savings. Capitalists rush to invest, so soaking up some of the unemployment which always marks capitalism. The lack of unemployment as a disciplinary tool is why the boom turns to bust, not the increased investment. Given that in a mutualist system, profits, interest and rent do not exist then erosion of profits which marks the top of a boom would not be applicable. If prices drop, then labour income drops. Thus a mutualist society need not fear inflation. As Kaldor argued with regard to the current system, *"under a 'credit-money' system . . . unwanted or excess amounts of money* ***could never come into existence****; it is the increase in the value of transactions . . . which calls forth an increase in the 'money supply' (whether in the form of bank balances or notes in circulation) as a result of the net increase in the value of working capital at the various stages of production and distribution."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 46] The gold standard cannot do what a well-run credit-currency can do, namely tailor the money supply to the economy's demand for money. The problem in the nineteenth century was that a capitalist credit-money economy was built upon a commodity-money base, with predictably bad results.

Would this be any different under Rothbard's system? Probably not. For Rothbard, each bank would have 100% reserve of gold with a law passed that defined fractional reserve banking as fraud. How would this affect mutual banks? Rothbard argued that attempts to create mutual banks or other non-gold based banking systems would be allowed under his system. Yet, how does this fit into his repeated

important point which "anarcho"-capitalism fails to understand or appreciate.

The Individualist Anarchists assumed that exploitation of labour would be non-existent in their system, so a general equality would prevail and so economic power would not undermine liberty. Remove this underlying assumption, assume that profits could be made and capital accumulated, assume that land can be monopolised by landlords (as the "anarcho"-capitalists do) and a radically different society is produced. One in which economic power means that the vast majority have to sell themselves to get access to the means of life and are exploited by those who own them in the process. A condition of "free markets" may exist, but as Tucker argued in 1911, it would not be anarchism. The ***deus ex machina*** of invisible hands takes a beating in the age of monopolies.

So we must stress that the social situation is important as it shows how apparently superficially similar arguments can have radically different aims and results depending on who suggests them and in what circumstances. Hence the importance of individualist anarchist support for equality. Without it, genuine freedom would not exist for the many and "anarchy" would simply be private statism enforcing rule by the rich.

G.3.5 Would individualist anarchists have accepted "Austrian" economics?

One of the great myths perpetrated by "anarcho"-capitalists is the notion that "anarcho"-capitalism is simply individualist anarchism plus "Austrian" economics. Nothing could be further from the truth, as is clear once the individualist anarchist positions on capitalist property rights, exploitation and equality are understood. Combine this with their vision of a free society as well as the social and political environment they were part of and the ridiculous nature of such claims become obvious.

At its most basic, Individualist anarchism was rooted in socialist economic analysis as would be expected of a self-proclaimed socialist

theory and movement. The "anarcho"-capitalists, in a roundabout way, recognise this with Rothbard dismissing the economic fallacies of individualist anarchism in favour of "Austrian" economics. *"There is,"* he stated, *"in the body of thought known as 'Austrian economics,' a scientific [sic!] explanation of the workings of the free market . . . which individualist anarchists could easily incorporate into their so political and social* ***Weltanshauung****. But to do this, they must throw out the worthless excess baggage of money-crankism and reconsider the nature and justification of the economic categories of interest, rent and profit."* Yet Rothbard's assertion is nonsense, given that the individualist anarchists were well aware of various justifications for exploitation expounded by the defenders of capitalism and rejected everyone. He himself noted that the *"individualist anarchists were exposed to critiques of their economic fallacies; but, unfortunately, the lesson, despite the weakness of Tucker's replies, did not take."* [*"The Spooner-Tucker Doctrine: An Economist's View"*, **Op. Cit.**, p. 14] As such, it seems like extremely wishful thinking that the likes of Tucker would have rushed to embrace an economic ideology whose basic aim has always been to refute the claims of socialism and defend capitalism from attacks on it.

Nor can it be suggested that the individualist anarchists were ignorant of the developments within bourgeois economics which the "Austrian" school was part of. Both Tucker and Yarros, for example, attacked marginal productivity theory as advocated by John B. Clark. [**Liberty**, no. 305] Tucker critiqued another anarchist for once being an *"Anarchistic socialist, standing squarely upon the principles of Liberty and Equity"* but then *"abandon[ing] Equity by repudiating the Socialistic theory of value and adopting one which differs but little, if any, from that held by the ordinary economist."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 80, p. 4] So the likes of Tucker were well aware of the so-called marginalist revolution and rejected it.

Somewhat ironically, a key founders of "Austrian" economics was quoted favourably in **Liberty** but only with regards to his devastating critique of existing theories of interest and profit. Hugo Bilgram asked a defender of interest whether he had *"ever read Volume 1 of Böhm-Bawerk's 'Capital and Interest'"* for in this volume *"the fructification theory is . . . completely refuted."* Bilgram, needless to say,

worker and capitalist. In other words, that capitalism needs unemployment to exist and so cannot produce an efficient and humane allocation of resources.

By supplying working people with money which is used to create productive co-operatives and demand for their products, mutual banks increase the amount of goods and services in circulation as it increases the money supply. Combined with the elimination of profit, rent and interest, inflationary pressures are effectively undercut (it makes much more sense to talk of a interest/rent/profits-prices spiral rather than a wages-prices spiral when discussing inflation). Only in the context of the ridiculous examples presented by neoclassical and "Austrian" economics does increasing the money supply result in rising inflation. Indeed, the "sound economic" view, in which if the various money-substitutes are in a fixed and constant proportion to "real money" (i.e. gold or silver) then inflation would not exist, ignores the history of money and the nature of the banking system. It overlooks the fact that the emergence of bank notes, fractional reserve banking and credit was a spontaneous process, not planned or imposed by the state, but rather came from the profit needs of capitalist banks which, in turn, reflected the real needs of the economy (*"The truth is that, as the exchanges of the world increased, and the time came when there was not enough gold and silver to effect these exchanges, so . . . people had to resort to paper promises."* [John Beverley Robinson, **Op. Cit.**, p. 139]). What **was** imposed by the state, however, was the imposition of legal tender, the use of specie and a money monopoly (*"attempt after attempt has been made to introduce credit money outside of government and national bank channels, and the promptness of the suppression has always been proportional to the success of the attempt."* [Tucker, **Liberty**, no. 193, p. 3]).

Given that the money supply is endogenous in nature, any attempt to control the money supply will fail. Rather than control the money supply, which would be impossible, the state would have to use interest rates. To reduce the demand for money, interest rates would be raised higher and higher, causing a deep recession as business cannot maintain their debt payments and go bankrupt. This would cause unemployment to rise, weakening workers' bargaining power and

lower profits, capitalists use their control over industry and market power of their firms to maintain their profit levels at the expense of the consumer (i.e., the workers and their families).

In this sense, mutual banks **could** contribute to inflation — by reducing unemployment by providing the credit needed for workers to start their own businesses and co-operatives, workers' power would increase and so reduce the power of managers to extract more work for a given wage and give workers a better economic environment to ask for better wages and conditions. This was, it should be stressed, a key reason why the individualist anarchists supported mutual banking:

> *"people who are now deterred from going into business by the ruinously high rates which they must pay for capital with which to start and carry on business will find their difficulties removed . . . This facility of acquiring capital will give an unheard of impetus to business, and consequently create an unprecedented demand for labour — a demand which will always be in excess of the supply, directly to the contrary of the present condition of the labour market . . . Labour will then be in a position to dictate its wages."* [Tucker, **The Individualist Anarchists**, pp. 84–5]

And, it must also be stressed, this was a key reason why the capitalist class turned against Keynesian full employment policies in the 1970s (see section C.8.3). Lower interest rates and demand management by the state lead precisely to the outcome predicted by the likes of Tucker, namely an increase in working class power in the labour market as a result of a lowering of unemployment to unprecedented levels. This, however, lead to rising prices as capitalists tried to maintain their profits by passing on wage increases rather than take the cut in profits indicated by economic forces. This could also occur if mutual banking took off and, in this sense, mutual banking could produce inflation. However, such an argument against the scheme requires the neo-classical and "Austrian" economist to acknowledge that capitalism cannot produce full employment and that the labour market must always be skewed in favour of the capitalist to keep it working, to maintain the inequality of bargaining power between

did not support Böhm-Bawerk's defence of usury, instead arguing that restrictions in the amount of money forced people to pay for its use and *"[t]his, and nothing else, [causes] the interest accruing to capital, regarding which the modern economists are doing their utmost to find a theory that will not expose the system of industrial piracy of today."* He did not exclude Böhm-Bawerk's theory from his conclusion that *"since every one of these pet theories is based on some fallacy, [economists] cannot agree upon any one."* The abolition of the money monopoly will *"abolish the power of capital to appropriate a net profit."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 282, p. 11] Tucker himself noted that Böhm-Bawerk *"has refuted all these ancient apologies for interest — productivity of capital, abstinence, etc."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 287, p. 5] **Liberty** also published a synopsis of Francis Tandy's **Voluntary Socialism**, whose chapter 6 was *"devoted to an analysis of value according to the marginal utility value of Böhm-Bawerk. It also deals with the Marxian theory of surplus value, showing that all our economic ills are due to the existence of that surplus value."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 334, p. 5] Clearly, then, the individualist anarchists were aware of the "Austrian" tradition and only embraced its critique of previous defences of non-labour incomes.

We have already critiqued the "time preference" justification for interest in section C.2.7 so will not go into it in much detail here. Rothbard argued that it *"should be remembered by radicals that, if they wanted to, all workers could refuse to work for wages and instead form their own producers' co-operatives and wait for years for their pay until the producers are sold to the consumers; the fact that they do not do so, shows the enormous advantage of the capital investment, wage-paying system as a means of allowing workers to earn money far in advance of the sale of their products."* And how, Professor Rothbard, are these workers to live during the years they wait until their products are sold? The reason why workers do not work for themselves has nothing to do with "time preference" but their lack of resources, their **class** position. Showing how capitalist ideology clouds the mind, Rothbard asserted that interest (*"in the shape of 'long-run' profit"*) would still exist in a *"world in which everyone invested his own money and nobody loaned or borrowed."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 12] Presumably, this means that the self-employed worker who invests her own money

into her own farm pays herself interest payments just as her labour income is, presumably, the "profits" from which this "interest" payment is deducted along with the "rent" for access to the land she owns!

So it seems extremely unlikely that the individualist anarchists would have considered "Austrian" economics as anything other than an attempt to justify exploitation and capitalism, like the other theories they spent so much time refuting. They would quickly have noted that "time preference", like the "waiting"/"abstinence" justifications for interest, is based on taking the current class system for granted and ignoring the economic pressures which shape individual decisions. In Tucker's words (when he critiqued Henry George's argument that interest is related to time) *"increase which is purely the work of time bears a price only because of monopoly."* The notion that "time" produced profit or interest was one Tucker was well aware of, and refuted on many occasions. He argued that it was class monopoly, restrictions on banking, which caused interest and *"where there is no monopoly there will be little or no interest."* If someone *"is to be rewarded for his mere time, what will reward him save [another]'s labour? There is no escape from this dilemma. The proposition that the man who for time spent in idleness receives the product of time employed in labour is a parasite upon the body industrial is one which . . . [its supporters] can never successfully dispute with men who understand the rudiments of political economy."* [**Liberty**, no. 109, p. 4 and p. 5] For Joshua King Ingalls, *"abstinence"* (or the ability to *"wait,"* as it was renamed in the late nineteenth century) was *"a term with which our cowardly moral scientists and political economists attempt to conjure up a spirit that will justify the greed of our land and money systems; by a casuistry similar to that which once would have justified human slavery."* [*"Labor, Wages, And Capital. Division Of Profits Scientifically Considered,"* **Brittan's Quarterly Journal**, I (1873), pp. 66–79]

What of the economic justification for that other great evil for individualist anarchists, rent? Rothbard attacked Adam Smith comment that landlords were monopolists who demanded rent for nature's produce and like to reap where they never sowed. As he put it, Smith showed *"no hint of recognition here that the landlord performs the*

soon restores the rate to its proper level." A crash, according to Rothbard, is the process of restoring the rate of interest to its *"proper"* level yet a crash can occur even if the interest rate is at that rate, assuming that the banks can discover this equilibrium rate and have an incentive to do so (as we discussed in section C.8 both are unlikely). Ultimately, credit expansion fails under capitalism because it runs into the contradictions within the capitalist economy, the need for capitalists, financiers and landlords to make profits via exploiting labour. As interest rates increase, capitalists have to service their rising debts putting pressure on their profit margins and so raising the number of bankruptcies. In an economy without non-labour income, the individualist anarchists argued, this process is undercut if not eliminated.

So expanding this from the world of fictional government helicopters and money fairies, we can see why Rothbard is wrong. Mutual banks operate on the basis of providing loans to people to set up or expand business, either as individuals or as co-operatives. When they provide a loan, in other words, they **increase** the amount of goods and services in the economy. Similarly, they do not simply increase the money supply to reduce interest rates. Rather, they reduce interest rates to increase the demand for money in order to increase the productive activity in an economy. By producing new goods and services, inflation is kept at bay. Would increased demand for goods by the new firms create inflation? Only if every firm was operating at maximum output, which would be a highly unlikely occurrence in reality (unlike in economic textbooks).

So what, then does case inflation? Inflation, rather than being the result of monetary factors, is, in fact, a result of profit levels and the dynamic of the class struggle. In this most anarchists agree with post-Keynesian economics which views inflation as *"a symptom of an on-going struggle over income distribution by the exertion of market power."* [Paul Davidson, **Op. Cit.**, p. 102] As workers' market power increases via fuller employment, their organisation, militancy and solidarity increases so eroding profits as workers keep more of the value they produce. Capitalists try and maintain their profits by rising prices, thus generating inflation (i.e. general price rises). Rather than accept the judgement of market forces in the form of

during the year. Then A carries the notes to the bank, receives in exchange for them his mortgage note, and the bank cancels the mortgage. Now, in this whole circle of transactions, has there been any lending of capital? If so, who was the lender? If not, who is entitled to interest?" [**Instead of a Book**, p. 198]

Obviously, in a real economy, as Rothbard admits *"inflation of the money supply takes place a step at a time and that the first beneficiaries, the people who get the new money first, gain at the expense of the people unfortunate enough to come last in line."* This process is *"plunder and exploitation"* as the *"prices of things they [those last in line] have to buy shooting up before the new injection [of money] filters down to them."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 11] Yet this expansion of the initial example, again, assumes that there is no increase in goods and services in the economy, that the *"first beneficiaries"* do nothing with the money bar simply buying more of the existing goods and services. It further assumes that this existing supply of goods and services is unchangeable, that firms do not have inventories of goods and sufficient slack to meet unexpected increases in demand. In reality, of course, a mutual bank would be funding productive investments and any firm will respond to increasing demand by increasing production as their inventories start to decline. In effect, Rothbard's analysis is just as static and unrealistic as the notion of money suddenly appearing overnight in people's wallets. Perhaps unsurprisingly Rothbard compared the credit generation of banks to the act of counterfeiters so showing his utter lack of awareness of how banks work in a credit-money (i.e., real) economy.

The "Austrian" theory of the business cycle is rooted in the notion that banks artificially lower the rate of interest by providing more credit than their savings and specie reverses warrant. Even in terms of pure logic, such an analysis is flawed as it cannot reasonably be asserted that all "malinvestment" is caused by credit expansion as capitalists and investors make unwise decisions all the time, irrespective of the supply of credit. Thus it is simply false to assert, as Rothbard did, that the *"process of inflation, as carried out in the real [sic!] world"* is based on *"new money"* entered the market by means of *"the loan market"* but *"this fall is strictly temporary, and the market*

vital function of allocating the land to its most productive use." [**An Austrian Perspective on the History of Economic Thought**, vol. 1, p. 456] Yet, as Smith was well aware, it is the farmer who has to feed himself and pay rent who decides how best to use the land, not the landlord. All the landlord does is decide whether to throw the farmer off the land when a more profitable business opportunity arrives (as in, say, during the Highland clearances) or that it is more "productive" to export food while local people starve (as in, say, the great Irish famine). It was precisely this kind of arbitrary power which the individualist anarchists opposed. As John Beverley Robinson put it, the *"land owner gives nothing whatever, but permission to you to live and work on his land. He does not give his product in exchange for yours. He did not produce the land. He obtained a title at law to it; that is, a privilege to keep everybody off his land until they paid him his price. He is well called the lord of the land — the landlord!"* [**Patterns of Anarchy**, p. 271]

Significantly, while Rothbard attacked Henry George's scheme for land nationalisation as being a tax on property owners and stopping rent playing the role "Austrian" economic theory assigns it, the individualist anarchists opposed it because, at best, it would not end landlordism or, at worse, turn the state into the only landlord. In an unequal society, leasing land from the state *"would greatly enhance the power of capitalism to engross the control of the land, since it would relieve it of the necessity of applying large amounts in purchasing land which it could secure the same control of by lease . . . It would greatly augment and promote the reign of the capitalism and displace the independent worker who now cultivates his own acres, but who would be then unable to compete with organised capital . . . and would be compelled to give up his holding and sink into the ranks of the proletariat."* [Joshua King Ingalls, Bowman N. Hall, *"Joshua K. Ingalls, American Individualist: Land Reformer, Opponent of Henry George and Advocate of Land Leasing, Now an Established Mode"*, pp. 383–96, **American Journal of Economics and Sociology**, Vol. 39, No. 4, p. 394]

Given Tucker's opposition to rent, interest and profit is should go without saying that he rejected the neo-classical and "Austrian" notion that a workers' wages equalled the "marginal product," i.e.

its contribution to the production process (see section C.2 for a critique of this position). Basing himself on the socialist critique of classical economics developed by Proudhon and Marx, he argued that non-labour income was usury and would be driven to zero in a genuinely free market. As such, any notion that Tucker thought that workers in a "free market" are paid according to their marginal product is simply wrong and any claim otherwise shows a utter ignorance of the subject matter. Individualist anarchists like Tucker strongly believed that a truly free (i.e. non-capitalist) market would ensure that the worker would receive the *"full product"* of his or her labour. Nevertheless, in order to claim Tucker as a proto-"anarcho"-capitalist, "anarcho"-capitalists may argue that capitalism pays the "market price" of labour power, and that this price **does** reflect the *"full product"* (or value) of the worker's labour. As Tucker was a socialist, we doubt that he would have agreed with the "anarcho"-capitalist argument that market price of labour reflected the value it produced. He, like the other individualist anarchists, was well aware that labour produces the "surplus value" which was appropriated in the name of interest, rent and profit. In other words, he very forcibly rejected the idea that the market price of labour reflects the value of that labour, considering *"the natural wage of labour is its product"* and *"that this wage, or product, is the only just source of income."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 6]

Liberty also favourably quoted a supporter of the silver coinage, General Francis A. Walker, and his arguments in favour of ending the gold standard. It praised his argument as *"far more sound and rational than that of the supercilios, narrow, bigoted monomentallists."* Walker attacked those *"economists of the **a priori** school, who treat all things industrial as if they were in a state of flux, ready to be poured indifferently into any kind of mould or pattern."* These economists *"are always on hand with the answer that industrial society will 'readjust' itself to the new conditions"* and *"it would not matter if wages were at any time unduly depressed by combinations of employers, inasmuch as the excess of profits resulting would infallibly become capital, and as such, constitute an additional demand for labour . . . It has been the teaching of the economists of this sort which has so deeply discredited political economy with the labouring men on the one hand, and with*

small amount of wealth now produced, I would not waste a moment's energy on it." [**Liberty**, no. 193, p. 3]).

This, in reply to the claims of neo-classical economics, indicates why mutual banking would not increase inflation. Like the neo-classical position, Rothbard's viewpoint is static in nature and does not understand how a real economy works. Needless to say, he (like Friedman) did not discuss how the new money gets into circulation. Perhaps, like Hume, it was a case of the money fairy (laissez-fairy?) placing the money into people's wallets. Maybe it was a case, like Friedman, of government (black?) helicopters dropping it from the skies. Rothbard did not expound on the mechanism by which money would be created or placed into circulation, rather it just appears one day out of the blue and starts chasing a given amount of goods. However, the individualist anarchists and mutualists did not think in such bizarre (typically, economist) ways. Rather than think that mutual banks would hand out cash willy-nilly to passing strangers, they realistically considered the role of the banks to be one of evaluating useful investment opportunities (i.e., ones which would be likely to succeed). As such, the role of credit would be to **increase** the number of goods and services in circulation along with money, so ensuring that inflation is not generated (assuming that it is caused by the money supply, of course). As one Individualist Anarchist put it, *"[i]n the absence of such restrictions [on money and credit], imagine the rapid growth of wealth, and the equity in its distribution, that would result."* [John Beverley Robinson, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 144] Thus Tucker:

> *"A is a farmer owning a farm. He mortgages his farm to a bank for $1,000, giving the bank a mortgage note for that sum and receiving in exchange the bank's notes for the same sum, which are secured by the mortgage. With the bank-notes A buys farming tools of B. The next day B uses the notes to buy of C the materials used in the manufacture of tools. The day after, C in turn pays them to D in exchange for something he needs. At the end of a year, after a constant succession of exchanges, the notes are in the hands of Z, a dealer in farm produce. He pays them to A, who gives in return $1,000 worth of farm products which he has raised*

will increase prices is flawed. Defenders of this argument usually present mental exercises to prove their case (as in Hume and Friedman). Needless to say, such an argument is spurious in the extreme simply because money does not enter the economy in this fashion. It is generated to meet specific demands for money and is so, generally, used productively. In other words, money creation is a function of the demand for credit, which is a function of the needs of the economy (i.e. it is endogenous) and **not** determined by the central bank injecting it into the system (i.e. it is **not** exogenous). And this indicates why the argument that mutual banking would produce inflation is flawed. It does not take into account the fact that money will be used to generate ***new*** goods and services.

As leading Post-Keynesian economist Paul Davidson argued, the notion that *"inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon"* (to use Friedman's expression) is *"ultimately based on the old homily that inflation is merely 'too many dollars chasing too few goods.'"* Davidson notes that *"[t]his 'too many dollars cliché is usually illustrated by employing a two-island parable. Imagine a hypothetical island where the only available goods are 10 apples and the money supply consists of, say, 10 $1 bills. If all the dollars are used to purchase the apples, the price per apple will be $1. For comparison, assume that on a second island there are 20 $1 bills and only 10 apples. All other things being equal, the price will be $2 per apple. Ergo, inflation occurs whenever the money supply is excessive relative to the available goods."* The similarities with Rothbard's argument are clear. So are its flaws as *"no explanation is given as to why the money supply was greater on the second island. Nor is it admitted that, if the increase in the money supply is associated with entrepreneurs borrowing 'real bills' from banks to finance an increase in payrolls necessary to harvest, say, 30 additional apples so that the $20 chases 40 apples, then the price will be only $0.50 per apple. If a case of 'real bills' finance occurs, then an increase in the money supply is not associated with higher prices but with greater output."* [**Controversies in Post Keynesian Economics**, p. 100] Davidson is unknowingly echoing Tucker (*"It is the especial claim of free banking that it will increase production . . . If free banking were only a picayanish attempt to distribute more equitably the practical business men on the other."* The *"greatest part of the evil of a diminishing money supply is wrought through the discouragement of enterprise."* [**Liberty**, no. 287, p. 11] Given that the "Austrian" school takes the **a priori** methodology to ridiculous extremes and is always on hand to defend *"excess of profits"*, *"combinations of employers"* and the gold standard we can surmise Tucker's reaction to Rothbard's pet economic ideology.

Somewhat ironically, give Rothbard's attempts to inflict bourgeois economics along with lots of other capitalist ideology onto individualist anarchism, Kropotkin noted that supporters of *"individualist anarchism . . . soon realise that the individualisation they so highly praise is not attainable by individual efforts, and . . . [some] abandon the ranks of the anarchists, and are driven into the liberal individualism of the classical economists."* [**Anarchism**, p. 297] "Anarcho"-capitalists confuse the ending place of **ex**-anarchists with their starting point. As can be seen from their attempt to co-opt the likes of Spooner and Tucker, this confusion only appears persuasive by ignoring the bulk of their ideas as well as rewriting the history of anarchism.

So it can, we think, be save to assume that Tucker and other individualist anarchists would have little problem in refuting Rothbard's economic fallacies as well as his goldbug notions (which seem to be a form of the money monopoly in another form) and support for the land monopoly. Significantly, modern individualist anarchists like Kevin Carson have felt no need to embrace "Austrian" economics and retain their socialist analysis while, at the same time, making telling criticisms of Rothbard's favourite economic ideology and the apologetics for "actually existing" capitalism its supporters too often indulge in (Carson calls this *"vulgar libertarianism"*, wherein right-"libertarians" forget that the current economuy is far from their stated ideal when it is a case of defending corporations or the wealthy).

G.3.6 Would mutual banking simply cause inflation?

One of the arguments against Individualist and mutualist anarchism, and mutual banking in general, is that it would just produce accelerating inflation. The argument is that by providing credit without interest, more and more money would be pumped into the economy. This would lead to more and more money chasing a given set of goods, so leading to price rises and inflation.

Rothbard, for example, dismissed individualist anarchist ideas on mutual banking as being *"totally fallacious monetary views."* He based his critique on "Austrian" economics and its notion of *"time preference"* (see section C.2.7 for a critique of this position). Mutual banking would artificially lower the interest rate by generating credit, Rothbard argued, with the new money only benefiting those who initially get it. This process "exploits" those further down the line in the form accelerating inflation. As more and more money was be pumped into the economy, it would lead to more and more money chasing a given set of goods, so leading to price rises and inflation. To prove this, Rothbard repeated Hume's argument that *"if everybody magically woke up one morning with the quantity of money in his possession doubled"* then prices would simply doubled. [*"The Spooner-Tucker Doctrine: An Economist's View"*, **Journal of Libertarian Studies**, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 14 and p. 10]

However, Rothbard is assuming that the amount of goods and services are fixed. This is just wrong and shows a real lack of understanding of how money works in a real economy. This is shown by the lack of agency in his example, the money just "appears" by magic (perhaps by means of a laissez-fairy?). Milton Friedman made the same mistake, although he used the more up to date example of government helicopters dropping bank notes. As post-Keynesian economist Nicholas Kaldor pointed out with regards to Friedman's position, the *"transmission mechanism from money to income remained a 'black box' — he could not explain it, and he did not attempt to explain it either. When it came to the question of* ***how*** *the authorities increase the supply of bank notes in circulation he answered that they*

are scattered over populated areas by means of a helicopter — though he did not go into the ultimate consequences of such an aerial Santa Claus." [**The Scourge of Monetarism**, p. 28]

Friedman's and Rothbard's analysis betrays a lack of understanding of economics and money. This is unsurprising as it comes to us via neo-classical economics. In neo-classical economics inflation is always a monetary phenomena — too much money chasing too few goods. Milton Friedman's Monetarism was the logical conclusion of this perspective and although "Austrian" economics is extremely critical of Monetarism it does, however, share many of the same assumptions and fallacies (as Hayek's one-time follower Nicholas Kaldor noted, key parts of Friedman's doctrine are *"closely reminiscent of the Austrian school of the twenties and the early thirties"* although it *"misses some of the subtleties of the Hayekian transmission mechanism and of the money-induced distortions in the 'structure of production.'"* [**The Essential Kaldor**, pp. 476–7]). We can reject this argument on numerous points.

Firstly, the claim that inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomena has been empirically refuted — often using Friedman's own data and attempts to apply his dogma in real life. As we noted in section C.8.3, the growth of the money supply and inflation have no fixed relationship, with money supply increasing while inflation falling. As such, *"the claim that inflation is always and everywhere caused by increases in the money supply, and that the rate of inflation bears a stable, predictable relationship to increases in the money supply is ridiculous."* [Paul Ormerod, **The Death of Economics**, p. 96] This means that the assumption that increasing the money supply by generating credit will always simply result in inflation cannot be supported by the empirical evidence we have. As Kaldor stressed, the *"the 'first-round effects' of the helicopter operation could be anything, depending on where the scatter occurred . . . there is no reason to suppose that the ultimate effect on the amount of money in circulation or on incomes would bear any close relation to the initial injections."* [**The Scourge of Monetarism**, p. 29]

Secondly, even if we ignore the empirical record (as "Austrian" economics tends to do when faced with inconvenient facts) the "logical" argument used to explain the theory that increases in money

for patents, Tucker considered that there was *"no more justification for the claim of the discoverer of an idea to exclusive use of it than there would have been for a claim on the part of the man who first 'struck oil' to ownership of the entire oil region or petroleum product . . . The central injustice of copyright and patent law is that it compels the race to pay an individual through a long term of years a monopoly price for knowledge that he has discovered today, although some other man or men might, and in many cases very probably would, have discovered it tomorrow."* [**Liberty**, no. 173, p. 4] The state, therefore, protects the inventors (or, these days, the company the inventors work for) *"against competition for a period long enough to enable them to extort from the people a reward enormously in excess of the labour measure of their services — in other words, in giving certain people a right of property for a term of years in laws and facts of Nature, and the power to extract tribute from others for the use of this natural wealth, which should be open to all."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 86]

However, the key monopoly was the credit monopoly. Tucker believed that bankers monopoly of the power to create credit and currency was the linchpin of capitalism. Although he thought that all forms of monopoly are detrimental to society, he maintained that the banking monopoly is the worst, since it is the root from which both the industrial-capitalist and landlordist monopolies grow and without which they would wither and die. For, if credit were not monopolised, its price (i.e. interest rates) would be much lower, which in turn would drastically lower the price of capital goods and buildings — expensive items that generally cannot be purchased without access to credit. This would mean that the people currently *"deterred from going into business by the ruinously high rates they must pay for capital with which to start and carry on business will find their difficulties removed"* (they would simply *"pay for the labour of running the banks"*). This *"facility of acquiring capital will give an unheard of impetus to business, and consequently create an unprecedented demand for labour — a demand which will always be in excess of the supply, directly to the contrary of the present condition of the labour market . . . Labour will then be in a position to dictate its wages."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 84 and p. 85]

the municipalities, and to districts within their jurisdiction" while *"the control of carrying them out will rest with the workmen's associations."* This was due to both their nature and libertarian values and so the *"direct, sovereign initiative of localities, in arranging for public works that belong to them, is a consequence of the democratic principle and the free contract: their subordination to the State is . . . a return to feudalism."* Workers' self-management of such public workers was, again, a matter of libertarian principles for *"it becomes necessary for the workers to form themselves into democratic societies, with equal conditions for all members, on pain of a relapse into feudalism."* [**The General Idea of the Revolution**, p. 276 and p. 277]

In the case of a park, either it is open to all or it is fenced off and police used to bar access. Taking "occupancy and use" as our starting point then it becomes clear that, over time, either the community organises itself communally or a park becomes private property. If a group of people frequent a common area then they will have to discuss how to maintain it — for example, arrange for labour to be done on it, whether to have a play-ground for children or to have a duck pond, whether to increase the numbers and types of trees, and so forth. That implies the development of communal structures. In the case of new people using the amenity, either they are excluded from it (and have to pay for access) or they automatically join the users group and so the park is, in effect, common property and socialised. In such circumstances, it would be far easier simply to ignore the issue of individual contributions and base access on need (i.e., communistic principles). However, as already indicated in section G.2.1, social anarchists reject attempts to coerce other workers into joining a co-operative or commune. Freedom cannot be given, it must be taken and social anarchism, like all forms of anarchy, cannot be imposed. How those who reject social anarchism will gain access to common property will depend, undoubtedly, on specific circumstances and who exactly is involved and how they wish to utilise it. As such, it will be difficult to generalise as each commune will determine what is best and reach the appropriate contracts with any individualist anarchists in their midst or vicinity.

It should also be pointed out (and this may seem ironic), wage labour does have the advantage that people can move to new locations and work without having to sell their old means of living. Often moving somewhere can be a hassle if one has to sell a shop or home. Many people prefer not to be tied down to one place. This is a problem in a system based on "occupancy and use" as permanently leaving a property means that it automatically becomes abandoned and so its users may be forced to stay in one location until they find a buyer for it. This is not an issue in social anarchism as access to the means of life is guaranteed to all members of the free society.

Most social anarchists also are critical of the means which individualists anarchists support to achieve anarchy, namely to abolish capitalism by the creation of mutual banks which would compete exploitation and oppression away. While mutual banks could aid the position of working class people under capitalism (which is why Bakunin and other social anarchists recommended them), they cannot undermine or eliminate it. This is because capitalism, due to its need to accumulate, creates **natural** barriers to entry into a market (see section C.4). Thus the physical size of the large corporation would make it immune to the influence of mutual banking and so usury could not be abolished. Even if we look at the claimed indirect impact of mutual banking, namely an increase in the demand of labour and so wages, the problem arises that if this happens then capitalism would soon go into a slump (with obvious negative effects on small firms and co-operatives). In such circumstances, the number of labourers seeking work would rise and so wages would fall and profits rise. Then it is a case of whether the workers would simply tolerate the slump and let capitalism continue or whether they would seize their workplaces and practice the kind of expropriation individualist anarchists tended to oppose.

This problem was recognised by many individualist anarchists themselves and it played a significant role in its decline as a movement. By 1911 Tucker had come to the same conclusions as communist-anarchists on whether capitalism could be reformed away. As we noted in section G.1.1, he *"had come to believe that free banking and similar measures, even if inaugurated, were no longer adequate to break the monopoly of capitalism or weaken the authority of the state."*

owning users to pay tribute to the non-using owners as a condition of admission to the competitive market." the land *"should be free to all, and no one would control more than he [or she] used."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 85, p. 130 and p. 114] Ending this monopoly would, he thought, reduce the evils of capitalism and increase liberty (particularly in predominantly agricultural societies such as the America of his era). For those who own no property have no room for the soles of their feet unless they have the permission of those who do own property, hardly a situation that would increase, never mind protect, freedom for all. Significantly, Tucker extended this principle to what was on the land, and so Tucker would *"accord the actual occupant and user of land the right to that which is upon the land, who left it there when abandoning the land."* [**Liberty**, no. 350, p. 4] The freedom to squat empty land and buildings would, in the absence of a state to protect titles, further contribute to the elimination of rent:

> *"Ground rent exists only because the State stands by to collect it and to protect land titles rooted in force or fraud. Otherwise land would be free to all, and no one could control more than he used."* [quoted by James J. Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 210]

This would lead to *"the abolition of landlordism and the annihilation of rent."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 300] Significantly, Tucker considered the **Irish Land League** (an organisation which used non-payment of rent to secure reforms against the British state) as *"the nearest approach, on a large scale, to perfect Anarchistic organisation that the world has yet seen. An immense number of local groups . . . each group autonomous, each free . . . each obeying its own judgement . . . all co-ordinated and federated."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 263]

The other capitalist monopolies were based on credit, tariffs and patents and all were reflected in (and supported by) the law. As far as tariffs went, this was seen as a statist means of *"fostering production at high prices"* which the workers paid for. Its abolition *"would result in a great reduction in the prices of all articles taxed.* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 85 and p. 86] With capitalists in the protected industries being unable to reap high profits, they would be unable to accumulate capital to the same degree and so the market would also become more equal. As

ownership." Supporting the current property rights regime meant *"departing from Anarchistic ground."* It was *"Archism"* and *"all Anarchists agree in viewing [it] as a denial of equal liberty"* and *"utterly inconsistent with the Anarchistic doctrine of occupancy and use as the limit of property in land."* [**Liberty**, no. 180, p. 4 and p. 6] He looked forward to the day when *"the Anarchistic view that occupancy and use should condition and limit landholding becomes the prevailing view."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 162, p. 5]

This was because Tucker did not believe in a *"natural right"* to property nor did he approve of unlimited holdings of scarce goods and *"in the case of land, or of any other material the supply of which is so limited that all cannot hold it in unlimited quantities, Anarchism undertakes to protect no titles except such as are based on actual occupancy and use."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 61] He clearly recognised that allowing "absolute" rights to private property in land would result in the liberty of non-owners being diminished and so *"I put the right of occupancy and use above the right of contract . . . principally by my interest in the right of contract. Without such a preference the theory of occupancy and use is utterly untenable; without it . . . it would be possible for an individual to acquire, and hold simultaneously, virtual titles to innumerable parcels of land, by the merest show of labour performed thereon.* This would lead to *"the virtual ownership of the entire world by a small fraction of its inhabitants"* which would result in *"the right of contract, if not destroyed absolutely, would surely be impaired in an intolerable degree."* [**Liberty**, no. 350, p. 4] Thus *"[i]t is true . . . that Anarchism does not recognise the principle of human rights. But it recognises human equality as a necessity of stable society."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 64]

So Tucker considered private property in land use (which he called the *"land monopoly"*) as one of the four great evils of capitalism. According to Tucker, *"the land monopoly . . . consists in the enforcement by government of land titles which do not rest upon personal occupancy and cultivation . . . the individual should no longer be protected by their fellows in anything but personal occupation and cultivation of land." "Rent"*, he argued, *"is due to the denial of liberty which takes the shape of the land monopoly, vesting titles to land in individuals and associations which do not use it, and thereby compelling the non-*

[Paul Avrich, **Anarchist Voices**, p. 6] While admitted that political or revolutionary action was required to destroy the concentrations of capital which made anarchy impossible even with free competition, he rejected the suggestion that individualist anarchists should join in such activity. Voltairine de Cleyre came to similar conclusions earlier and started working with Emma Goldman before becoming a communist-anarchist sometime in 1908. Perhaps unsurprisingly, one historian argues that as the *"native American variety of anarchism dissolved in the face of increasing State repression and industrialisation, rationalisation, and concentration of capital, American anarchists were forced either to acquiesce or to seek a more militant stain of anarchism: this latter presented itself in the form of Communist Anarchism . . . Faith in peaceful evolution toward an anarchist society seemed archaic and gradually faded."* [Kline, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 83]

So while state action may increase the degree of monopoly in an industry, the natural tendency for any market is to place barriers (natural ones) to new entries in terms of set-up costs and so on. This applies just as much to co-operatives as it does to companies based on wage-labour. It means that if the relation between capital and labour was abolished **within** the workplace (by their transformation into co-operatives) but they remained the property of their workers, it would only be a matter of time before the separation of the producers from their means of production reproduced itself. This is because, within any market system, some firms fail and others succeed. Those which fail will create a pool of unemployed workers who will need a job. The successful co-operatives, safe behind their natural barriers to entry, would be in a stronger position than the unemployed workers and so may hire them as wage labourers — in effect, the co-operative workers would become "collective capitalists" hiring other workers. This would end workers' self-management (as not all workers are involved in the decision making process) as well as workers' ownership, i.e. *"occupancy and use,"* (as not all workers' would own the means of production they used). The individual workers involved may "consent" to becoming wage slaves, but that is because it is the best option available rather than what they really want. Which, of course, is the same as under capitalism.

This was why Proudhon argued that *"every worker employed in the association"* must have *"an undivided share in the property of the company"* in order to ensure workers' self-management. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 222] Only this could ensure *"occupancy and use"* and so self-management in a free society (i.e. keep that society free). Thus in anarchism, as de Cleyre summarised, it is *"a settled thing that to be free one must have liberty of access to the sources and means of production"* Without socialisation of the means of life, liberty of access could be denied. Little wonder she argued that she had become *"convinced that a number of the fundamental propositions of individualistic economy would result in the destruction of equal liberty."* The only logical anarchist position is *"that some settlement of the whole labour question was needed which would not split up the people again into land possessors and employed wage-earners."* Hence her movement from individualism towards, first, mutualism and then communism — it was the only logical position to take in a rapidly industrialising America which had made certain concepts of individualism obsolete. It was her love of freedom which made her sensitive to the possibility of any degeneration back into capitalism: *"the instinct of liberty naturally revolted not only at economic servitude, but at the outcome of it, class-lines."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 58, p. 105, p. 61 and p. 55] As we argue in section G.4.2 such a possibility can be avoided only by a consistent application of "occupancy and use" which, in practice, would be nearly identical to the communalisation or socialisation of the means of life.

This issue is related to the question of inequality within a market economy and whether free exchanges tend to reduce or increase any initial inequalities. While Individualist Anarchists argue for the *"cost principle"* (i.e. cost being the limit of price) the cost of creating the same commodity in different areas or by different people is not equal. Thus the market price of a good **cannot** really equal the multitude of costs within it (and so price can only equal a workers' labour in those few cases where that labour was applied in average circumstances). This issue was recognised by Tucker, who argued that *"economic rent . . . is one of nature's inequalities. It will probably remain with us always. Complete liberty will every much lessen it; of that I have no doubt."* [*"Why I am an Anarchist"*, pp. 132–6, **Man!**,

paid to the wealthy for being allowed to use part of their wealth, a part the rich could comfortably lend out to others as they were not using it. Once capitalism was abolished, the market would be able to reach its full promise and become a means of enriching all rather than the few:

> *"Liberty's aim — universal happiness — is that of all Socialists, in contrast with that of the Manchester men — luxury fed by misery. But its principle — individual sovereignty — is that of the Manchester men, in contrast with that of the Socialists — individual subordination. But individual sovereignty,* ***when logically carried out****, leads, not to luxury fed by misery, but to comfort for all industrious persons and death for all idle ones."* [**Liberty**, no. 89, p. 1]

As other anarchists have also argued, likewise for Tucker — the state is the *"protector"* of the exploiter. *"Usury is the serpent gnawing at labour's vitals, and only liberty can detach and kill it. Give labourers their liberty and they will keep their wealth."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 89] From this it is clear that he considered laissez-faire capitalism to be opposed to genuine individual sovereignty. This was because it was based on the state interfering in the market by enforcing certain restrictions on competition in favour of the capitalist class and certain types of private property. Thus his opposition to the state reflected his opposition to capitalist property rights and the abolition of the state automatically meant their abolition as well.

Tucker spent considerable time making it clear that he was against capitalist private property rights, most notably in land and what was on it. He supported Proudhon's argument that *"property is theft,"* even translating many of Proudhon's works including the classic *"What is Property?"* where that phrase originated. Tucker advocated **possession** (or *"occupancy and use,"* to use his preferred expression for the concept) but not private property, believing that empty land, houses, and so on should be squatted by those who could use them, as labour (i.e. use) would be the only title to "property" (Tucker opposed all non-labour income as usury). For Tucker, the true *"Anarchistic doctrine"* was *"occupancy and use as the basis and limit of land*

that is adding to his riches by his labour alone no man makes another man poorer; that on the contrary every man this adding to his riches makes every other man richer; . . . that every increase in capital in the hands of the labourer tends, in the absence of legal monopoly, to put more products, better products, cheaper products, and a greater variety of products within the reach of every man who works; and that this fact means the physical, mental, and moral perfecting of mankind, and the realisation of human fraternity." [**Instead of a Book**, pp. 361–2]

It is true that he also sometimes railed against "socialism," but in those cases it is clear that he was referring to **state** socialism. Like many anarchists (including Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin), he argued that there are two kinds of socialism based upon two different principles:

"The two principles referred to are Authority and Liberty, and the names of the two schools of Socialistic thought which fully and unreservedly represent one or the other of them are, respectively, State Socialism and Anarchism. Whoso knows what these two schools want and how they propose to get it understands the Socialistic movement. For, just as it has been said that there is no half-way house between Rome and Reason, so it may be said that there is no half-way house between State Socialism and Anarchism." [**The Anarchist Reader**, p. 150]

Like other socialists, Tucker argued that profits *"to a few mean robbery of others, — monopoly. Andrews and Warren, realising this, make individual sovereignty **and** the cost principle the essential conditions of a true civilisation."* [**Liberty**, no. 94, p. 1] Like Proudhon, he argued that *"property, in the sense of individual possession, is liberty."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 122, p. 4] However, unlike state socialists and communist-anarchists, Tucker saw a key role for a market system under socialism. In this he followed Proudhon who also argued that competition was required to ensure that prices reflected the labour costs involved in producing it and so interest, rent and profit were opposed because they did not reflect actual costs but simply usury

M. Graham (ed.), pp. 135–6] However, argue social anarchists, the logic of market exchange produces a situation where the stronger party to a contract seeks to maximise their advantage. Given this, free exchange will tend to **increase** differences in wealth and income over time, not eliminate them. As Daniel Guérin summarised:

"Competition and the so-called market economy inevitably produce inequality and exploitation, and would do so even if one started from complete equality. They could not be combined with workers' self-management unless it were on a temporary basis, as a necessary evil, until (1) a psychology of 'honest exchange' had developed among the workers; (2) most important, society as a whole had passed from conditions of shortage to the stage of abundance, when competition would lose its purpose . . . The libertarian communist would condemn Proudhon's version of a collective economy as being based on a principle of conflict; competitors would be in a position of equality at the start, only to be hurled into a struggle which would inevitably produce victors and vanquished, and where goods would end up by being exchanged according to the principles of supply and demand." [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 53–4]

Thus, even a non-capitalist market could evolve towards inequality and away from fair exchange. It was for this reason that Proudhon argued that a portion of income from agricultural produce be paid into a central fund which would be used to make equalisation payments to compensate farmers with less favourably situated or less fertile land. As he put it, economic rent *"in agriculture has no other cause than the inequality in the quality of land . . . if anyone has a claim on account of this inequality . . . [it is] the other land workers who hold inferior land. That is why in our scheme for liquidation [of capitalism] we stipulated that every variety of cultivation should pay a proportional contribution, destined to accomplish a balancing of returns among farm workers and an assurance of products."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 209] His advocacy of federations of workers' associations was, likewise, seen as a means of abolishing inequalities.

Unlike Proudhon, however, individualist anarchists did not propose any scheme to equalise income. Perhaps Tucker was correct and the differences would be slight, but in a market situation exchanges tend to magnify differences, **not** reduce them as the actions of self-interested individuals in unequal positions will tend to exacerbate differences. Over time these slight differences would become larger and larger, subjecting the weaker party to relatively increasingly worse contracts. Without equality, individualist anarchism would quickly become hierarchical and non-anarchist. As the communist-anarchist paper **Freedom** argued in the 1880s:

> *"Are not the scandalous inequalities in the distribution of wealth today merely the culminate effect of the principle that every man is justified in securing to himself everything that his chances and capacities enable him to lay hands on?*
>
> *"If the social revolution which we are living means anything, it means the destruction of this detestable economic principle, which delivers over the more social members of the community to the domination of the most unsocial and self-interested."* [**Freedom**, vol. 2, no. 19]

Freedom, it should be noted, is slightly misrepresenting the position of individualist anarchists. They did **not** argue that every person could appropriate all the property he or she could. Most obviously, in terms of land they were consistently opposed to a person owning more of it than they actually used. They also tended to apply this to what was on the land as well, arguing that any buildings on it were abandoned when the owner no longer used them. Given this, individualist anarchists have stressed that such a system would be unlikely to produce the inequalities associated with capitalism (as Kropotkin noted, equality was essential and was implicitly acknowledged by individualists themselves who argued that their system *"would offer no danger, because the rights of each individual would have been limited by the equal rights of all others."* [**Evolution and Environment**, p. 85]). Thus contemporary individualist anarchist Joe Peacott:

G.5 Benjamin Tucker: Capitalist or Anarchist?

Benjamin Tucker, like all genuine anarchists, was against both the state and capitalism, against both oppression and exploitation. While not against the market and property he was firmly against capitalism as it was, in his eyes, a state-supported monopoly of social capital (tools, machinery, etc.) which allows owners to exploit their employees, i.e., to avoid paying workers the full value of their labour. He thought that the *"labouring classes are deprived of their earnings by usury in its three forms, interest, rent and profit."* [quoted by James J. Martin, **Men Against the State**, p. 210f] Therefore *"Liberty will abolish interest; it will abolish profit; it will abolish monopolistic rent; it will abolish taxation; it will abolish the exploitation of labour; it will abolish all means whereby any labourer can be deprived of any of his product."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 157]

This stance puts him squarely in the libertarian socialist tradition and, unsurprisingly, Tucker referred to himself many times as a socialist and considered his philosophy to be *"Anarchistic socialism."* For Tucker, capitalist society was exploitative and stopped the full development of all and so had to be replaced:

> *"[This] society is fundamentally anti-social. The whole so-called social fabric rests on privilege and power, and is disordered and strained in every direction by the inequalities that necessarily result therefrom. The welfare of each, instead of contributing to that of all, as it naturally should and would, almost invariably detracts from that of all. Wealth is made by legal privilege a hook with which to filch from labour's pockets. Every man who gets rich thereby makes his neighbours poor. The better off one is, the worse the rest are . . . Labour's Deficit is precisely equal to the Capitalist's Efficit.*
>
> *"Now, Socialism wants to change all this. Socialism says . . . that no man shall be able to add to his riches except by labour;*

In order to reach this implausible conclusion, a few individualist anarchist ideas are ripped from their social context and applied in a way that makes a mockery of them.

Given this analysis, it becomes clear why few social anarchists exclude individualist anarchism from the anarchist tradition while almost all do so for "anarcho"-capitalism. The reason is simple and lies in the analysis that any individualist anarchism which supports wage labour is **inconsistent** anarchism. It **can** easily be made **consistent** anarchism by applying its own principles consistently. In contrast, "anarcho"-capitalism rejects so many of the basic, underlying, principles of anarchism and has consistently followed the logical conclusions of such a rejection into private statism and support for hierarchical authority associated with private property that it cannot be made consistent with the ideals of anarchism. In constrast, given its **own** principles, individualist anarchism can easily become **consistent** anarchism. That is why it is a school of anarchism, unlike "anarcho"-capitalism. All that is required is to consistently apply "occupancy and use" to workplaces (as Proudhon advocated as did many individualist anarchists). By consistently applying this principle it finally ends exploitation along with hierarchy, so bringing all its ideals into line.

As Malatesta argued, *"anarchy, as understood by the anarchists and as only they can interpret it, is based on socialism. Indeed were it not for those schools of socialism which artificially divide the natural unity of the social question, and consider some aspects out of context . . . we could say straight out that anarchy is synonymous with socialism, for both stand for the abolition of the domination and exploitation of man by man, whether exercised at bayonet point or by a monopoly of the means of life."* Without socialism, liberty is purely *"liberty . . . for the strong and the property owners to oppress and exploit the weak, those who have nothing . . . [so] lead[ing] to exploitation and domination, in other words, to authority . . . for freedom is not possible without equality, and real anarchy cannot exist without solidarity, without socialism."* [**Anarchy**, p. 48 and p. 47]

"Although individualists envision a society based on private property, we oppose the economic relationships of capitalism, whose supporters misuse words like private enterprise and free markets to justify a system of monopoly ownership in land and the means of production which allows some to skim off part or even most of the wealth produced by the labour of others. Such a system exists only because it is protected by the armed power of government, which secures title to unjustly acquired and held land, monopolises the supply of credit and money, and criminalises attempts by workers to take full ownership of the means of production they use to create wealth. This state intervention in economic transactions makes it impossible for most workers to become truly independent of the predation of capitalists, banks, and landlords. Individualists argue that without the state to enforce the rules of the capitalist economy, workers would not allow themselves to be exploited by these thieves and capitalism would not be able to exist . . .

"One of the criticisms of individualist economic proposals raised by other anarchists is that a system based on private ownership would result in some level of difference among people in regard to the quality or quantity of possessions they have. In a society where people are able to realise the full value of their labour, one who works harder or better than another will possess or have the ability to acquire more things than someone who works less or is less skilled at a particular occupation . . .

"The differences in wealth that arise in an individualist community would likely be relatively small. Without the ability to profit from the labour of others, generate interest from providing credit, or extort rent from letting out land or property, individuals would not be capable of generating the huge quantities of assets that people can in a capitalist system. Furthermore, the anarchist with more things does not have them at the expense of another, since they are the result of the owner's own effort. If someone with less wealth wishes to have more, they can work more, harder, or better. There is no injustice in one person working 12 hours a day and six days a week in order to buy a boat, while another chooses to work three eight hour days a week and is content with a less extravagant

lifestyle. If one can generate income only by hard work, there is an upper limit to the number and kind of things one can buy and own." [**Individualism and Inequality**]

However, argue social anarchists, market forces may make such an ideal impossible to achieve or maintain. Most would agree with Peter Marshall's point that *"[u]ndoubtedly real difficulties exist with the economic position of the individualists. If occupiers became owners overnight as Benjamin Tucker recommended, it would mean in practice that those with good land or houses would merely become better off than those with bad. Tucker's advocacy of 'competition everywhere and always' among occupying owners, subject to the only moral law of minding your own business might will encourage individual greed rather than fair play for all."* [**Demanding the Impossible**, p. 653]

Few social anarchists are convinced that all the problems associated with markets and competition are purely the result of state intervention. They argue that it is impossible to have most of the underlying pre-conditions of a competitive economy without the logical consequences of them. It is fair to say that individualist anarchists tend to ignore or downplay the negative effects of markets while stressing their positive ones.

While we discuss the limitations of markets in section I.1.3, suffice to say here that competition results in economic forces developing which those within the market have to adjust to. In other words, the market may be free but those within it are not. To survive on the market, firms would seek to reduce costs and so implement a host of dehumanising working practices in order to compete successfully on the market, things which they would resist if bosses did it. Work hours could get longer and longer, for example, in order to secure and maintain market position. This, in turn, affects our quality of life and our relationship with our partners, children, parents, friends, neighbours and so on. That the profits do not go to the executives and owners of businesses may be a benefit, it matters little if people are working longer and harder in order to invest in machinery to ensure market survival. Hence **survival**, not **living**, would be the norm within such a society, just as it is, unfortunately, in capitalism.

property monopolies, of which the State is the necessary stronghold." [**Op. Cit.**, p. 162]

Such would be the possible (perhaps probable) result of the individualists' contract theory of freedom without a social background of communal self-management and ownership. As can be seen from capitalism, a society based on the abstract individualism associated with contract theory would, in practice, produce social relationships based on power and authority (and so force — which would be needed to back up that authority), **not** liberty. As we argued in section A.2.14, voluntarism is **not** enough in itself to preserve freedom. This result, as noted in section A.3, could **only** be avoided by workers' control, which is in fact the logical implication of Tucker's and other individualists' proposals. This is hardly a surprising implication, since as we've seen, artisan production was commonplace in 19th-century America and its benefits were extolled by many individualists. Without workers' control, individualist anarchism would soon become a form of capitalism and so statism — a highly unlikely intention of individualists like Tucker, who hated both.

Therefore, given the assumptions of individualist anarchism in both their economic and political aspects, it is forced along the path of co-operative, not wage, labour. In other words, individualist anarchism is a form of socialism as workers receive the full product of their labour (i.e. there is no non-labour income) and this, in turn, logically implies a society in which self-managed firms compete against each other on the free market, with workers selling the product of their labour and not the labour itself. As this unites workers with the means of production they use, it is **not** capitalism and instead a form of socialism based upon worker ownership and control of the places they work.

For individualist anarchists not to support co-operatives results in a contradiction, namely that the individualist anarchism which aims to secure the worker's *"natural wage"* cannot in fact do so, while dividing society into a class of order givers and order takers which violates individual self-government. It is this contradiction within Tucker's thought which the self-styled "anarcho"-capitalists take advantage of in order to maintain that individualist anarchism in fact implies capitalism (and so private-statism), not workers' control.

liberty and its potential to generate, and justify, authoritarian social relationships rather than libertarian and liberty enhancing ones.

This explains anarchist opposition to wage labour, it undermines liberty and, as a result, allows exploitation to happen. Albert Parsons put it well. Under capitalism labour *"is a commodity and wages is the price paid for it. The owner of this commodity — of labour — sells it, that is himself, to the owner of capital in order to live . . . The reward of the wage labourer's activity is not the product of his labour — far from it."* This implies exploitation and so class struggle as there is a *"irreconcilable conflict between wage labourers and capitalists, between those who buy labour or sell its products, and the wage worker who sells labour (himself) in order to live."* This is because the boss will seek to use their authority over the worker to make them produce more for the agreed wage. Given this, during a social revolution the workers *"first act will, of necessity, be the application of communistic principles. They will expropriate all wealth; they will take possession of all foundries, workshops, factories, mines, etc., for in no other way could they be able to continue to produce what they require on a basis of equality, and be, at the same time, independent of any authority."* [**Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis**, p. 99, p. 104 and p. 166] Hence Kropotkin's comment that *"anarchism . . . refuses all hierarchical organisation and preaches free agreement."* [**Anarchism**, p. 137] To do otherwise is to contradict the basic ideas of anarchism.

Peter Kropotkin recognised the statist implications of some aspects of anarchist individualism which Tucker's strike example highlights. Tucker's anarchism, due to its uncritical support for contract theory, could result in a few people dominating economic life, because *"no force"* would result in the perpetuation of authority structures, with freedom simply becoming the *"right to full development"* of *"privileged minorities."* But, Kropotkin argued, *"as such monopolies cannot be maintained otherwise than under the protection of a monopolist legislation and an organised coercion by the State, the claims of these individualists necessarily end up in a return to the State idea and to that same coercion which they so fiercely attack themselves. Their position is thus the same as that of Spencer and of the so-called 'Manchester school' of economists, who also begin by a severe criticism of the State and end up in its full recognition in order to maintain the*

Ultimately, Individualist Anarchists lose sight of the fact that success and competition are not the same thing. One can set and reach goals without competing. That we may loose more by competing than by co-operating is an insight which social anarchists base their ideas on. In the end, a person can become a success in terms of business but lose sight of their humanity and individuality in the process. In contrast, social anarchists stress community and co-operation in order to develop us as fully rounded individuals. As Kropotkin put it, *"the **individualisation** they so highly praise is not attainable by individual efforts."* [**Anarchism**, p. 297]

As we noted in section D.1, the capitalist state intervenes into the economy and society to counteract the negative impact of market forces on social life and the environment as well as, of course, protecting and enhancing the position of itself and the capitalist class. As individualist anarchism is based on markets (to some degree), it seems likely that market forces would have similar negative impacts (albeit to a lesser degree due to the reduced levels of inequality implied by the elimination of non-labour incomes). Without communal institutions, social anarchists argue, individualist anarchism has no means of counteracting the impact of such forces except, perhaps, by means of continual court cases and juries. Thus social issues would not be discussed by all affected but rather by small subgroups retroactively addressing individual cases.

Moreover, while state action may have given the modern capitalist an initial advantage on the market, it does not follow that a truly free market will not create similar advantages naturally over time. And if it did, then surely a similar system would develop? As such, it does not follow that a non-capitalist market system would remain such. In other words, it is true that extensive state intervention was required to **create** capitalism but after a time economic forces can usually be relied upon to allow wage workers to be exploited. The key factor is that while markets have existed long before capitalism, that system has placed them at the centre of economic activity. In the past, artisans and farmers produced for local consumers, with the former taking their surplus to markets. In contrast, capitalism has produced a system where producers are primarily geared to exchanging **all** goods they create on an extensive market rather simply a surplus

locally. This implies that the dynamics of a predominantly market system may be different from those in the past in which the market played a much smaller role and where self-sufficiency was always a possibility. It is difficult to see how, for example, car workers or IT programmers could produce for their own consumption using their own tools.

So in a market economy with a well developed division of labour it is possible for a separation of workers from their means of production to occur. This is particularly the case when the predominant economic activity is not farming. Thus the net effect of market transactions could be to re-introduce class society simply by their negative long-term consequences. That such a system developed without state aid would make it no less unfree and unjust. It is of little use to point out that such a situation is **not** what the Individualist Anarchists desired for it is a question of whether their ideas would actually result in what they wanted. Social anarchists have fears that it will not. Significantly, as we noted in section G.3, Tucker was sensible enough to argue that those subject to such developments should rebel against it.

In response, individualist anarchists could argue that the alternative to markets would be authoritarian (i.e., some form of central planning) and/or inefficient as without markets to reward effort most people would not bother to work well and provide for the consumer. So while markets do have problems with them, the alternatives are worse. Moreover, when social anarchists note that there is a remarkable correlation between competitiveness in a society and the presence of clearly defined "have" and "have-not" groups individualist anarchists would answer that the causation flows not from competitiveness to inequality but from inequality to competitiveness. In a more equal society people would be less inclined to compete as ruthlessly as under capitalism and so the market would not generate as many problems as it does today. Moreover, eliminating the artificial barriers erected by the state would allow a universal competition to develop rather than the one sided form associated with capitalism. With a balance of market power, competition would no longer take the form it currently does.

> *is very incomplete and quite contradictory type of anarchism. The most thorough-going and perceptive anarchist theories have shown that all types of domination are interrelated, all are destructive, and all must be eliminated . . . Anarchism may begin as a revolt against political authority, but if followed to its logical conclusion it becomes an all-encompassing critique of the will to dominate and all its manifestations."* [**Max Stirner's Egoism**, pp. 92–3]

Certain individualist anarchists were keenly aware of the fact that even free association need not be based on freedom for both parties. Take, for example, marriage. Marriage, correctly argued John Beverley Robinson, is based on *"the promise to obey"* and this results in *"a very real subordination."* As part of *"the general progress toward freedom in all things,"* marriage will *"become the union of those who are both equal and both free."* [**Liberty**, no. 287, p. 2] Why should property associated subordination be any better than patriarchal subordination? Does the fact that one only lasts 8 or 12 hours rather than 24 hours a day really make one consistent with libertarian principles and the other not?

Thus Tucker's comments on wage labour indicates a distinct contradiction in his ideas. It violates his support for *"occupancy and use"* as well as his opposition to the state and usury. It could, of course, be argued that the contradiction is resolved because the worker consents to the authority of the boss by taking the job. However, it can be replied that, by this logic, the citizen consents to the authority of the state as a democratic state allows people to leave its borders and join another one — that the citizen does not leave indicates they consent to the state (this flows from Locke). When it came to the state, anarchists are well aware of the limited nature of this argument (as one individualist anarchist put it: *"As well say that the government of New York or even of the United States is voluntary, and, if you don't like New York Sunday laws, etc., you can secede and go to — South Carolina."* [A. H. Simpson, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 287]). In other words, consent of and by itself does not justify hierarchy for if it did, the current state system would be anarchistic. This indicates the weakness of contract theory as a means of guaranteeing

contract theory can lead to a form of "voluntary" and "private" government within the workplace. This means that, while outside of a contract an individual is free, within it he or she is governed. This violates Tucker's concept of *"equality of liberty,"* since the boss has obviously more liberty than the worker during working hours.

Therefore, logically, individualist anarchism must follow Proudhon and support co-operatives and self-employment in order to ensure the maximum individual self-government and labour's *"natural wage."* So Tucker's comments about strikers and wage labour show a basic inconsistency in his basic ideas. This conclusion is not surprising. As Malatesta argued:

> *"The individualists give the greatest importance to an abstract concept of freedom and fail to take into account, or dwell on the fact, that real, concrete freedom is the outcome of solidarity and voluntary co-operation . . . They certainly believe that to work in isolation is fruitless and that an individual, to ensure a living as a human being and to materially and morally enjoy all the benefits of civilisation, must either exploit — directly or indirectly — the labour of others . . . or associate with his [or her] fellows and share their pains and the joys of life. And since, being anarchists, they cannot allow the exploitation of one by another, they must necessarily agree that to be free and live as human beings they have to accept some degree and form of voluntary communism."* [**The Anarchist Revolution**, p. 16]

Occupancy and use, therefore, implies the collective ownership of resources used by groups which, in turn, implies associative labour and self-management. In other words, *"some degree and form of voluntary communism."* Ultimately, as John P. Clark summarised, opposition to authority which is limited to just the state hardly makes much sense from a libertarian perspective:

> *"Neither . . . is there any reason to consider such a position a very consistent or convincing form of anarchism . . . A view of anarchism which seeks to eliminate coercion and the state, but which overlooks other ways in which people dominate other people,*

Yet, as noted above, this position ignores natural barriers to competition The accumulation needs of a competitive market economy do not disappear just because capitalism has been replaced by co-operatives and mutual credit banks. In any market economy, firms will try to improve their market position by investing in new machinery, reducing prices by improving productivity and so on. This creates barriers to new competitors who have to expend more money in order to match the advantages of existing firms. Such amounts of money may not be forthcoming from even the biggest mutual bank and so certain firms would enjoy a privileged position on the market. Given that Tucker defined a monopolist as *"any person, corporation, or institution whose right to engage in any given pursuit of life is secured, either wholly or partially, by any agency whatsoever — whether the nature of things or the force of events or the decree of arbitrary power — against the influence of competition"* we may suggest that due to **natural** barriers, an individualist anarchist society would not be free of monopolists and so of usury. [quoted by James J. Martin, **Men Against the State**, p. 210]

For this reason, even in a mutualist market certain companies would receive a bigger slice of profits than (and at the expense of) others. This means that exploitation would still exist as larger companies could charge more than cost for their products. It could be argued that the ethos of an anarchist society would prevent such developments happening but, as Kropotkin noted, this has problems, firstly because of *"the difficulty if estimating the **market** value"* of a product based on *"average time"* or cost necessary to produce it and, secondly, if that could be done then to get people *"to agree upon such an estimation of their work would already require a deep penetration of the Communist principles into their ideas."* [**Environment and Evolution**, p. 84] In addition, the free market in banking would also result in **its** market being dominated by a few big banks, with similar results. As such, it is all fine and well to argue that with rising interest rates more competitors would be drawn into the market and so the increased competition would automatically reduce them but that is only possible if there are no serious natural barriers to entry.

This obviously impacts on how we get from capitalism to anarchism. Natural barriers to competition limit the ability to compete

exploitation away. So as to its means of activism, individualist anarchism exaggerates the potential of mutual banks to fund co-operatives. While the creation of community-owned and -managed mutual credit banks would help in the struggle for a free society, such banks are not enough in themselves. Unless created as part of the social struggle against capitalism and the state, and unless combined with community and strike assemblies, mutual banks would quickly die, because the necessary social support required to nurture them would not exist. Mutual banks must be part of a network of other new socio-economic and political structures and cannot be sustained in isolation from them. This is simply to repeat our earlier point that, for most social anarchists, capitalism cannot be reformed away. As such, social anarchists would tend to agree with the summary provided by this historian:

> *"If [individualist anarchists] rejected private ownership of property, they destroyed their individualism and 'levelled' mankind. If they accepted it, they had the problem of offering a solution whereby the inequalities [of wealth] would not amount to a tyranny over the individual. They meet the same dilemma in 'method.' If they were consistent libertarian individualists they could not force from 'those who had' what they had acquired justly or unjustly, but if they did not force it from them, they perpetuated inequalities. They met a stone wall."* [Eunice Minette Schuster, **Native American Anarchism**, p. 158]

So while Tucker believed in direct action, he opposed the "forceful" expropriation of social capital by the working class, instead favouring the creation of a mutualist banking system to replace capitalism with a non-exploitative system. Tucker was therefore fundamentally a **reformist**, thinking that anarchy would evolve from capitalism as mutual banks spread across society, increasing the bargaining power of labour. And reforming capitalism over time, by implication, always means tolerating boss's control during that time. So, at its worse, this is a reformist position which becomes little more than an excuse for tolerating landlord and capitalist domination.

> *an 'authoritaire'; Proudhon was a champion of Liberty."* [**Liberty**, no. 35, p. 2]

Ironically, therefore, by Tucker placing so much stress in opposing capitalist **exploitation**, instead of capitalist **oppression**, he was actually closer to the *"authoritaire"* Marx than Proudhon and, like Marx, opened the door to various kinds of domination and restrictions on individual self-government within anarchism. Again we see a support for contract theory creating authoritarian, not libertarian, relationships between people. Simply out, the social relationships produced by wage labour shares far too much in common with those created by the state **not** to be of concern to any genuine libertarian. Arguing that it is based on consent is as unconvincing as those who defend the state in similar terms.

And we must add that John Stuart Mill (who agreed with the Warrenite slogan *"Individual Sovereignty"*) faced with the same problem that wage labour made a mockery of individual liberty came to the same conclusion as Proudhon. He thought that if *"mankind is to continue to improve"* (and it can only improve within liberty, we must add) then in the end one form of association will predominate, *"not that which can exist between a capitalist as chief, and workpeople without a voice in management, but the association of the labourers themselves on terms of equality, collectively owning the capital with which they carry on their operations, and working under managers elected and removable by themselves."* [quoted by Carole Pateman, **Participation and Democratic Theory**, p. 34]

Tucker himself pointed out that *"the essence of government is control . . . He who attempts to control another is a governor, an aggressor, an invader."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 23] So when Tucker suggests that (non-exploitative, and so non-capitalist) wage labour could exist in individualist anarchy there is a distinct contradiction. Unlike wage labour under capitalism, workers would employ other workers and all would (in theory) receive the full product of their labour. Be that as it may, such relationships are not libertarian and so contradict Tucker's own theories on individual liberty (as Proudhon and Mill recognised with their own, similar, positions). Wage labour is based on the control of the worker by the employer; hence Tucker's

triumph of an-archy? Logically, it makes no sense. An-**archy**, by definition, means no-archy rather than wholehearted support for a specific form of **archy**, namely hier-**archy**! At best, Rothbard was a "voluntary archist" not an anarchist.)

As Charles A. Dana put it (in a work published by Tucker and described by him as *"a really intelligent, forceful, and sympathetic exposition of mutual banking"*), *"[b]y introducing mutualism into exchanges and credit we introduce it everywhere, and labour will assume a new aspect and become truly democratic."* Labour *"must be reformed by means of association as well as banking"* for *"if labour be not organised, the labourers will be made to toil for others to receive the fruit thereof as heretofore."* These co-operatives *"to a great extent abolish the exploitation of the employed worker by the employing capitalist, and make the worker his own employer; but, in order to completely gain that end, the associations must be associated, united in one body for mutual aid."* This is *"the Syndicate of Production."* [**Proudhon and His *"Bank of the People"***, p. 45, p. 50 and p. 54] Tucker, however, asserted that Proudhon included the syndicate of production *"to humour those of his associated who placed stress on these features. He did not consider them of any value."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 51–2] However, he was simply incorrect. Industrial democracy was a key aspect of Proudhon's ideas, as was the creation of an *"agro-industrial federation"* based on these self-managed associations. This can be seen from Tucker's own comparison of Marx and Proudhon made on the formers death:

> *"For Karl Marx, the 'egalitaire', we feel the profoundest respect; as for Karl Marx, the 'authoritaire', we must consider him an enemy. . . Proudhon was years before Marx [in discussing the struggle of the classes and the privileges and monopolies of capital]. . . The vital difference between Proudhon and Marx [was] to be found in their respective remedies which they proposed. Man would nationalise the productive and distributive forces; Proudhon would individualise and associate them. Marx would make the labourers political masters; Proudhon would abolish political mastership entirely . . . Man believed in compulsory majority rule; Proudhon believed in the voluntary principle. In short, Marx was*

Also, we may note, in the slow transition towards anarchism, we would see the rise of pro-capitalist "defence associations" which **would** collect rent from land, break strikes, attempt to crush unions and so on. Tucker seemed to have assumed that the anarchist vision of *"occupancy-and-use"* would become universal. Unfortunately, landlords and capitalists would resist it and so, ultimately, an Individualist Anarchist society would have to either force the minority to accept the majority wishes on land use (hence his comments on there being *"no legal power to collect rent"*) or the majority are dictated to by the minority who are in favour of collecting rent and hire "defence associations" to enforce those wishes. With the head start big business and the wealthy have in terms of resources, conflicts between pro- and anti-capitalist "defence associations" would usually work against the anti-capitalist ones (as trade unions often find out). In other words, reforming capitalism would not be as non-violent or as simple as Tucker maintained. The vested powers which the state defends will find other means to protect themselves when required (for example, when capitalists and landlords backed fascism and fascist squads in Italy after workers "occupied and used" their workplaces and land workers and peasants "occupied and used" the land in 1920). We are sure that economists will then rush to argue that the resulting law system that defended the collection of rent and capitalist property against "occupancy and use" was the most "economically efficient" result for "society."

In addition, even if individualist mutualism **did** result in an increase in wages by developing artisan and co-operative ventures that decreased the supply of labour in relation to its demand, this would not eliminate the subjective and objective pressures on profits that produce the business cycle within capitalism (see section C.7). In fact, it was increase the subjective pressures considerably as was the case under the social Keynesian of the post-war period. Unsurprisingly, business interests sought the necessary "reforms" and ruthlessly fought the subsequent strikes and protests to achieve a labour market more to their liking (see section C.8.2 for more on this). This means that an increase in the bargaining power of labour would soon see capital moving to non-anarchist areas and so deepening any recession caused by a lowering of profits and other non-labour

income. This could mean that during an economic slump, when workers' savings and bargaining position were weak, the gains associated with mutualism could be lost as co-operative firms go bust and mutual banks find it hard to survive in a hostile environment.

Mutual banks would not, therefore, undermine modern capitalism, as recognised by social anarchists from Bakunin onward. They placed their hopes in a social revolution organised by workplace and community organisations, arguing that the ruling class would be as unlikely to tolerate being competed away as they would be voted away. The collapse of social Keynesianism into neo-liberalism shows that even a moderately reformed capitalism which increased working class power will not be tolerated for too long. In other words, there was a need for social revolution which mutual banks do not, and could not, eliminate.

However, while social anarchists disagree with the proposals of individualist anarchists, we do still consider them to be a form of anarchism — one with many flaws and one perhaps more suited to an earlier age when capitalism was less developed and its impact upon society far less than it is now (see section G.1.4). Individualist and social anarchism could co-exist happily in a free society and neither believes in forcing the other to subscribe to their system. As Paul Nursey-Bray notes *"linking all of these approaches . . . is not just the belief in individual liberty and its corollary, the opposition to central or state authority, but also a belief in community, and an equality of community members."* The *"discussion over forms of property . . . should not be allowed to obscure the commonality of the idea of the free community of self-regulating individuals."* And so *"there are meeting points in the crucial ideas of individual autonomy and community that suggest, at least, a basis for the discussion of equality and property relations."* [**Anarchist Thinkers and Thought**, p. xvi]

G.4.1 Is wage labour consistent with anarchist principles?

No, it is not. This can be seen from social anarchism, where opposition to wage labour as hierarchical and exploitative is taken

and the worker is an *"associate"* and *"forms a part of the producing organisation"* and *"forms a part of the sovereign power, of which he was before but the subject."* Without co-operation and association, *"the workers . . . would remain related as subordinates and superiors, and there would ensue two industrial castes of masters and wage-workers, which is repugnant to a free and democratic society."* [**The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century**, p. 216, p. 219 and p. 216] As Robert Graham notes, *"Proudhon's market socialism is indissolubly linked to his notions of industry democracy and workers' self-management."* [*"Introduction"*, **Op. Cit.**,, p. xxxii]

This analysis lead Proudhon to call for co-operatives to end wage labour. This was most consistently advocated in his **The General Idea of the Revolution** but appears repeatedly in his work. Thus we find him arguing in 1851 that socialism is *"the elimination of misery, the abolition of capitalism and of wage-labour, the transformation of property, . . . the effective and direct sovereignty of the workers, . . . the substitution of the contractual regime for the legal regime."* [quoted by John Ehrenberg, **Proudhon and his Age**, p. 111] Fourteen years later, he argued the same, with the aim of his mutualist ideas being *"the complete emancipation of the workers . . . the abolition of the wage worker."* Thus a key idea of Proudhon's politics is the abolition of wage labour: *"Industrial Democracy must . . . succeed Industrial Feudalism."* [quoted by K. Steven Vincent, **Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism** p. 222 and p. 167] *"In democratising us,"* Proudhon argued, *"revolution has launched us on the path of industrial democracy."* [**Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon**, p. 63]

(As an aside, it is deeply significant how different Proudhon's analysis of hierarchy and wage-labour is to Murray Rothbard's. For Rothbard, both *"hierarchy"* and *"wage-work"* were part of *"a whole slew of institutions necessary to the triumph of liberty"* (others included *"granting of funds by libertarian millionaires, and a libertarian political party"*). He strenuously objected to those *"indicting"* such institutions *"as non-libertarian or non-market"*. [**Konkin on Libertarian Strategy**] For Proudhon — as well as Bakunin, Kropotkin, and others — both wage-labour and hierarchy were anti-libertarian by their very nature. How could hier-archy be *"necessary"* for the

anarchism, unlike "anarcho"-capitalism. All that is required is to consistently apply "occupancy and use" to workplaces (as Proudhon advocated). By consistently applying this principle they can finally end exploitation along with hierarchy, so bringing all their ideas into line.

Tucker's position is also in direct opposition to Proudhon's arguments, which is somewhat ironic since Tucker stressed being inspired by and following the French anarchist and his ideas (Tucker referred to Proudhon as being both *"the father of the Anarchistic school of socialism"* as well as *"being the Anarchist **par excellence**"* [Tucker, **Instead of a Book**, p. 391]). Tucker is distinctly at odds with Proudhon who consistently opposed wage-labour and so, presumably, was also an advocate of *"pseudo-Anarchism"* alongside Kropotkin and Most. For Proudhon, the worker has *"sold and surrendered his liberty"* to the proprietor, with the proprietor being *"a man, who, having absolute control of an instrument of production, claims the right to enjoy the product of the instrument without using it himself."* This leads to exploitation and if *"the labourer is proprietor of the value which he creates, it follows"* that *"all production being necessarily collective, the labourer is entitled to a share of the products and profits commensurate with his labour"* and that, *"all accumulated capital being social property, no one can be its exclusive proprietor."* [**What is Property?**, p. 130, p. 293 and p. 130] With *"machinery and the workshop, divine right — that is, the principle of authority — makes its entrance into political economy. Capital . . . Property . . . are, in economic language, the various names of . . . Power, Authority."* Thus, under capitalism, the workplace has a *"hierarchical organisation."* There are three alternatives, capitalism (*"that is, monopoly and what follows"*), state socialism (*"exploitation by the State"*) *"or else . . . a solution based on equality, — in other words, the organisation of labour, which involves the negation of political economy and the end of property."* [**System of Economical Contradictions**, pp. 203–4 and p. 253]

For Proudhon, employees are *"subordinated, exploited"* and their *"permanent condition is one of obedience."* The wage worker is, therefore, a *"slave."* Indeed, capitalist companies *"plunder the bodies and souls of wage workers"* and they are *"an outrage upon human dignity and personality."* However, in a co-operative the situation changes

as an obvious and logical aspect of anarchist principles. However, ironically, this conclusion must also be drawn from the principles expounded by individualist anarchism. However, as noted in section G.1.3, while many individualist anarchists opposed wage labour and sought it end not all did. Benjamin Tucker was one of the latter. To requote him:

> *"Wages is not slavery. Wages is a form of voluntary exchange, and voluntary exchange is a form of Liberty."* [**Liberty**, no. 3, p. 1]

The question of wage labour was one of the key differences between Tucker and communist-anarchist Johann Most. For Most, it signified that Tucker supported the exploitation of labour. For Tucker, Most's opposition to it signified that he was not a real anarchist, seeking to end freedom by imposing communism onto all. In response to Most highlighting the fact that Tucker supported wage labour, Tucker argued as followed:

> *"If the men who oppose wages — that is, the purchase and sale of labour — were capable of analysing their thought and feelings, they would see that what really excites their anger is not the fact that labour is bought and sold, but the fact that one class of men are dependent for their living upon the sale of their labour, while another class of men are relieved of the necessity of labour by being legally privileged to sell something that is not labour, and that, but for the privilege, would be enjoyed by all gratuitously. And to such a state of things I am as much opposed as any one. But the minute you remove privilege, the class that now enjoy it will be forced to sell their labour, and then, when there will be nothing but labour with which to buy labour, the distinction between wage-payers and wage-receivers will be wiped out, and every man will be a labourer exchanging with fellow-labourers. Not to abolish wages, but to make every man dependent upon wages and secure to every man his whole wages is the aim of Anarchistic Socialism. What Anarchistic Socialism aims to abolish is usury. It does not want to deprive labour of its reward; it wants to deprive capital of*

its reward. It does not hold that labour should not be sold; it holds that capital should not be hired at usury." [**Liberty**, no. 123, p. 4]

Social anarchists, in reply, would argue that Tucker is missing the point. The reason why almost all anarchists are against wage labour is because it generates social relationships based on authority and, as such, it sets the necessary conditions for the exploitation of labour to occur. If we take the creation of employer-employee relationships within an anarchy, we see the danger of private statism arising (as in "anarcho"-capitalism) and so the end of anarchy. Such a development can be seen when Tucker argued that if, in an anarchy, *"any labourers shall interfere with the rights of their employers, or shall use force upon inoffensive 'scabs,' or shall attack their employers' watchmen . . . I pledge myself that, as an Anarchist and in consequence of my Anarchistic faith, I will be among the first to volunteer as a member of a force to repress these disturbers of order, and, if necessary, sweep them from the earth."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 455] Tucker's comments were provoked by the Homestead strike of 1892, where the striking steelworkers fought with, and defeated, their employer's Pinkerton thugs sent to break the strike (Tucker, it should be stressed supported the strikers but not their methods and considered the capitalist class as responsible for the strike by denying workers a free market).

In such a situation, these defence associations would be indeed "private states" and here Tucker's ideas unfortunately do parallel those of the "anarcho"-capitalists (although, as Tucker thought that the employees would not be exploited by the employer, this does not suggest that Tucker can be considered a forefather of "anarcho"-capitalism). As Kropotkin warned, *"[f]or their self-defence, both the citizen and group have a right to any violence [within individualist anarchy] . . . Violence is also justified for enforcing the duty of keeping an agreement. Tucker . . . opens . . . the way for reconstructing under the heading of the 'defence' all the functions of the State."* [**Anarchism**, p. 297]

Such an outcome is easy to avoid, however, by simply consistently applying individualist anarchist principles and analysis to wage labour. To see why, it is necessary simply to compare private property with Tucker's definition of the state.

precisely the fatal inconsistency of the 'Freiheit' school . . . Yes, genuine A narchism is consistent Manchesterism, and Communistic or pseudo-Anarchism is inconsistent Manchesterism." [**Liberty**, no. 123, p. 4]

In other words, if individualist anarchism is, as Tucker claimed, *"consistent Manchesterism"* then, argue social anarchists, individualist anarchism is "inconsistent" anarchism. This means that some of Tucker's arguments contradict some of his own fundamental principles, most obviously his indifference to wage labour. This, as argued, violates "occupancy and use", his opposition to exploitation and, as it is a form of hierarchy, his anarchism.

To see what we mean we must point out that certain individualist anarchists are not the only "inconsistent" ones that have existed. The most obvious example is Proudhon, whose sexism is well known, utterly disgraceful and is in direct contradiction to his other ideas and principles. While Proudhon attacked hierarchy in politics and economics, he fully supported patriarchy in the home. This support for a form of archy does not refute claims that Proudhon was an anarchist, it just means that certain of his ideas were inconsistent with his key principles. As one French anarcha-feminist critic of Proudhon put it in 1869: *"These so-called lovers of liberty, if they are unable to take part in the direction of the state, at least they will be able to have a little monarchy for their personal use, each in his own home . . . Order in the family seems impossible to them — well then, what about in the state?"* [André Léo, quoted by Carolyn J. Eichner, *"'Vive La Commune!' Feminism, Socialism, and Revolutionary Revival in the Aftermath of the 1871 Paris Commune,"*, pp. 68–98, **Journal of Women's History**, Vol. 15, No.2, p. 75] Rejecting monarchy and hierarchy on the state level and within the workplace while supporting it — in the form of rule by the father — on the family level was simply illogical and inconsistent. Subsequent anarchists (from Bakunin onwards) solved this obvious contradiction by consistently applying anarchist principles and opposing sexism and patriarchy. In other words, by critiquing Proudhon's sexism by means of the very principles he himself used to critique the state and capitalism.

Much the same applies to individualist anarchists. The key issue is that, given their own principles, individualist anarchism can easily become **consistent** anarchism. That is why it is a school of

G.4.2 Why do social anarchists think individualism is inconsistent anarchism?

From our discussion of wage labour in the last section, some may consider that Tucker's support for wage labour would place him outside the ranks of anarchism. After all, this is one of the key reasons why most anarchists reject "anarcho"-capitalism as a form of anarchism. Surely, it could be argued, if Murray Rothbard is not an anarchist, then why is Tucker?

That is not the case and the reason is obvious — Tucker's support for wage labour is inconsistent with his ideas on "occupancy and use" while Rothbard's are in line with his capitalist property rights. Given the key place self-management holds in almost all anarchist thought, unsurprisingly we find Chomsky summarising the anarchist position thusly:

> *"A consistent anarchist must oppose private ownership of the means of production and the wage slavery which is a component of this system, as incompatible with the principle that labour must be freely undertaken and under the control of the producer . . . A consistent anarchist must oppose not only alienated labour but also the stupefying specialisation of labour that takes place when the means for developing production."* [*"Notes on Anarchism"*, **Chomsky on Anarchism**, p. 123]

Thus the *"consistent anarchist, then, will be a socialist, but a socialist of a particular sort."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 125] Which suggests that Tucker's position is one of inconsistent anarchism. While a socialist, he did not take his libertarian positions to their logical conclusions — the abolition of wage labour. There is, of course, a certain irony in this. In response to Johann Most calling his ideas *"Manchesterism"*, Tucker wrote *"what better can a man who professes Anarchism want than that? For the principle of Manchesterism is liberty, and consistent Manchesterism is consistent adherence to liberty. The only inconsistency of the Manchester men lies in their infidelity to liberty in some of its phases. And these infidelity to liberty in some of its phases is*

How did Tucker define the state? All states have two common elements, *"aggression"* and *"the assumption of sole authority over a given area and all within it, exercised generally for the double purpose of more complete oppression of its subjects and extension of its boundaries."* This monopoly of authority is important, as *"I am not aware that any State has ever tolerated a rival State within its borders."* So the state, Tucker stated, is *"the embodiment of the principle of invasion in an individual, or a band of individuals, assuming to act as representatives or masters of the entire people within a given area."* The *"essence of government is control, or the attempt to control. He who attempts to control another is a governor, an aggressor, an invader . . . he who resists another's attempt to control is not an aggressor, an invader, a governor, but simply a defender, a protector."* In short, *"the Anarchistic definition of government: the subjection of the non-invasive individual to an external will."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 24]

The similarities with capitalist property (i.e., one based on wage labour) is obvious. The employer assumes and exercises *"sole authority over a given area and all within it,"* they are the boss after all and so capitalists are the *"masters of the entire people within a given area."* That authority is used to control the employees in order to maximise the difference between what they produce and what they get paid (i.e., to ensure exploitation). As August Spies, one of the Haymarket Martyrs, noted:

> *"I was amazed and was shocked when I became acquainted with the condition of the wage-workers in the New World.*
>
> *"The factory: the ignominious regulations, the surveillance, the spy system, the servility and lack of manhood among the workers and the arrogant arbitrary behaviour of the boss and his associates — all this made an impression upon me that I have never been able to divest myself of. At first I could not understand why the workers, among them many old men with bent backs, silently and without a sign of protest bore every insult the caprice of the foreman or boss would heap upon them. I was not then aware of the fact that the opportunity to work was a privilege, a favour, and that it was in the power of those who were in the possession of the factories and instruments of labour to deny or grant this privilege. I did*

not then understand how difficult it was to find a purchaser for ones labour, I did not know then that there were thousands and thousands of idle human bodies in the market, ready to hire out upon most any conditions, actually begging for employment. I became conscious of this, very soon, however, and I knew then why these people were so servile, whey suffered the humiliating dictates and capricious whims of their employers." [**The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs**, pp. 66–7]

That this is a kind of state-like authority becomes clear when we consider company towns. As Ward Churchill notes, the *"extent of company power over workers included outright ownership of the towns in which they lived, a matter enabling employers to garner additional profits by imposing exorbitant rates of rent, prices for subsistence commodities, tools, and such health care as was available. Conditions in these 'company towns' were such that, by 1915, the Commission on Industrial Relations was led to observe that they displayed 'every aspect of feudalism except the recognition of special duties on the part of the employer.' The job of the Pinkertons — first for the railroads, then more generally — was to prevent workers from organising in a manner that might enable them to improve their own circumstances, thus reducing corporate profits."* [*"From the Pinkertons to the PATRIOT Act: The Trajectory of Political Policing in the United States, 1870 to the Present"*, pp. 1–72, **CR: The New Centennial Review**, vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 11–2] In the words of one historian of the Pinkerton Agency *"[b]y the mid-1850s a few businessmen saw the need for greater control over their employees; their solution was to sponsor a private detective system. In February 1855, Allan Pinkerton, after consulting with six midwestern railroads, created such an agency in Chicago."* [Frank Morn, quoted by Churchill, **Op. Cit.**, p. 4] As we have noted in section F.7.1, such regimes remained into the 1930s, with corporations having their own well armed private police to enforce the propertarian hierarchy (see also section F.6.2).

So, in terms of monopoly of authority over a given area the capitalist company and the state share a common feature. The reason why wage labour violates Individualist Anarchist principles is clear. If the workers who use a workplace do not own it, then someone else

native labour reform tradition in several ways. Besides suggesting reforms in land and money, Proudhon urged producer co-operation." [Frank H. Brooks, *"Ideology, Strategy, and Organization: Dyer Lum and the American Anarchist Movement"*, pp. 57–83, **Labor History**, Vol. 34, No. 1, p. 72]

So, somewhat ironically given his love of Proudhon, it was, in fact, Most who was closer to the French anarchist's position on this issue than Tucker. Kropotkin echoed Proudhon's analysis when he noted that *"the only guarantee not to be robbed of the fruits of your labour is to possess the instruments of labour."* [**The Conquest of Bread**, p. 145] In other words, for a self-proclaimed follower of Proudhon, Tucker ignored the French anarchist's libertarian arguments against wage labour. The key difference between the communist-anarchists and Proudhon was on the desirability of making the product of labour communal or not (although both recognised the right of people to share as they desired). However, it must be stressed that Proudhon's analysis was not an alien one to the individualist anarchist tradition. Joshua King Ingalls, for example, presented a similar analysis to Proudhon on the issue of joint production as well as its solution in the form of co-operatives (see section G.1.3 for details) and Dyer Lum was a firm advocator of the abolition of wage labour. So integrating the insights of social anarchism on this issue with individualist anarchism would not be difficult and would build upon existing tendencies within it.

In summary, social anarchists argue that individualist anarchism does not solve the social question. If it did, then they would be individualists. They argue that in spite of Tucker's claims, workers would still be exploited in any form of individualist anarchism which retained significant amounts of wage labour as well as being a predominantly hierarchical, rather than libertarian, society. As we argue in the next section, this is why most anarchists consider individualist anarchism as being an inconsistent form of anarchism.

the boss from the workers subjected to his authority. Thus wage labour and exploitation would go hand-in-hand — and so Most's horror at Tucker's support for it.

As best, it could be argued that such "wages" would be minimal as workers would be able to swap jobs to get higher wages and, possibly, set up co-operatives in competition. However, this amounts to saying that, in the long run, labour gets its full product and to say that is to admit in the short term that labour **is** exploited. Yet nowhere did Tucker argue that labour would get its full product **eventually** in a free society, rather he stressed that liberty would result in the end of exploitation. Nor should we be blind to the fact that a market economy is a dynamic one, making the long run unlikely to ever appear (*"in the long run we are all dead"* as Keynes memorably put it). Combine this with the natural barriers to competition we indicated in section G.4 and we are left with problems of usury/exploitation in an individualist anarchist system.

The obvious solution to these problems is to be found in Proudhon, namely the use of co-operatives for any workplace which cannot be operated by an individual. This was the also the position of the Haymarket anarchists, with August Spies (for example) arguing that *"large factories and mines, and the machinery of exchange and transportation . . . have become too vast for private control. Individuals can no longer monopolise them."* [contained in Albert Parsons, **Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis**, pp. 60–1] Proudhon denounced property as *"despotism"*, for Albert Parsons the *"wage system of labour is a despotism."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 21]

As Frank H. Brooks notes, *"producer and consumer co-operatives were a staple of American labour reform (and of Proudhonian anarchism)."* This was because they *"promised the full reward of labour to the producer, and commodities at cost to the consumer."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 110] This was the position of Voltairine de Cleyre (during her individualist phase) as well as her mentor Dyer Lum:

> *"Lum drew from the French anarchist Proudhon . . . a radical critique of classical political economy and . . . a set of positive reforms in land tenure and banking . . . Proudhon paralleled the*

will (i.e. the owner, the boss). This in turn means that the owner can tell those who use the resource what to do, how to do it and when. That is, they are the sole authority over the workplace and those who use it. However, according to Tucker, the state can be defined (in part) as *"the assumption of sole authority over a given area and all within it."* Tucker considered this element as *"common to all States"* and so opposition to the state logically implies support for workers' self-management for only in this case can people govern themselves during the working day (see section B.4 for more discussion). Even with Tucker's other aspect, *"aggression"*, there are issues. Competition is inherently aggressive, with companies seeking to expand their market share, go into new markets, drive their competitors out of business, and so forth. Within the firm itself, bosses always seek to make workers do more work for less, threatening them with the sack if they object.

Tucker's comments on strikers brings to light an interesting contradiction in his ideas. After all, he favoured a system of "property" generally defined by use and occupancy, that is whoever uses and possesses is to be consider the owner. As we indicated in section G.1.2, this applied to both the land and what was on it. In particular, Tucker pointed to the example of housing and argued that rent would not be collected from tenants nor would they be evicted for not paying it. Why should this position change when it is a workplace rather than a house? Both are products of labour, so that cannot be the criteria. Nor can it be because one is used for work as Tucker explicitly includes the possibility that a house could be used as a workplace.

Thus we have a massive contradiction between Tucker's "occupancy and use" perspective on land use and his support for wage labour. One letter to **Liberty** (by "Egoist") pointed out this contradiction. As the letter put it, *"if production is carried on in groups, as it now is, who is the legal occupier of the land? The employer, the manager, or the ensemble of those engaged in the co-operative work? The latter appearing the only rational answer."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 143, p. 4] Sadly, Tucker's reply did not address this particular question and so we are left with an unresolved contradiction.

Looking at the Homestead strike which provoked Tucker's rant against strikers, the similarities between wage labour and statism become even clearer. The 3,800 workers locked out by Carnegie at Homestead in 1892 definitely occupied and used the works from which they were barred entry by the owners. The owners, obviously, did not use the workplace themselves — they hired **others** to occupy and use it **for** them. Now, why should *"occupancy and use"* be acceptable for land and housing but not for workplaces? There is no reason and so wage labour, logically, violates *"occupancy and use"* — for under wage labour, those who occupy and use a workplace do not own or control it. Hence *"occupancy and use"* logically implies workers' control and ownership.

The Homestead lockout of 1892, ironically enough, occurred when the owners of the steel mill provoked the union in order to break its influence in the works. In other words, the property owners practised *"aggression"* to ensure their *"sole authority over a given area and all within it"* (to use Tucker's words). As such, the actions of the capitalist property owners meets Tucker's definition of the state exactly. According to the Carnegie Steel Company, it had *"a legal right to the enjoyment of our property, and to operate it as we please . . . But for years our works have been managed . . . by men who do not own a dollar in them. This will stop right here. The Carnegie Steel Company will hereafter control their works in the employment of labour."* Secretary Lovejoy of the corporation was clear on this, and its wider impact, arguing that *"[t]his outbreak will settle one matter forever, and that is that the Homestead mill hereafter will be run non-union . . . other mills heretofore union [will] become non-union and thus free their owners from the arbitrary dictation of labour unions."* [quoted by Peter Krause, **The Battle for Homestead 1880–1892**, p. 12 and pp. 39–40]

In other words, the workers will henceforth be submit to the arbitrary dictation of the owners, who would be free to exercise their authority without hindrance of those subject to it. Unsurprisingly, for the workers, the strike was over their freedom and independence, of their ability to control their own labour. As one historian notes, the *"lockout crushed the largest trade union in America . . . the victory at Homestead gave Carnegie and his fellow steelmasters carte blanche*

pay them for the combined labour power of the 100." [**Capital**, Vol. 1, p. 451] Only co-operative workplaces can ensure that the benefits of co-operative labour are not monopolised by the few who happen to own, and so control, the means of production.

If this is not done, then it becomes a case of simply renaming "profits" to "wages" and saying that they are the result of the employers work rather than their ownership of capital. However, this is not the case as some part of the "wages" of the employer is derived purely from their owning capital (and is usury, charging to allow use) while, for the workers, it is unlikely to equal their product in the short run. Given that the major rationale for the Homestead strike of 1892 **was** to secure the despotism of the property owner, the results of breaking the union should be obvious. According to David Brody in his work **The Steel Workers**, after the union was broken *"the steel workers output doubled in exchange for an income rise of one-fifth . . . The accomplishment was possible only with a labour force powerless to oppose the decisions of the steel men."* [quoted by Jeremy Brecher, **Op. Cit.**, p. 62] At Homestead, between 1892 and 1907 the daily earnings of highly-skilled plate-mill workers fell by a fifth while their hours increased from eight to twelve. [Brecher, **Op. Cit.**, p. 63] Who would dare claim that the profits this increased exploitation created somehow reflected the labour of the managers rather than their total monopoly of authority within the workplace?

The logic is simple — which boss would employ a worker unless they expected to get more out of their labour than they pay in wages? And why does the capitalist get this reward? They own "capital" and, consequently, their "labour" partly involves excluding others from using it and ordering about those whom they do allow in — in exchange for keeping the product of their labour. As Marx put it, *"the worker works under the control of the capitalist to whom his labour belongs"* and *"the product is the property of the capitalist and not that of the worker, its immediate producer."* And so *"[f]rom the instant he steps into the workshop, the use-value of his labour-power and therefore its use, which is labour, belongs to the capitalist."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 291 and p. 292] This suggests that exploitation takes place within production and so a contract for wages made beforehand simply cannot be expected to anticipate the use-value extracted by

equalling the workers' *"whole wage"* and any profits equalling the bosses *"whole wage"* (some early defences of profit did argue precisely this, although the rise of shareholding made such arguments obviously false). The problem arises in that the employer's income is not determined independently of their ownership of capital and their monopoly of power in the workplace. This means that the boss can appropriate for themselves all the advantages of co-operation and self-activity within the workplace simply because they owned it. Thus, "profits" do not reflect the labour ("wages") of the employer.

It was this aspect of ownership which made Proudhon such a firm supporter of workers associations. As he put it, a *"hundred men, uniting or combining their forces, produce, in certain cases, not a hundred times, but two hundred, three hundred, a thousand times as much. This is what I have called* ***collective force****. I even drew from this an argument, which, like so many others, remains unanswered, against certain forms of appropriation: that it is not sufficient to pay merely the wages of a given number of workmen, in order to acquire their product legitimately; that they must be paid twice, thrice or ten times their wages, or an equivalent service rendered to each one of them."* Thus, *"all workers must associate, inasmuch as collective force and division of labour exist everywhere, to however slight a degree."* Industrial democracy, in which *"all positions are elective, and the by-laws subject to the approval of the members*, would ensure that *"the collective force, which is a product of the community, ceases to be a source of profit to a small number of managers"* and becomes *"the property of all the workers."* [**The General Idea of the Revolution**, pp. 81–2, p. 217, p. 222 and p. 223]

Proudhon had first expounded this analysis in **What is Property?** in 1840 and, as K. Steven Vincent notes, this was *"[o]one of the reasons Proudhon gave for rejecting 'property' [and] was to become an important motif of subsequent socialist thought."* Thus *"collective endeavours produced an additional value"* which was *"unjustly appropriated by the* ***proprietaire****."* [**Pierre-Joseph Proudhon the Rise of French Republican Socialism** p. 64 and p. 65] Marx, it should be noted, concurred. Without mentioning Proudhon, he stressed how a capitalist buys the labour-power of 100 men and *"can set the 100 men to work. He pays them the value of 100 independent labour-powers, but does not*

in the administration of their works. The lockout put 'the employers in the saddle' — precisely where they would remain, without union interference, for four decades." The Pinkerton agents *"were preparing to enforce the authority putatively designated to them by Henry Clay Frick"* (although Frick *"had been counting on the ultimate authority of the state from the outset."*). [Peter Krause, **Op. Cit.**, p. 13, p. 14 and p. 25]

Nor was the 1892 lockout an isolated event. There had been a long history of labour disputes at Homestead. In 1882, for example, a strike occurred over the *"question of complete and absolute submission on the part of manufacturers to the demands of their men,"* in the words of one ironmaster. [quoted by Krause, **Op. Cit.**, p. 178] It was a question of power, whether bosses would have sole and total authority over a given area and all within it. The workers won that strike, considering it *"a fight for freedom."* As such, the 1892 lockout was the end result of years of management attempts to break the union and so *"in creating and fortifying the system that had, over the years, produced the conditions for this violence, Carnegie's role cannot be denied. What provoked the apparently 'barbaric' and 'thankless' workers of Homestead was not, as an account limited to that day might indicate, the sudden intrusion of Pinkerton agents into their dispute but the slow and steady erosion of their rights and their power, over which Carnegie and his associates in steel and politics had presided for years, invisibly but no less violently."* [Krause, **Op. Cit.**, p. 181 and p. 43]

The conflict at Homestead was thus directly related to the issue of ensuring that the *"sole authority over a given area and all within it"* rested in the hands of the capitalists. This required smashing the union for, as Tucker noted, no state *"has ever tolerated a rival State within its borders."* The union was a democratic organisation, whose *"basic organisation . . . was the lodge, which elected its own president and also appointed a mill committee to enforce union rules within a given department of the steelworks. The union maintained a joint committee of the entire works."* Elected union officials who *"act[ed] without the committee's authorisation"* were *"replaced. Over and above the Advisory Committee stood the mass meeting"* which was *"often open to all workers,"* not just union members. This union democracy was the key to the strike, as Carnegie and his associates

"were deeply troubled by its effects in the workplace. So troubled, in fact, that beyond the issue of wages or any issues related to it, it was unionism itself that was the primary target of Carnegie's concern." [Krause, **Op. Cit.**, p. 293]

Instead of a relatively libertarian regime, in which those who did the work managed it, the lockout resulted in the imposition of a totalitarian regime for the *"purpose of more complete oppression of its subjects"* and by its competitive advantage on the market, the *"extension of its boundaries"* (to use Tucker's description of the state). *"Without the encumbrance of the union,"* notes Krause, *"Carnegie was able to slash wages, impose twelve-hour workdays, eliminate five hundred jobs, and suitably assuage his republican conscience with the endowment of a library."* And so *"the labour difficulties that precipitated the Homestead Lockout had less to do with quantifiable matter such as wages and wage scales than with the politics of the workers' claim to a franchise within the mill — that is, the legitimacy, authority, and power of the union."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 361 and p. 294]

The contradictions in wage labour become clear when Secretary Lovejoy stated that with the lockout the owners had declared that *"we have decided to run our Homestead Mill ourselves."* [quoted by Krause, **Op. Cit.**, p. 294] Except, of course, they did no such thing. The workers who occupied and used the steel mills still did the work, but without even the smallest say in their labour. A clearer example of why wage labour violates the individualist anarchist principle of "occupancy and use" would be harder to find. As labour historian David Montgomery put it, the Homestead lockout was a *"crisp and firm declaration that workers' control was illegal — that the group discipline in the workplace and community by which workers enforced their code of mutualism in opposition to the authority and power of the mill owners was tantamount to insurrection against the republic — clearly illuminated the ideological and political dimensions of workplace struggles."* [**The Fall of the House of Labour**, p. 39] This defeat of America's most powerful trade union was achieved by means of a private police, supported by the State militia.

Thus we have numerous contradictions in Tucker's position. On the one hand, occupancy and use precludes landlords renting land and housing but includes capitalists hiring workers to "occupancy

and use" their land and workplaces; the state is attacked for being a monopoly of power over a given area while the boss can have the same authority; opposing voluntary wage labour shows that you are an authoritarian, but opposing voluntary landlordism is libertarian. Yet, there is no logical reason for workplaces to be excluded from "occupancy and use." As Tucker put it:

> *"Occupancy and use is the only title to land in which we will protect you; if you attempt to use land which another is occupying and using, we will protect him against you; if another attempts to use land to which you lay claim, but which you are not occupying and using, we will not interfere with him; but of such land as you occupy and use you are the sole master, and we will not ourselves take from you, or allow anyone else to take from you, whatever you may get out of such land."* [**Liberty**, no. 252, p. 3]

Needless to say, neither Carnegie nor Frick were occupying and using the Homestead steel-mills nor were any of the other shareholders. It was precisely the autocratic authority of the owners which their private army and the state militia sought to impose on those who used, but did not own, the steel-mills (as the commander of the state troops noted, others *"can hardly believe the actual communism of these people. They believe the works are theirs quite as much as Carnegie's."* [quoted by Jeremy Brecher, **Strike!**, p. 60] As we discuss in the next section, this is precisely why most anarchists have opposed wage labour as being incompatible with general anarchist principles. In other words, a consistent anarchism precludes all forms of authoritarian social relationships.

There is another reason why wage labour is at odds with anarchist principles. This is to do with our opposition to exploitation and usury. Simply put, there are the problems in determining what are the "whole wages" of the employer and the employee. The employer, of course, does not simply get his "share" of the collectively produced output, they get the whole amount. This would mean that the employer's "wages" are simply the difference between the cost of inputs and the price the goods were sold on the market. This would imply that the market wage of the labour has to be considered as

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Following Proudhon, Tucker argued that if any group of people could legally form a "mutual bank" and issue credit based on any form of collateral they saw fit to accept, the price of credit would fall to the labour cost of the paperwork involved in running the bank. He claimed that banking statistics show this cost to be less than one percent of principal, and hence, that a one-time service fee which covers this cost and no more is the only **non-usurious** charge a bank can make for extending credit. This charge should not be called "interest" since, as it represented the labour-cost in providing, it is non-exploitative. This would ensure that workers could gain free access to the means of production (and so, in effect, be the individualist equivalent of the communist-anarchist argument for socialisation).

Tucker believed that under mutual banking, capitalists' ability to extract surplus value from workers in return for the use of tools, machinery, etc. would be eliminated because workers would be able to obtain zero-interest credit and use it to buy their own instruments of production instead of "renting" them, as it were, from capitalists. *"Make capital free by organising credit on a mutual plan,"* stressed Tucker, *"and then these vacant lands will come into use . . . operatives will be able to buy axes and rakes and hoes, and then they will be independent of their employers, and then the labour problem will solved."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 321] Easy access to mutual credit would result in a huge increase in the purchase of capital goods, creating a high demand for labour, which in turn would greatly increase workers' bargaining power and thus raise their wages toward equivalence with the value their labour produces.

For Tucker, reforms had to be applied at the heart of the system and so he rejected the notion of setting up intentional communities based on anarchist principles in the countryside or in other countries. *"Government makes itself felt alike in city and in country,"* he argued, *"capital has its usurious grip on the farm as surely as on the workshop, and the oppression and exactions of neither government nor capital can be avoided by migration. The State is the enemy, and the best means of fighting it can be found in communities already existing."* He stressed that *"I care nothing for any reform that cannot be effected right here*

in Boston among the every day people whom I meet in the streets." [quoted by Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 249 and p. 248]

It should be noted that while his social and political vision remained mostly the same over his lifetime, Tucker's rationale for his system changed significantly. Originally, like the rest of the American individualist anarchist tradition he subscribed to a system of natural rights. Thus he advocated "occupancy and use" based on a person's right to have access to the means of life as well as its positive effects on individual liberty. However, under the influence of Max Stirner's book **The Ego and Its Own**, Tucker along with many of his comrades, became egoists (see next section for a discussion of Stirner). This resulted in Tucker arguing that while previously *"it was my habit to talk glibly of the right of man to land"* this was *"a bad habit, and I long ago sloughed it off."* Now a person's *"only right over the land is his might over it."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 350] Contracts were seen as the means of securing the peaceful preservation of the ego's personality as it would be against a person's self-interest to aggress against others (backed-up, of course, by means of freely joined defence associations). It should be noted that the issue of egoism split the individualist anarchist movement and lead to its further decline.

Tucker's ideal society was one of small entrepreneurs, farmers, artisans, independent contractors and co-operative associations based around a network of mutual banks. He looked to alternative institutions such as co-operative banks and firms, schools and trade unions, combined with civil disobedience in the form of strikes, general strikes, tax and rent strikes and boycotts to bring anarchism closer. He was firm supporter of the labour movement and *"strikes, whenever and wherever inaugurated, deserve encouragement from all the friends of labour . . . They show that people are beginning to know their rights, and knowing, dare to maintain them."* Echoing Bakunin's thoughts on the subject, Tucker maintained that strikes should be supported and encouraged because *"as an awakening agent, as an agitating force, the beneficent influence of a strike is immeasurable . . . with our present economic system almost every strike is just. For what is justice in production and distribution? That labour, which creates all, shall have **all**."* [**Liberty**, no. 19, p. 7] While critical of certain

In summary, as can be seen, as with other individualist anarchists, there is a great deal of commonality between Spooner's ideas and those of social anarchists. Spooner perceives the same sources of exploitation and oppression inherent in monopolistic control of the means of production by a wealth-owning class as do social anarchists. His solutions may differ, but he observes exactly the same problems. In other words, Spooner is a left libertarian, and his individualist anarchism is just as anti-capitalist as the ideas of, say, Bakunin, Kropotkin or Chomsky. Spooner, in spite of his closeness to classical liberalism, was no more a capitalist than Rothbard was an anarchist.

aspects of trade unionism, Tucker was keen to stress that *"it is not to be denied for a moment that workingmen are obliged to unite and act together in order, not to successfully contend with, but to defend themselves at least to some extent from, the all-powerful possessors of natural wealth and capital."* [**Op. Cit.**, no. 158, p. 1]

Like the anarcho-syndicalists and many other social anarchists, Tucker considered Labour unions as a positive development, being a *"crude step in the direction of supplanting the State"* and involved a *"movement for self-government on the part of the people, the logical outcome of which is ultimate revolt against those usurping political conspiracies which manifest themselves in courts and legislatures. Just as the [Irish] Land League has become a formidable rival of the British State, so the amalgamated trades unions may yet become a power sufficiently strong to defy the legislatures and overthrow them."* Thus unions were *"a potent sign of emancipation."* Indeed, he called the rise of the unions *"trades-union socialism,"* saw in it a means of *"supplanting"* the state by *"an intelligent and self-governing socialism"* and indicated that *"imperfect as they are, they are the beginnings of a revolt against the authority of the political State. They promise the coming substitution of industrial socialism for usurping legislative mobism."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, pp. 283–284] Hence we see the co-operative nature of the voluntary organisations supported by Tucker and a vision of socialism being based on self-governing associations of working people.

In this way working people would reform capitalism away by non-violent social protest combined with an increase in workers' bargaining power by alternative voluntary institutions and free credit. Exploitation would be eliminated and workers would gain economic liberty. His ideal society would be classless, with *"each man reaping the fruit of his labour and no man able to live in idleness on an income from capital"* and society *"would become a great hive of Anarchistic workers, prosperous and free individuals."* While, like all anarchists, he rejected *"abolute equality"* he did envision an egalitarian society whose small differences in wealth were rooted in labour, not property, and so liberty, while abolishing exploitation, would *"not abolish the limited inequality between one labourer's product and another's . . . Liberty will ultimately make all men rich; it will not make all men*

equally rich." [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 276, p. 156 and p. 157] He firmly believed that the *"most perfect Socialism is possible only on the condition of the most perfect individualism."* [quoted by Peter Marshall, **Demanding the Impossible**, p. 390]

As we noted in section G.1.3, there is one apparent area of disagreement between Tucker and most other socialists, namely the issue of wage labour. For almost all anarchists the employer/employee social relationship does not fit in well with Tucker's statement that *"if the individual has the right to govern himself, all external government is tyranny."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 86] However, even here the differences are not impossible to overcome. It is important to note that because of Tucker's proposal to increase the bargaining power of workers through access to mutual credit, his individualist anarchism is not only compatible with workers' control but would in fact **promote** it (as well as logically requiring it — see section G.4.1).

For if access to mutual credit were to increase the bargaining power of workers to the extent that Tucker claimed it would, they would then be able to: (1) demand and get workplace democracy; and (2) pool their credit to buy and own companies collectively. This would eliminate the top-down structure of the firm and the ability of owners to pay themselves unfairly large salaries as well as reducing capitalist profits to zero by ensuring that workers received the full value of their labour. Tucker himself pointed this out when he argued that Proudhon (like himself) *"would individualise and associate"* workplaces by mutualism, which would *"place the means of production within the reach of all."* [quoted by Martin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 228] Proudhon used the word *"associate"* to denote co-operative (i.e. directly democratic) workplaces (and given Proudhon's comments — quoted in section G.4.2 — on capitalist firms we can dismiss any attempt to suggest that the term *"individualise"* indicates support for capitalist rather than artisan/peasant production, which is the classic example of individualised production). For as Proudhon recognised, only a system without wage slavery (and so exploitation) would ensure the goal of all anarchists: *"the greatest amount of liberty compatible with equality of liberty."* [Tucker, **Instead of a Book**, p. 131]

of applying his ideas, his vision is the exact opposition of that of the "anarcho"-capitalist guru. For Spooner, rather than being a revolt against nature, equality and liberty were seen to be mutually self-enforcing; rather than a necessary and essential aspect of a (so-called) free economy, wage labour was condemned as producing inequality, servitude and a servile mentality. Moreover, the argument that capitalists deny workers *"all the fruits"* of their labour is identical to the general **socialist** position that capitalism is exploitative. All of which undoubtedly explains why Rothbard only selectively quoted from Spooner's critique of the state rather and ignored the socio-economic principles which underlay his political analysis and hopes for a free society. Yet without those aspects of his ideas, Spooner's political analysis is pressed into service of an ideology it is doubtful he would have agreed with.

As such, we must agree with Peter Marshall, who notes that Spooner *"recommends that every man should be his own employer, and he depicts an ideal society of independent farmers and entrepreneurs who have access to easy credit. If every person received the fruits of his own labour, the just and equal distribution of wealth would result."* Because of this, he classifies Spooner as a **left** libertarian as *"his concern with equality as well as liberty makes him a left-wing individualist anarchist. Indeed, while his starting-point is the individual, Spooner goes beyond classical liberalism in his search for a form of rough equality and a community of interests.* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 389] This is also noted by Stephan L. Newman, who writes that while right-"libertarians" are generally *"sympathic to Spooner's individualist anarchism, they fail to notice or conveniently overlook its egalitarian implications . . . They accept inequality as the price of freedom"* and *"habour no reservations about the social consequences of capitalism."* Spooner *"insist[s] that inequality corrupts freedom. [His] anarchism is directed as much against inequality as against tyranny."* Spooner *"attempt[s] to realise th[e] promise of social harmony by recreating [a] rough equality of condition"* and so joins the *"critics of modern capitalism and champions of the Jeffersonian idea of the autonomous individual — independent yeoman and the self-employed mechanic."* **Liberalism at Wit's End**, p. 76, p. 74 and p. 91]

that he stressed that it was not, in fact, anarchist at all (he called it *"Archist"*) and, as a result, rejected them.

Thus we have a contradiction. Spooner attacked the government for it *"denies the **natural** right of human beings to live on this planet. This it does by denying their **natural** right to those things that are indispensable to the maintenance of life."* [**A Letter to Grover Cleveland**, p. 33] Yet what happens if, by market forces, all the land and capital becomes owned by a few people? The socio-economic situation of the mass of the population is in exactly the same situation as under a system founded by stealing the land by the few. Equally, having to pay for access to the land results in just as much a deduction from the product of work as wage labour. If property is a "natural right" then they must be universal and so must be extended to everyone — like all rights — and this implies an end to absolute property rights (*"Because the right to live and to develop oneself fully is equal for all,"* Proudhon argued, *"and because inequality of conditions is an obstacle to the exercise of this right."* [quoted by John Enrenberg, **Proudhon and his Age**, pp. 48–9]). However, saying that it is fair to suggest, given his arguments in favour of universal self-employment, that Spooner did not think that his system of property rights would be abused to produce a landlord class and, as such, did not see the need to resolve the obvious contradictions in his ideology. Whether he was correct in that assumption is another matter.

Which indicates why Spooner must be considered an anarchist regardless of his unique position on property rights within the movement. As we argued in section A.3.1, only a system where the users of land or a workplace own it can it be consistent with anarchist principles. Otherwise, if there are bosses and landlords, then that society would be inherently hierarchical and so ***Archist***. Spooner's vision of a free society, rooted as it is in self-employment, meets the criteria of being genuinely libertarian in spite of the property rights used to justify it. Certain "anarcho"-capitalists may subscribe to a similar theory of property but they use it to justify an economy rooted in wage labour and so hierarchy.

Somewhat ironically, then, while certain of Spooner's ideas were closer to Rothbard's than other individualist anarchists (most notably, a "natural rights" defence of property) in terms of actual outcomes

Thus the logical consequence of Tucker's proposals would be a system equivalent in most important respects to the kind of system advocated by other left libertarians. In terms of aspirations, Tucker's ideas reflected those of social anarchists — a form of socialism rooted in individual liberty. His fire was directed against the same targets, exploitation and oppression and so state and capital. He aimed for a society without inequalities of wealth where it would be impossible to exploit another's labour and where free access to the means of life were secured by mutual banking and "occupancy and use" applied to land and what was on it. He considered laissez-faire capitalism to be a system of state-supported privilege rather than as an ideal to be aimed for. He argued extensively that getting rid of the state would mean getting rid of capitalist property rights and so, like other anarchists, he did not artificially divide economic and political issues. In other words, like social anarchists, he was against the state because it protected specific kinds of private property, kinds which allowed its owners to extract tribute from labour.

In summary, then, Tucker *"remained a left rather than a right-wing libertarian."* [Marshall, **Op. Cit.**, p. 391] When he called himself a socialist he knew well what it meant and systematically fought those (usually, as today, Marxists and capitalists) who sought to equate it with state ownership. John Quail, in his history of British Anarchism, puts his finger on the contextual implications and limitations of Tucker's ideas when he wrote:

> *"Tucker was a Proudhonist and thus fundamentally committed to a society based on small proprietorship. In the American context, however, where the small landowner was often locked in battle with large capitalist interests, this did not represent the reactionary position it often did later where it could easily degenerate into an 'Anarchism for small business-men.' Tucker had a keen sense of the right of the oppressed to struggle against oppression."* [**The Slow Burning Fuse**, p. 19]

As we stressed in section G.1.4, many of Tucker's arguments can only be fully understood in the context of the society in which he developed them, namely the transformation of America from a

pre-capitalist into a capitalist one by means of state intervention (the process of *"primitive accumulation"* to use Marx's phrase — see section F.8.5). At that time, it was possible to argue that access to credit would allow workers to set-up business and undermine big business. However, eventually Tucker had come to argue that this possibility had effectively ended and even the freest market would not be able to break-up the economic power of corporations and trusts (see section G.1.1).

In this, ironically, Tucker came to the same conclusion as his old enemy Johann Most had done three decades previously. In the 1880s, Tucker had argued that wage labour would be non-exploitative under individualist anarchy. This was part of the reason why Most had excommunicated Tucker from anarchism, for he thought that Tucker's system could not, by definition, end exploitation due to its tolerance of wage labour, an argument Tucker disputed but did not disprove (see section G.4.1 for more discussion on this issue). In 1888 Tucker had speculated that *"the question whether large concentrations of capital for production on the large scale confronts us with the disagreeable alternative of either abolishing private property or continuing to hold labour under the capitalistic yoke."* [**Liberty**, no. 122, p. 4] By 1911, he had come to the conclusion that the latter had come to pass and considered revolutionary or political action as the only means of breaking up such concentrations of wealth (although he was against individualists anarchists participating in either strategy). [Martin, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 273–4] In other words, Tucker recognised that economic power existed and, as a consequence, free markets were not enough to secure free people in conditions of economic inequality.

There are, of course, many differences between the anarchism of, say, Bakunin and Kropotkin and that of Tucker. Tucker's system, for example, does retain some features usually associated with capitalism, such as competition between firms in a free market. However, the fundamental socialist objection to capitalism is not that it involves markets or "private property" but that it results in exploitation. Most socialists oppose private property and markets because they result in exploitation and have other negative consequences rather than an opposition to them as such. Tucker's system was

labour, whether he retains them in his actual possession or not." This Spooner subscribed to Locke's theory and argued that the *"**natural** wealth of the world belongs to those who **first** take possession of it . . . There is no limit, fixed by the law of nature, to the amount of property one may acquire, simply by taking possession of natural wealth, not already possessed, except the limit fixed by power or ability to take such possession, without doing violence to the person or property of others."* [**The Law of Intellectual Property**, p. 88 and pp. 21–2] From this position he argued that the inventor should have intellectual property rights forever, a position in direct contradiction to the opinions of other anarchists (and even capitalist law and right-"libertarians" like Murray Rothbard).

Unsurprisingly, Tucker called Spooner's work on Intellectual Property *"positively foolish because it is fundamentally foolish, — because, that is to say, its discussion of the acquisition of the right of property starts with a basic proposition that must be looked upon by all consistent Anarchists as obvious nonsense."* This was because it *"defines taking possession of a thing as the bestowing of valuable labour upon it, such, for instance, in the case of land, as cutting down the trees or building a fence around it. What follows from this? Evidently that a man may go to a piece of vacant land and fence it off; that he may then go to a second piece and fence that off; then to a third, and fence that off; then to a fourth, a fifth, a hundredth, a thousandth, fencing them all off; that, unable to fence off himself as many as he wishes, he may hire other men to do the fencing for him; and that then he may stand back and bar all other men from using these lands, or admit them as tenants at such rental as he may choose to extract.* According to Tucker, Spooner *"bases his opposition to . . . landlords on the **sole** ground that they or their ancestors took their lands **by the sword** from the original holders . . . I then asked him whether if"* a landlord *"had found unoccupied the very lands that he now holds, and had fenced them off, he would have any objection to raise against [his] title to and leasing of these lands. He declared emphatically that he would not. Whereupon I protested that his pamphlet, powerful as it was within its scope, did not go to the bottom of the land question."* [**Liberty**, no. 182, p. 6] For Tucker, the implications of Spooner's argument were such

of failure" and this *"is the true relation between capital and labour, (or, what is the same thing, between the lender and borrower.)"* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 29–30] It is doubtful that rich lenders would concur with Spooner on that!

However, by the 1880s Spooner had lost his illusions that finance capital was fundamentally different from industrial capital. Now it was a case, like the wider individualist anarchist movement he had become aware of and joined, of attacking the money monopoly. His mature analysis recognised that *"the employers of wage labour"* were *"also the monopolists of money"* and so both wings of the capitalist class aimed to *"reduce [the public] to the condition of servants; and to subject them to all the extortions as their employers — the holders of privileged money — may choose to practice upon them." "The holders of this monopoly now rule and rob this nation; and the government, in all its branches, is simply their tool."* [**A Letter to Grover Cleveland**, p. 48, p. 39, p. 48] Thus Spooner came to see, like other socialists that both finance and industrial capital share a common goal in oppressing and exploiting the working class and that the state is simply an organ of (minority) class rule. In this, his politics became more in line with other individualist anarchists. This analysis is, needless to say, a left-libertarian one rather than right-"libertarian."

Of course, it may be objected that Spooner was a right-Libertarian" because he supported the market and private property. However, as we argued in section G.1.1 support for the market does not equate to support for capitalism (no matter how often the ideologues of capitalism proclaim it so). As noted, markets are not the defining feature of capitalism as there were markets long before capitalism existed. So the fact that Spooner retained the concept of markets does not necessarily make him a supporter of capitalism. As for "property", this question is more complex as Spooner is the only individualist anarchist to apparently reject the idea of "occupancy and use." Somewhat ironically, he termed the doctrine that *"which holds that a man has a right to lay his hands on any thing, which has no other man's hands upon it, no matter who may have been the producer"* as *"absolute communism"* and contrasted this with *"individual property . . . which says that each man has an absolute dominion, as against all other men, over the products and acquisitions of his own*

intended to eliminate exploitation and involves a radical change in property rights, which is why he called himself a socialist and why most other anarchists concurred. This is why we find Kropotkin discussing Tucker in his general accounts of anarchism, accounts which note that the anarchists *"constitute the left wing"* of the socialists and which make no comment that Tucker's ideas were any different in this respect. [**Anarchism**, p. 285] A position, needless to say, Tucker also held as he considered his ideas as part of the wider socialist movement.

This fact is overlooked by "anarcho"-capitalists who, in seeking to make Tucker one of their "founding fathers," point to the fact that he spoke of the advantages of owning "property." But it is apparent that by "property" he was referring to simple "possession" of land, tools, etc. by independent artisans, farmers, and co-operating workers (he used the word property *"as denoting the labourer's individual possession of his product or his share of the joint product of himself and others."* [Tucker, **Instead of a Book**, p. 394]. For, since Tucker saw his system as eliminating the ability of capitalists to maintain exploitative monopolies over the means of production, it is therefore true **by definition** that he advocated the elimination of "private property" in the capitalist sense.

So while it is true that Tucker placed "property" and markets at the heart of his vision of anarchy, this does not make he a supporter of capitalism (see sections G.1.1 and G.1.2). Unlike supporters of capitalism, the individualist anarchists identified "property" with simple "possession," or *"occupancy and use"* and considered profit, rent and interest as exploitation. Indeed, Tucker explicitly stated that *"all property rests on a labour title, and no other property do I favour."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 400] Because of their critique of capitalist property rights and their explicit opposition to usury (profits, rent and interest) individualist anarchists like Tucker could and did consider themselves as part of the wider socialist movement, the libertarian wing as opposed to the statist/Marxist wing.

Thus, Tucker is clearly a left libertarian rather than a forefather of right-wing "libertarianism". In this he comes close to what today would be called a market socialist, albeit a non-statist variety. As

can be seen, his views are directly opposed to those of right "libertarians" like Murray Rothbard on a number of key issues. Most fundamentally, he rejected "absolute" property rights in land which are protected by laws enforced either by private security forces or a "night watchman state." He also recognised that workers were exploited by capitalists, who use the state to ensure that the market was skewed in their favour, and so urged working people to organise themselves to resist such exploitation and, as a consequence, supported unions and strikes. He recognised that while formal freedom may exist in an unequal society, it could not be an anarchy due to the existence of economic power and the exploitation and limitations in freedom it produced. His aim was a society of equals, one in which wealth was equally distributed and any differences would be minor and rooted in actual work done rather than by owning capital or land and making others produce it for them. This clearly indicates that Rothbard's claim to have somehow modernised Tucker's thought is **false** — "ignored" or "changed beyond recognition" would be more appropriate.

It should be noted that this fierce and militant rhetoric is never mentioned by those who seek to associate social anarchism with violence.

Spooner's analysis of the root causes of social problems grew more radical and consistent over time. Initially, he argued that there was a *"class of employers, who now stand between the capitalist and labourer, and, by means of usury laws, sponge money from the former, and labour from the latter, and put the plunder into their own pockets."* These usury laws *"are the contrivances, not of the retired rich men, who have capital to loan . . . but of those few 'enterprising' 'business men,' as they are called, who, in and out of legislatures, are more influential than either the rich or the poor; who control the legislation of the country, and who, by means of usury laws, can sponge money from those who are richer, and labour from those who are poorer than themselves — and thus make fortunes . . . And they are almost the only men who do make fortunes . . . large fortunes could rarely be made at all by one individual, except by his sponging capital and labour from others."* If *"free competition in banking were allowed, the rate of interest would be brought very low, and bank loans would be within the reach of everybody."* [**Poverty: Its Illegal Causes and Legal Cure**, p. 35, p. 11 and p. 15]

This is a wonderfully self-contradictory analysis, with Spooner suggesting that industrial capitalists are both the only wealthy people around and, at the same time, sponge money off the rich who have more money than them! Equally, he seemed to believe that allowing interest rates to rise without legal limit will, first, produce more people willing to take out loans and then, when it fell below the legal limit, would produce more rich people willing to loan their cash. And as the aim of these reforms was to promote equality, how would paying interest payments to the already very wealthy help achieve that goal? As can be seen, his early work was directed at industrial capital only and he sought *"the establishment of a sort of partnership relation between the capitalist and labourer, or lender and borrower — the former furnishing capital, the latter labour."* However, he opposed the idea that debtors should pay their debts in case of failure, stating *"the capitalist is made to risk his capital on the final success of the enterprise, without any claim upon the debtor in case*

Thus Spooner identified the underlying basis for legislation (as well as the source of much misery, exploitation and oppression throughout history) as the result of the monopolisation of the means of wealth creation by an elite class. We doubt he would have considered that calling these laws "libertarian" would in any change their oppressive and class-based nature. The state was an instrument of the wealthy few, not some neutral machine which furthered its own interests, and so *"the whole business of legislation, which has now grown to such gigantic proportions, had its origin in the conspiracies, which have always existed among the few, for the purpose of holding the many in subjection, and extorting from them their labour, and all the profits of their labour."* Characterising employment as extortion may seem rather extreme, but it makes sense given the exploitative nature of profit under capitalism, as left libertarians have long recognised (see section C.2).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given Spooner's rhetorical denunciation of the state as being a gang of murderers and thieves employed by the wealthy few to oppress and exploit the many, he was not shy in similarly extreme rhetoric in advocating revolution. In this (as in many other things) Spooner was a very atypical individualist anarchist and his language could be, at times, as extreme as Johann Most. Thus we find Spooner in 1880 *"advocat[ing] that the Irish rise up and kill their British landlords since be believed that when a person's life, liberty, and property — his natural rights — are denied, that person has a natural right to kill those who would deny these rights. Spooner called for a class war."* [Wm. Gary Kline, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 41] Elsewhere he thundered:

> *"**Who** compose the real governing power in the country? . . . How shall we find these men? How shall we know them from others? . . . Who, of our neighbours, are members of this secret band of robbers and murderers? How can we know which are **their** houses, that we may burn or demolish them? Which **their** property, that we may destroy it? Which their persons, that we may kill them, and rid the world and ourselves of such tyrants and monsters?"* [**No Treason**, p. 46]

G.6 What are the ideas of Max Stirner?

To some extent, Stirner's work **The Ego and Its Own** is like a Rorschach test. Depending on the reader's psychology, he or she can interpret it in drastically different ways. Hence, a few have tried to use Stirner's ideas to defend capitalism while others have used them to argue for anarcho-syndicalism. For example, many in the anarchist movement in Glasgow, Scotland, took Stirner's *"Union of Egoists"* literally as the basis for their anarcho-syndicalist organising in the 1940s and beyond. Similarly, we discover the noted anarchist historian Max Nettlau stating that *"[o]n reading Stirner, I maintain that he cannot be interpreted except in a socialist sense."* [**A Short History of Anarchism**, p. 55] In this section of the FAQ, we will indicate why, in our view, the latter, syndicalistic, interpretation of egoism is far more appropriate than the capitalistic one.

It should be noted, before continuing, that Stirner's work has had a bigger impact on individualist anarchism than social anarchism. Benjamin Tucker and many of his comrades embraced egoism when they became aware of **The Ego and Its Own** (a development which provoked a split in individualist circles which, undoubtedly, contributed to its decline). However, his influence was not limited to individualist anarchism. As John P. Clark notes, Stirner *"has also been seen as a significant figure by figures who are more in the mainstream of the anarchist tradition. Emma Goldman, for example, combines an acceptance of many of the principles of anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-communism with a strong emphasis on individuality and personal uniqueness. The inspiration for this latter part of her outlook comes from thinkers like . . . Stirner. Herbert Read has commented on the value of Stirner's defence of individuality."* [**Max Stirner's Egoism**, p. 90] Daniel Guérin's classic introduction to anarchism gives significant space to the German egoist, arguing he *"rehabilitated the individual at a time when the philosophical field was dominated by Hegelian anti-individualism and most reformers in the social field had been led by the misdeeds of bourgeois egotism to stress its opposite"*

and pointed to *"the boldness and scope of his thought."* [**Anarchism**, p. 27] From meeting anarchists in Glasgow during the Second World War, long-time anarchist activist and artist Donald Rooum likewise combined Stirner and anarcho-communism. In America, the short-lived Situationist influenced group *"For Ourselves"* produced the inspired **The Right to Be Greedy: Theses on the Practical Necessity of Demanding Everything**, a fusion of Marx and Stirner which proclaimed a *"communist egoism"* based on the awareness that greed *"in its fullest sense is the **only possible** basis of communist society."*

It is not hard to see why so many people are influenced by Stirner's work. It is a classic, full of ideas and a sense of fun which is lacking in many political writers. For many, it is only known through the criticism Marx and Engels subjected it too in their book **The German Ideology**. As with their later attacks on Proudhon and Bakunin, the two Germans did not accurately reflect the ideas they were attacking and, in the case of Stirner, they made it their task to make them appear ridiculous and preposterous. That they took so much time and energy to do so suggests that Stirner's work is far more important and difficult to refute than their notoriously misleading diatribe suggests. That in itself should prompt interest in his work.

As will become clear from our discussion, social anarchists have much to gain from understanding Stirner's ideas and applying what is useful in them. While some may object to our attempt to place egoism and communism together, pointing out that Stirner rejected "communism". Quite! Stirner did not subscribe to libertarian communism, because it did not exist when he was writing and so he was directing his critique against the various forms of **state** communism which did. Moreover, this does not mean that anarcho-communists and others may not find his work of use to them. And Stirner would have approved, for nothing could be more foreign to his ideas than to limit what an individual considers to be in their best interest. Unlike the narrow and self-defeating "egoism" of, say, Ayn Rand, Stirner did not prescribe what was and was not in a person's self-interest. He did not say you should act in certain ways because he preferred it, he did not redefine selfishness to allow most of bourgeois morality to remain intact. Rather he urged the individual to think for themselves and seek their own path. Not for Stirner the

This is an interesting comment. Spooner suggests that the liberated slave class were perhaps **better off as slaves**. Most anarchists would not go so far, although we would agree that employees are subject to the power of those who employ them and so are no long self-governing individuals — in other words, that capitalist social relationships deny self-ownership and freedom. Spooner denounced the power of the economically dominant class, noting that the workers *"were liable, at the caprice or interest of the landholders, to be thrown out of home, employment, and the opportunity of even earning a subsistence by their labour."* Lest the reader doubt that Spooner is actually discussing employment here (and not slavery), he explicitly includes being made unemployed as an example of the arbitrary nature of wage labour and indicates that this is a source of class conflict and danger for the ruling class: *"They were, therefore, in large numbers, driven to the necessity of begging, stealing, or starving; and became, of course, dangerous to the property and quiet of their late masters."* And so the *"consequence was, that these late owners found it necessary, for their own safety and the safety of their property, to organise themselves more perfectly as a government **and make laws for keeping these dangerous people in subjection**."*

In other words, the robber class creates legislation which will protect its power, namely its property, against the dispossessed. Hence we see the creation of "law code" by the wealthy which serves to protect their interests while effectively making attempts to change the status quo illegal. This process is in effect similar to the right-"libertarian" concept of a judge interpreted and developed "general libertarian law code" which exercises a monopoly over a given area and which exists to defend the "rights" of property against "initiation of force," i.e. attempts to change the system into a new one. Spooner goes on:

> *"The purpose and effect of these laws have been to maintain, in the hands of robber, or slave holding class, a monopoly of all lands, and, as far as possible, of all other means of creating wealth; and thus to keep the great body of labourers in such a state of poverty and dependence, as would compel them to sell their labour to their tyrants for the lowest prices at which life could be sustained."*

the land-holding class — their former owners — for just what the latter might choose to give them."

Here Spooner echoes the standard anarchist critique of capitalism. Note that he is no longer talking about slavery but rather about economic relations between a wealth-holding class and a 'freed' class of workers and tenant farmers. Clearly he does **not** view this relation — wage labour — as a voluntary association, because the former slaves have little option but to be employed by members of the wealth-owning class. As he put it elsewhere, their wealth ensures that they have *"control of those great armies of servants — the wage labourers — from whom all their wealth is derived, and whom they can now coerce by the alternative of starvation, to labour for them."* [**A Letter to Grover Cleveland**, p. 48] Thus we have the standard socialist analysis that economic power, wealth itself, is a source of coercion.

Spooner points out that by monopolising the means of wealth creation while at the same time requiring the newly 'liberated' slaves to provide for themselves, the robber class thus continues to receive the benefits of the labour of the former slaves while accepting none of the responsibility for their welfare. *"Of course,"* Spooner continued *"these liberated slaves, as some have erroneously called them, having no lands, or other property, and no means of obtaining an independent subsistence, had no alternative — to save themselves from starvation — but to sell their labour to the landholders, in exchange only for the coarsest necessaries of life; not always for so much even as that."* Thus while technically "free," the apparently liberated working class lack the ability to provide for their own needs and hence remain dependent on the wealth-owning class. This echoes not right-"libertarian" analysis of capitalism, but left-libertarian and other socialist viewpoints:

> *"These liberated slaves, as they were called, were now scarcely less slaves than they were before. Their means of subsistence were perhaps even more precarious than when each had his own owner, who had an interest to preserve his life."*

grim "egoism" of "selfishly" living a life determined by some guru and which only that authority figure would approve of. True egoism is not parroting what Stirner wrote and agreeing with everything he expounded. Nothing could be more foreign to Stirner's work than to invent "Stirnerism." As Donald Rooum put it:

> *"I am happy to be called a Stirnerite anarchist, provided 'Stirnerite' means one who agrees with Stirner's general drift, not one who agrees with Stirner's every word. Please judge my arguments on their merits, not on the merits of Stirner's arguments, and not by the test of whether I conform to Stirner."* [*"Anarchism and Selfishness"*, pp. 251–9, **The Raven**, no. 3, p. 259fn]

With that in mind, we will summarise Stirner's main arguments and indicate why social anarchists have been, and should be, interested in his ideas. Saying that, John P. Clark presents a sympathetic and useful social anarchist critique of his work in **Max Stirner's Egoism**. Unless otherwise indicated all quotes are from Stirner's **The Ego and Its Own**.

So what is Stirner all about? Simply put, he is an Egoist, which means that he considers self-interest to be the root cause of an individual's every action, even when he or she is apparently doing "altruistic" actions. Thus: *"I am everything to myself and I do everything **on my account**."* Even love is an example of selfishness, *"because love makes me happy, I love because loving is natural to me, because it pleases me."* He urges others to follow him and *"take courage now to really make **yourselves** the central point and the main thing altogether."* As for other people, he sees them purely as a means for self-enjoyment, a self-enjoyment which is mutual: *"For me you are nothing but my food, even as I am fed upon and turned to use by you. We have only one relation to each other, that of **usableness**, of utility, of use."* [p. 162, p. 291 and pp. 296–7]

For Stirner, all individuals are unique (*"My flesh is not their flesh, my mind is not their mind,"*) and should reject any attempts to restrict or deny their uniqueness: *"To be looked upon as a mere **part**, part of society, the individual cannot bear — because he is **more**; his uniqueness puts from it this limited conception."* Individuals, in order

to maximise their uniqueness, must become aware of the **real** reasons for their actions. In other words they must become conscious, not unconscious, egoists. An unconscious, or involuntary, egoist is one *"who is always looking after his own and yet does not count himself as the highest being, who serves only himself and at the same time always thinks he is serving a higher being, who knows nothing higher than himself and yet is infatuated about something higher."* [p. 138, p. 265 and p. 36] In contrast, egoists are aware that they act purely out of self-interest, and if they support a "higher being," it is not because it is a noble thought but because it will benefit them.

Stirner himself, however, has no truck with "higher beings." Indeed, with the aim of concerning himself purely with his own interests, he attacks all "higher beings," regarding them as a variety of what he calls *"spooks,"* or ideas to which individuals sacrifice themselves and by which they are dominated. First amongst these is the abstraction *"Man"*, into which all unique individuals are submerged and lost. As he put it, *"liberalism is a religion because it separates my essence from me and sets it above me, because it exalts 'Man' to the same extent as any other religion does to God . . . it sets me beneath Man."* Indeed, he *"who is infatuated with **Man** leaves persons out of account so far as that infatuation extends, and floats in an ideal, sacred interest. **Man**, you see, is not a person, but an ideal, a spook."* [p. 176 and p.79] Among the many *"spooks"* Stirner attacks are such notable aspects of capitalist life as private property, the division of labour, the state, religion, and (at times) society itself. We will discuss Stirner's critique of capitalism before moving onto his vision of an egoist society and how it relates to social anarchism.

For the egoist, private property is a spook which *"lives by the grace of **law**"* and it *"becomes 'mine' only by effect of the law"*. In other words, private property exists purely *"through the **protection of the State,** through the State's grace."* Recognising its need for state protection, Stirner is also aware that *"[i]t need not make any difference to the 'good citizens' who protects them and their principles, whether an absolute King or a constitutional one, a republic, if only they are protected. And what is their principle, whose protector they always 'love'? Not that of labour"*, rather it is *"**interesting-bearing possession** . . . **labouring capital**, therefore . . . labour certainly, yet*

This can be clearly seen for his analysis of history, when he asks: *"Why is it that [Natural Law] has not, ages ago, been established throughout the world as the one only law that any man, or all men, could rightfully be compelled to obey?"* Spooner's answer is given in his interpretation of how the State evolved, where he postulates that it was formed through the initial ascendancy of a land-holding, slave-holding class by military conquest and oppressive enslavement of the peasantry:

> *"These tyrants, living solely on plunder, and on the labour of their slaves, and applying all their energies to the seizure of still more plunder, and the enslavement of still other defenceless persons; increasing, too, their numbers, perfecting their organisations, and multiplying their weapons of war, they extend their conquests until, in order to hold what they have already got, it becomes necessary for them to act systematically, and co-operate with each other in holding their slaves in subjection.*
>
> *"But all this they can do only by establishing what they call a government, and making what they call laws . . . Thus substantially all the legislation of the world has had its origin in the desires of one class of persons to plunder and enslave others, **and hold them as property**."*

Nothing too provocative here, simply Spooner's view of government as a tool of the wealth-holding, slave-owning class. What is more interesting is Spooner's view of the subsequent development of (post-slavery) socio-economic systems:

> *"In process of time, the robber, or slaveholding, class — who had seized all the lands, and held all the means of creating wealth — began to discover that the easiest mode of managing their slaves, and making them profitable, was **not** for each slaveholder to hold his specified number of slaves, as he had done before, and as he would hold so many cattle, but to give them so much liberty as would throw upon themselves (the slaves) the responsibility of their own subsistence, and yet compel them to sell their labour to*

which is not designed to be an engine in the hands of the rich for the oppression of the poor." It seems unlikely that Spooner would have supported unequal voting rights based on wealth particularly as *"all questions as to the **rights** of the corporation itself, must be determined by members of the corporation itself . . . by the unanimous verdict of a tribunal fairly representing the whole people"* such as a jury [**Trial by Jury**, p. 223, p. 172 and p. 214]

These comments are particularly important when we consider Spooner's criticisms of finance capitalists, like the Rothschilds. Here he departs even more strikingly from right-"libertarian" positions. For he believes that sheer wealth has intrinsic power, even to the extent of allowing the wealthy to coerce the government into behaving at their behest. For Spooner, governments are *"the merest hangers on, the servile, obsequious, fawning dependants and tools of these blood-money loan-mongers, on whom they rely for the means to carry on their crimes."* Thus the wealthy can *"make [governments] and use them"* as well as being able to *"unmake them . . . the moment they refuse to commit any crime we require of them, or to pay over to us such share of the proceeds of their robberies as we see fit to demand."* Indeed, Spooner considers *"these soulless blood-money loan-mongers"* as *"the real rulers,"* not the government (who are simply their agents). Thus governments are *"little or nothing else than mere tools, employed by the wealthy to rob, enslave, and (if need be) murder those who have less wealth, or none at all."* [**No Treason**, p. 50, p. 51, p. 52 and p. 47] This is an extremely class conscious analysis of the state, one which mirrors the standard socialist one closely.

If one grants that highly concentrated wealth has intrinsic power and may be used in such a Machiavellian manner as Spooner claims, then simple opposition to the state is not sufficient. Logically, any political theory claiming to promote liberty should also seek to limit or abolish the institutions that facilitate large concentrations of wealth. As shown above, Spooner regarded wage labour under capitalism as one of these institutions, because without it *"large fortunes could rarely be made at all by one individual."* Hence for Spooner, as for social anarchists, to be anti-statist also necessitates being anti-capitalist.

little or none at all of one's own, but labour of capital and of the — subject labourers." [p. 251, p. 114, p. 113 and p. 114]

As can be seen from capitalist support for fascism, Stirner was correct — as long as a regime supports capitalist interests, the 'good citizens' (including many on the so-called "libertarian" right)) will support it. Stirner sees that not only does private property require state protection, it also leads to exploitation and oppression. As noted in section D.10, like subsequent anarchists like Kropotkin, Stirner attacked the division of labour resulting from private property for its deadening effects on the ego and individuality of the worker:

> *"When everyone is to cultivate himself into man, condemning a man to **machine-like labour** amounts to the same thing as slavery . . . Every labour is to have the intent that the man be satisfied. Therefore he must become a **master** in it too, be able to perform it as a totality. He who in a pin-factory only puts on heads, only draws the wire, works, as it were mechanically, like a machine; he remains half-trained, does not become a master: his labour cannot **satisfy** him, it can only **fatigue** him. His labour is nothing by itself, has no object **in itself**, is nothing complete in itself; he labours only into another's hands, and is **used** (exploited) by this other."* [p. 121]

Stirner had nothing but contempt for those who defended property in terms of "natural rights" and opposed theft and taxation with a passion because it violates said rights. *"Rightful, or legitimate property of another,"* he stated, *"will by only that which **you** are content to recognise as such. If your content ceases, then this property has lost legitimacy for you, and you will laugh at absolute right to it."* After all, *"what well-founded objection could be made against theft"* [p. 278 and p. 251] He was well aware that inequality was only possible as long as the masses were convinced of the sacredness of property. In this way, the majority end up without property:

> *"Property in the civic sense means **sacred** property, such that I must **respect** your property . . . Be it ever so little, if one only has somewhat of his own — to wit, a **respected** property: The more*

such owners . . . the more 'free people and good patriots' has the State.

*"Political liberalism, like everything religious, counts on **respect**, humaneness, the virtues of love . . . For in practice people respect nothing, and everyday the small possessions are bought up again by greater proprietors, and the 'free people' change into day labourers."* [p. 248]

Thus free competition *"is not 'free,' because I lack the **things** for competition."* Due to this basic inequality of wealth (of "things"), *"[u]nder the **regime** of the commonality the labourers always fall into the hands of the possessors . . . of the capitalists, therefore. The labourer cannot **realise** on his labour to the extent of the value that it has for the customer."* [p. 262 and p. 115] In other words, the working class is exploited by the capitalists and landlords.

Moreover, it is the exploitation of labour which is the basis of the state, for the state *"rests on the **slavery of labour**. If **labour becomes free**, the State is lost."* Without surplus value to feed off, a state could not exist. For Stirner, the state is the greatest threat to his individuality: *"**I** am free in **no** State."* This is because the state claims to be sovereign over a given area, while, for Stirner, only the ego can be sovereign over itself and that which it uses (its *"property"*): *"I am my **own** only when I am master of myself."* Thus the state *"is not thinkable without lordship and servitude (subjection); for the State must will to be the lord of all that it embraces."* Stirner also warned against the illusion in thinking that political liberty means that the state need not be a cause of concern for *"[p]olitical liberty means that the **polis**, the State, is free; . . . not, therefore, that I am free of the State . . . It does not mean **my** liberty, but the liberty of a power that rules and subjugates me; it means that one of my **despots** . . . is free."* [p. 116, p. 226, p. 169, p. 195 and p. 107]

Therefore Stirner urges insurrection against all forms of authority and **dis**-respect for property. For *"[i]f man reaches the point of losing respect for property, everyone will have property, as all slaves become free men as soon as they no longer respect the master as master."* And in order for labour to become free, all must have *"property." "The poor become free and proprietors only when they **rise**."* Thus, *"[i]f we want*

up of a few simple elementary principles, of the truth and justice of which every ordinary mind has an almost intuitive perception," thus indicating that what is right and wrong exists in "ordinary people" and not in "prosperous judges" or any other small group claiming to speak on behalf of "truth."

As can be seen, Spooner's account of how "natural law" will be administered is radically different from, say, Murray Rothbard's and indicates a strong egalitarian context foreign to right-libertarianism. As we noted in section G.3, Rothbard explicitly rejected Spooner's ideas on the importance of jury driven law (for Spooner, *"the jurors were to judge the law, and the justice of the law."* [**Trial by Jury**, p. 134]). As far as "anarcho"-capitalism goes, one wonders how Spooner would regard the "anarcho"-capitalist "protection firm," given his comment that *"[a]ny number of scoundrels, having money enough to start with, can establish themselves as a 'government'; because, with money, they can hire soldiers, and with soldiers extort more money; and also compel general obedience to their will."* [**No Treason**, p. 22] This is the use of private police to break strikes and unions in a nutshell. Compare this to Spooner's description of his voluntary justice associations:

"it is evidently desirable that men should associate, so far as they freely and voluntarily can do so, for the maintenance of justice among themselves, and for mutual protection against other wrongdoers. It is also in the highest degree desirable that they should agree upon some plan or system of judicial proceedings"

At first glance, one may be tempted to interpret Spooner's justice organisations as a subscription to "anarcho"-capitalist style protection firms. A more careful reading suggests that Spooner's actual conception is more based on the concept of mutual aid, whereby people provide such services for themselves and for others rather than buying them on a fee-per-service basis. A very different concept. As he put it elsewhere, *"[a]ll legitimate government is a mutual insurance company"* in which *"insured persons are shareholders of a company."* It is likely that this would be a co-operative as the *"free administration of justice . . . must necessarily be a part of every system of government*

coming so into the world destitute of rights, he must forever remain so. For if no one brings any rights with him into the world, clearly no one can ever have any rights of his own, or give any to another. And the consequence would be that mankind could never have any rights; and for them to talk of any such things as their rights, would be to talk of things that had, never will, and never can have any existence."

And, we add, unlike the "Natural Laws" of *"gravitation, . . . of light, the principles of mathematics"* to which Spooner compares them, he is perfectly aware that his "Natural Law" can be *"trampled upon"* by other humans. However, unlike gravity (which does not need enforcing) it is obvious that Spooner's "Natural Law" has to be enforced by human beings as it is within human nature to steal. In other words, it is a moral code, **not** a "Natural Law" like gravity. Appeals to make this specific moral code to be considered the universal one required by nature are unconvincing, particularly as such absolutist schemes generally end up treating the rights in question (usually property related ones) as more important than actual people. Hence we find, for example, supporters of "natural rights" to property (like Murray Rothbard) willing to deny economic power, the restrictions of liberty it creates and its similarity to the state in the social relations it creates simply because property is sacred (see section F.1).

Interestingly, Spooner did come close to a **rational**, non-metaphysical source for rights when he pointed out that *"Men living in contact with each other, and having intercourse together, cannot avoid learning natural law."* This indicates the **social** nature of rights, of our sense of right and wrong, and so rights and ethics can exist without believing in religious concepts as "Natural Law." In addition, we can say that his support for juries indicates an unconscious recognition of the **social** nature (and so evolution) of any concepts of human rights. In other words, by arguing strongly for juries to judge human conflict, he implicitly recognises that the concepts of right and wrong in society are **not** indelibly inscribed in law tomes as the "true law," but instead change and develop as society does (as reflected in the decisions of the juries). In addition, he states that *"[h]onesty, justice, natural law, is usually a very plain and simple matter,"* which is *"made*

*no longer to leave the land to the landed proprietors, but to appropriate it to ourselves, we unite ourselves to this end, form a union, a **société**, that makes **itself** proprietor . . . we can drive them out of many another property yet, in order to make it **our** property, the property of the — **conquerors**."* Thus property *"deserves the attacks of the Communists and Proudhon: it is untenable, because the civic proprietor is in truth nothing but a propertyless man, one who is everywhere **shut out**. Instead of owning the world, as he might, he does not own even the paltry point on which he turns around."* [p. 258, p. 260, p. 249 and pp. 248–9]

Stirner recognises the importance of self-liberation and the way that authority often exists purely through its acceptance by the governed. As he argues, *"no thing is sacred of itself, but my **declaring it sacred**, by my declaration, my judgement, my bending the knee; in short, by my conscience."* It is from this worship of what society deems *"sacred"* that individuals must liberate themselves in order to discover their true selves. And, significantly, part of this process of liberation involves the destruction of **hierarchy**. For Stirner, *"Hierarchy is domination of thoughts, domination of mind!,"* and this means that we are *"kept down by those who are supported by thoughts."* [p. 72 and p. 74] That is, by our own willingness to not question authority and the sources of that authority, such as private property and the state:

*"Proudhon calls property 'robbery' (**le vol**) But alien property — and he is talking of this alone — is not less existent by renunciation, cession, and humility; it is a **present**. Who so sentimentally call for compassion as a poor victim of robbery, when one is just a foolish, cowardly giver of presents? Why here again put the fault on others as if they were robbing us, while we ourselves do bear the fault in leaving the others unrobbed? The poor are to blame for there being rich men."* [p. 315]

For those, like modern-day "libertarian" capitalists, who regard "profit" as the key to "selfishness," Stirner has nothing but contempt. Because "greed" is just one part of the ego, and to spend one's life pursuing only that part is to deny all other parts. Stirner called such

pursuit *"self-sacrificing,"* or a *"one-sided, unopened, narrow egoism,"* which leads to the ego being possessed by one aspect of itself. For *"he who ventures everything else for **one thing**, one object, one will, one passion . . . is ruled by a passion to which he brings the rest as sacrifices."* [p. 76]

For the true egoist, capitalists are *"self-sacrificing"* in this sense, because they are driven only by profit. In the end, their behaviour is just another form of self-denial, as the worship of money leads them to slight other aspects of themselves such as empathy and critical thought (the bank balance becomes the rule book). A society based on such "egoism" ends up undermining the egos which inhabit it, deadening one's own and other people's individuality and so reducing the vast potential "utility" of others to oneself. In addition, the drive for profit is not even based on self-interest, it is forced upon the individual by the workings of the market (an alien authority) and results in labour *"claim[ing] all our time and toil,"* leaving no time for the individual *"to take comfort in himself as the unique."* [pp. 268–9]

Stirner also turns his analysis to "socialism" and "communism," and his critique is as powerful as the one he directs against capitalism. This attack, for some, gives his work an appearance of being pro-capitalist, while, as indicated above, it is not. Stirner did attack socialism, but he (rightly) attacked **state** socialism, not libertarian socialism, which did not really exist at that time (the only well known anarchist work at the time was Proudhon's **What is Property?**, published in 1840 and this work obviously could not fully reflect the developments within anarchism that were to come). He also indicated why moralistic (or altruistic) socialism is doomed to failure, and laid the foundations of the theory that socialism will work only on the basis of egoism (communist-egoism, as it is sometimes called). Stirner correctly pointed out that much of what is called socialism was nothing but warmed up liberalism, and as such ignores the individual: *"Whom does the liberal look upon as his equal? Man! . . . , In other words, he sees in you, not **you**, but the **species**."* A socialism that ignores the individual consigns itself to being state capitalism, nothing more. "Socialists" of this school forget that "society" is made up of individuals and that it is individuals who work, think, love, play

(i.e., Proudhon's distinction between property and possession which was echoed by, among others, Marx). Like more obvious socialists like Proudhon and Marx, Spooner was well aware that wage labour resulted in exploitation and, as a result, urged its abolition to secure the worker the full produce of their labour.

As such, Spooner's analysis of capitalism was close to that of social anarchists and Marxists. This is confirmed by an analysis of his famous works **Natural Law** (unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent quotes are from this work).

Spooner's support of "Natural Law" has also been taken as "evidence" that Spooner was a proto-right-"libertarian." Most obviously, this ignores the fact that support for "Natural Law" is not limited to right-"libertarians" and has been used to justify, among other things, feudalism, slavery, theocracy, liberty, fascism as well as communism. As such, "natural rights" justification for property need not imply a support for capitalism or suggest that those who hold similar views on them will subscribe to the same vision of a good society. Of course, most anarchists do not find theories of "natural law," be they those of right-"libertarians", fascists or whatever, to be particularly compelling. Certainly the ideas of "Natural Law" and "Natural Rights," as existing independently of human beings in the sense of the ideal Platonic Forms, are difficult for most anarchists to accept **per se**, because such ideas are inherently authoritarian as they suggest a duty to perform certain actions for no other reason than obedience to some higher authority regardless of their impact on individuals and personal goals. Most anarchists would agree with Tucker when he called such concepts *"religious"* (Robert Anton Wilson's **Natural Law: or don't put a rubber on your willy** is an excellent discussion of the flaws of such concepts).

Spooner, unfortunately, did subscribe to the cult of *"immutable and universal"* Natural Laws. If we look at his "defence" of Natural Law we can see how weak (and indeed silly) it is. Replacing the word *"rights"* with the word *"clothes"* in the following passage shows the inherent weakness of his argument:

> *"if there be no such principle as justice, or natural law, then every human being came into the world utterly destitute of rights; and*

that experience, wealth, being common to all, enables him to sympathise with all, and insures to himself the sympathy of all. And thus the social virtues of mankind would be greatly increased." [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 46–7]

Independence in producing would lead to independence in all aspects of life, for it was a case of the *"higher self-respect also, which a man feels, and the higher social position he enjoys, when he is master of his own industry, than when he labours for another."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 35] It is quite apparent, then, that Spooner was against wage labour and, therefore, was no supporter of capitalism. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Spooner (like William Greene) had been a member of the **First International**. [George Woodcock, **Anarchism**, p. 393]

Whether Spooner's ideas are relevant now, given the vast amount of capital needed to start companies in established sectors of the economy, is another question. Equally, it seems unlikely that a reversion to pre-industrial forms of economy is feasible even if we assume that Spooner's claims about the virtues of a free market in credit are correct. But one thing is clear: Spooner was opposed to the way America was developing in the 19th century. He had no illusions about tariffs, for example, seeing them as a means of accumulating capital as they *"enable[d] the home producers . . . to make fortunes by robbing everybody else in the prices of their goods."* Such protectionism *"originated with the employers"* as the workers *"could not have had no hope of carrying through such a scheme, if they alone were to profit; because they could have had no such influence with governments."* [**A Letter to Grover Cleveland** p. 20 and p. 44] He had no illusions that the state was anything else than a machine run by and for the wealthy.

Spooner viewed the rise of capitalism with disgust and suggested a way for non-exploitative and non-oppressive economic relationships to become the norm again in US society, a way based on eliminating a root feature of capitalism — wage-labour — through a system of easy credit, which he believed would enable artisans and farmers to obtain their own means of production and work for themselves. As we stressed in section G.1.2 capitalism is based not on property as such but rather property which is not owned by those who use it

and enjoy themselves. Thus: *"That society is no ego at all, which could give, bestow, or grant, but an instrument or means, from which we may derive benefit . . . of this the socialists do not think, because they — as liberals — are imprisoned in the religious principle and zealously aspire after — a sacred society, such as the State was hitherto."* [p. 123]

Of course, for the egoist libertarian communism can be just as much an option as any other socio-political regime. As Stirner stressed, egoism *"is not hostile to the tenderest of cordiality . . . nor of socialism: in short, it is not inimical to any interest: it excludes no interest. It simply runs counter to un-interest and to the uninteresting: it is not against love but against sacred love . . . not against socialists, but against the sacred socialists."* [**No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 1, p. 23] After all, if it aids the individual then Stirner had no more problems with libertarian communism that, say, rulers or exploitation. Yet this position does not imply that egoism tolerates the latter. Stirner's argument is, of course, that those who are subject to either have an interest in ending both and should unite with those in the same position to end it rather than appealing to the good will of those in power. As such, it goes without saying that those who find in egoism fascistic tendencies are fundamentally wrong. Fascism, like any class system, aims for the elite to rule and provides various spooks for the masses to ensure this (the nation, tradition, property, and so on). Stirner, on the other hand, urges an universal egoism rather than one limited to just a few. In other words, he would wish those subjected to fascistic domination to reject such spooks and to unite and rise against those oppressing them:

*"Well, who says that every one can do everything? What are you there for, pray, you who do not need to put up with everything? Defend yourself, and no one will do anything to you! He who would break your will has to do with you, and is your **enemy**. Deal with him as such. If there stand behind you for your protection some millions more, then you are an imposing power and will have an easy victory."* [p. 197]

That Stirner's desire for individual autonomy becomes transferred into support for rulership for the few and subjection for the many by

many of his critics simply reflects the fact we are conditioned by class society to accept such rule as normal — and hope that our masters will be kind and subscribe to the same spooks they inflict on their subjects. It is true, of course, that a narrow "egoism" would accept and seek such relationships of domination but such a perspective is not Stirner's. This can be seen from how Stirner's egoist vision could fit with social anarchist ideas.

The key to understanding the connection lies in Stirner's idea of the *"union of egoists,"* his proposed alternative mode of organising society. Stirner believed that as more and more people become egoists, conflict in society will decrease as each individual recognises the uniqueness of others, thus ensuring a suitable environment within which they can co-operate (or find *"truces"* in the *"war of all against all"*). These *"truces"* Stirner termed ***"Unions of Egoists."*** They are the means by which egoists could, firstly, *"annihilate"* the state, and secondly, destroy its creature, private property, since they would *"multiply the individual's means and secure his assailed property."* [p. 258]

The unions Stirner desires would be based on free agreement, being spontaneous and voluntary associations drawn together out of the mutual interests of those involved, who would *"care best for their welfare if they **unite** with others."* [p. 309] The unions, unlike the state, exist to ensure what Stirner calls *"intercourse,"* or *"union"* between individuals. To better understand the nature of these associations, which will replace the state, Stirner lists the relationships between friends, lovers, and children at play as examples. [**No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 1, p. 25] These illustrate the kinds of relationships that maximise an individual's self-enjoyment, pleasure, freedom, and individuality, as well as ensuring that those involved sacrifice nothing while belonging to them. Such associations are based on mutuality and a free and spontaneous co-operation between equals. As Stirner puts it, *"intercourse is mutuality, it is the action, the **commercium**, of individuals."* [p. 218] Its aim is *"pleasure"* and *"self-enjoyment."* Thus Stirner sought a broad egoism, one which appreciated others and their uniqueness, and so criticised the narrow egoism of people who forgot the wealth others are:

no necessity, for either force or fraud, on the part of anyone, to enable him to secure his standing." [quoted by Peter Marshall, **Demanding the Impossible**, pp. 388–9] Thus:

> *"That the principle of allowing each man to have, (so far as it is consistent with the principles of natural law that he can have,) all the fruits of his own labour, would conduce to a more just and equal distribution of wealth than now exists, is a proposition too self-evident almost to need illustration. It is an obvious principle of natural justice, that each man should have the fruits of his own labour . . . It is also an obvious fact, that the property produced by society, is now distributed in very unequal proportions among those whose labour produced it, and with very little regard to the actual value of each one's labour in producing it."* [**Poverty: Its Illegal Causes and Legal Cure**, p. 7]

For Spooner, as with other left-libertarians, equality was seen as the necessary basis for liberty. As he put it, the *"practice of each man's labouring for himself, instead of labouring for another for wages"* would *"be greatly promoted by a greater equality of wealth."* Not only that, it *"would also contribute to the increase of labour-saving inventions — because when a man is labouring for himself, and is to have all the proceeds of his labour, he applies his mind, with his hands, much more than when he is labouring for another."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 42] As he stressed equality will have many positive outcomes beyond the abolition of wage labour and increased productiveness:

> *"Extremes of difference, in their pecuniary circumstances, divide society into castes; set up barriers to personal acquaintance; prevent or suppress sympathy; give to different individuals a widely different experience, and thus become the fertile source of alienation, contempt, envy, hatred, and wrong. But give to each man all the fruits of his own labour, and a comparative equality with others in his pecuniary condition, and caste is broken down; education is given more equally to all; and the object is promoted of placing each on a social level with all: of introducing each to the acquaintance of all; and of giving to each the greatest amount of*

hands of a few proprietors, but employing a great number of wage labourers, would be broken up; for few, or no persons, who could hire capital, and do business for themselves, would consent to labour for wages for another." [**A Letter to Grover Cleveland**, p. 41]

Wage-labour, Spooner argued, meant that workers did not labour for their own benefit *"but only for the benefit of their employers."* The workers are *"mere tools and machines in the hands of their employers."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 50] Thus he considered that *"it was necessary that every man be his own employer or work for himself in a direct way, since working for another resulted in a portion being diverted to the employer. To be one's own employer, it was necessary for one to have access to one's own capital."* [James J. Martin, **Men Against the State**, p. 172] This was because wage labour resulted in exploitation:

*"When a man knows that he is to have **all** the fruits of his labour, he labours with more zeal, skill, and physical energy, than when he knows — as in the case of one labouring for wages — that a portion of the fruits of his labour are going to another. . . In order that each man may have the fruits of his own labour, it is important, as a general rule, that each man should be his own employer, or work directly for himself, and not for another for wages; because, in the latter case, a part of the fruits of his labour go to his employer, instead of coming to himself . . . That each man may be his own employer, it is necessary that he have materials, or capital, upon which to bestow his labour."* [**Poverty: Its Illegal Causes and Legal Cure**, p. 8]

This preference for a system based on simple commodity production in which capitalists and wage slaves are replaced by self-employed and co-operating workers puts Spooner squarely in the **anti-capitalist** camp with other anarchists. And, we may add, the egalitarianism he expected to result from his system indicates the left-libertarian nature of his ideas, turning the present *"wheel of fortune"* into *"an extended surface, varied somewhat by inequalities, but still exhibiting a general level, affording a safe position for all, and creating*

"But that would be a man who does not know and cannot appreciate any of the delights emanating from an interest taken in others, from the consideration shown to others. That would be a man bereft of innumerable pleasures, a wretched character . . . would he not be a wretched egoist, rather than a genuine Egoist? . . . The person who loves a human being is, by virtue of that love, a wealthier man that someone else who loves no one." [**No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 1, p. 23]

In order to ensure that those involved do not sacrifice any of their uniqueness and freedom, the contracting parties have to have roughly the same bargaining power and the association created must be based on self-management (i.e. equality of power). Only under self-management can all participate in the affairs of the union and express their individuality. Otherwise, we have to assume that some of the egoists involved will stop being egoists and will allow themselves to be dominated by another, which is unlikely. As Stirner himself argued:

"But is an association, wherein most members allow themselves to be lulled as regards their most natural and most obvious interests, actually an Egoist's association? Can they really be 'Egoists' who have banded together when one is a slave or a serf of the other?. . .

"Societies wherein the needs of some are satisfied at the expense of the rest, where, say, some may satisfy their need for rest thanks to the fact that the rest must work to the point of exhaustion, and can lead a life of ease because others live in misery and perish of hunger, or indeed who live a life of dissipation because others are foolish enough to live in indigence, etc., such societies . . . [are] more of a religious society, a communion held as sacrosanct by right, by law and by all the pomp and circumstance of the courts." [**Op. Cit.**, p. 24]

Therefore, egoism's revolt against all hierarchies that restrict the ego logically leads to the end of authoritarian social relationships, particularly those associated with private property and the state.

Given that capitalism is marked by extensive differences in bargaining power outside its "associations" (i.e. firms) and power within these "associations" (i.e. the worker/boss hierarchy), from an egoist point of view it is in the self-interest of those subjected to such relationships to get rid of them and replace them with unions based on mutuality, free association, and self-management. Ultimately, Stirner stresses that it is in the workers' **self-interest** to free themselves from both state and capitalist oppression. Sounding like an anarcho-syndicalist, Stirner recognised the potential for strike action as a means of self-liberation:

> *"The labourers have the most enormous power in their hands, and, if they once become thoroughly conscious of it and used it, nothing could withstand them; they would only have to stop labour, regard the product of labour as theirs, and enjoy it. This is the sense of the labour disturbances which show themselves here and there."* [p. 116]

Given the holistic and egalitarian nature of the union of egoists, it can be seen that it shares little with the so-called free agreements of capitalism (in particular wage labour). The hierarchical structure of capitalist firms hardly produces associations in which the individual's experiences can be compared to those involved in friendship or play, nor do they involve equality. An essential aspect of the *"union of egoists"* for Stirner was such groups should be "owned" by their members, not the members by the group. That points to a **libertarian** form of organisation within these "unions" (i.e. one based on equality and participation), **not** a hierarchical one. If you have no say in how a group functions (as in wage slavery, where workers have the "option" of "love it or leave it") then you can hardly be said to own it, can you? Indeed, Stirner argues, for *"[o]nly in the union can you assert yourself as unique, because the union does not possess you, but you possess it or make it of use to you."* [p. 312]

Thus, Stirner's *"union of egoists"* cannot be compared to the employer-employee contract as the employees cannot be said to "own" the organisation resulting from the contract (nor do they own themselves during work time, having sold their labour/liberty to the boss

G.7 Lysander Spooner: right-"libertarian" or libertarian socialist?

Murray Rothbard and others on the "libertarian" right have argued that Lysander Spooner is another individualist anarchist whose ideas support "anarcho"-capitalism's claim to be part of the anarchist tradition. It is fair to say that Spooner's critique of the state, rooted in *"natural rights"* doctrine, was quoted favourably by Rothbard on many occasions, making Spooner the 19th century anarchist most likely to be referenced by him. This is understandable as Spooner was undoubtedly the closest to liberalism of the individualist anarchists, making him more amenable to appropriation than the others (particularly those, like Tucker, who called themselves socialists).

As will be shown below, however, any claim that Spooner provides retroactive support for "anarcho"-capitalist claims of being a form of anarchism is untrue. This is because, regardless of his closeness to liberalism, Spooner's vision of a free society was fundamentally anti-capitalist. It is clear that Spooner was a left-libertarian who was firmly opposed to capitalism. The ignoring (at best) or outright dismissal (at worse) of Spooner's economic ideas and vision of a free society by right-"libertarians" should be more than enough to show that Spooner cannot be easily appropriated by the right regardless of his (from an anarchist position) unique, even idiosyncratic, perspective on property rights.

That Spooner was against capitalism can be seen in his opposition to wage labour, which he wished to eliminate by turning capital over to those who work it. Like other anarchists, he wanted to create a society of associated producers — self-employed farmers, artisans and co-operating workers — rather than wage-slaves and capitalists. For example, Spooner writes:

> *"every man, woman, and child . . . could . . . go into business for himself, or herself — either singly, or in partnerships — and be under no necessity to act as a servant, or sell his or her labour to others. All the great establishments, of every kind, now in the*

in return for wages — see section B.4). Only within a participatory association can you *"assert"* yourself freely and subject your maxims, and association, to your *"ongoing criticism"* — in capitalist contracts you can do both only with your bosses' permission.

And by the same token, capitalist contracts do not involve "leaving each other alone" (a la "anarcho"-capitalism). No boss will "leave alone" the workers in his factory, nor will a landowner "leave alone" a squatter on land he owns but does not use. Stirner rejects the narrow concept of "property" as private property and recognises the **social** nature of "property," whose use often affects far more people than those who claim to "own" it: *"I do not step shyly back from your property, but look upon it always as **my** property, in which I 'respect' nothing. Pray do the like with what you call my property!"* [p. 248] This view logically leads to the idea of both workers' self-management and grassroots community control (as will be discussed more fully in section I) as those affected by an activity will take a direct interest in it and not let "respect" for "private" property allow them to be oppressed by others.

Moreover, egoism (self-interest) must lead to self-management and mutual aid (solidarity), for by coming to agreements based on mutual respect and social equality, we ensure non-hierarchical relationships. If I dominate someone, then in all likelihood I will be dominated in turn. By removing hierarchy and domination, the ego is free to experience and utilise the full potential of others. As Kropotkin argued in **Mutual Aid**, individual freedom and social co-operation are not only compatible but, when united, create the most productive conditions for all individuals within society.

Stirner reminds the social anarchist that communism and collectivism are not sought for their own sake but to ensure individual freedom and enjoyment. As he argued: *"But should competition some day disappear, because concerted effort will have been acknowledged as more beneficial than isolation, then will not every single individual inside the associations be equally egoistic and out for his own interests?"* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 22] This is because competition has its drawbacks, for *"[r]estless acquisition does not let us take breath, take a calm **enjoyment**. We do not get the comfort of our possessions. . . Hence it is at any rate helpful that we come to an agreement about **human** labours*

that they may not, as under competition, claim all our time and toil." [p. 268] In other words, in the market only the market is free not those subject to its pressures and necessities — an important truism which defenders of capitalism always ignore.

Forgetting about the individual was, for Stirner, the key problem with the forms of communism he was familiar with and so this *"organisation of labour touches only such labours as others can do for us . . . the rest remain egoistic, because no one can in your stead elaborate your musical compositions, carry out your projects of painting, etc.; nobody can replace Raphael's labours. The latter are labours of a unique person, which only he is competent to achieve."* He went on to ask *"for whom is time to be gained [by association]? For what does man require more time than is necessary to refresh his wearied powers of labour? Here Communism is silent."* Unlike egoism, which answers: *"To take comfort in himself as unique, after he has done his part as man!"* In other words, competition *"has a continued existence"* because *"all do not attend to **their affair** and come to an **understanding** with each other about it."* [p. 269 and p. 275] As can be seen from Chapter 8 of Kropotkin's **Conquest of Bread** (*"The Need for Luxury"*), communist-anarchism builds upon this insight, arguing that communism is required to ensure that all individuals have the time and energy to pursue their own unique interests and dreams (see section I.4).

Stirner notes that socialising property need not result in genuine freedom if it is not rooted in individual use and control. He states *"the lord is proprietor. Choose then whether you want to be lord, or whether society shall be!"* He notes that many communists of his time attacked alienated property but did not stress that the aim was to ensure access for all individuals. *"Instead of transforming the alien into own,"* Stirner noted, *"they play impartial and ask only that all property be left to a third party, such as human society. They revindicate the alien not in their own name, but in a third party's"* Ultimately, of course, under libertarian communism it is not "society" which uses the means of life but individuals and associations of individuals. As Stirner stressed: *"Neither God nor Man ('human society') is proprietor, but the individual."* [p. 313, p. 315 and p. 251] This is why social anarchists have always stressed self-management — only that can bring collectivised property into the hands of those who utilise it.

Stirner places the focus on decision making back where it belongs — in the individuals who make up a given community rather than abstractions like "society."

Therefore Stirner's union of egoists has strong connections with social anarchism's desire for a society based on freely federated individuals, co-operating as equals. His central idea of "property" — that which is used by the ego — is an important concept for social anarchism because it stresses that hierarchy develops when we let ideas and organisations own us rather than vice versa. A participatory anarchist community will be made up of individuals who must ensure that it remains their "property" and be under their control; hence the importance of decentralised, confederal organisations which ensure that control. A free society must be organised in such a way to ensure the free and full development of individuality and maximise the pleasure to be gained from individual interaction and activity. Lastly, Stirner indicates that mutual aid and equality are based not upon an abstract morality but upon self-interest, both for defence against hierarchy and for the pleasure of co-operative intercourse between unique individuals.

Stirner demonstrates brilliantly how abstractions and fixed ideas (*"spooks"*) influence the very way we think, see ourselves, and act. He shows how hierarchy has its roots within our own minds, in how we view the world. He offers a powerful defence of individuality in an authoritarian and alienated world, and places subjectivity at the centre of any revolutionary project, where it belongs. Finally, he reminds us that a free society must exist in the interests of all, and must be based upon the self-fulfilment, liberation and enjoyment of the individual.