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The Space War

Something has happened to the Libertarian Party on the way to glory. Right now, it is too soon to say whether this is merely an ephemeral and temporary zag on the inevitable zig-zag road that every growing ideological movement must travel. We don't know whether these are just growing pains that will be swiftly overcome. Let us hope, or for some of us in the movement, let us pray.

As I wrote in last issue's editorial ("LP Breakthrough," November-December 1978), the LP is moving rapidly toward its great Presidential nomination convention this September 6-9 (or, for those who want to catch the platform committee hearings, Sept. 4-9) at the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles. The theme of the convention is slated to be "Toward a Three Party System", and the speeches and workshops are to be built around national political concerns, in the light of the imminent breakthrough of the LP into the mainstream of American politics. The eyes of all the media, of three TV networks, will be on us, and we should act as if we are indeed about to be a third major party in America. That does not mean, of course, any watering down of our glorious principles, which are the whole point of our enterprise. But it means acting like adults, in the real world, like "real people", to use a provocative but correct formulation of my own over the years.

When Ed Crane, chairman of the convention committee, presented this theme and program to the national committee of the LP meeting in Las Vegas on January 14, everything hit the fan. There ensued a highly illuminating debate on the nat.com. The opponents of the theme began to whine: "This program is all about politics;" "politics is a downer;" "Who cares if we become one of the major parties" And, "none of this motivates people." I was astonished: how could an LP national committee member fail to become ecstatic over the prospect of us actually becoming a major party, over moulding real-world politics in the direction of freedom? And if they are not so motivated, why in blazes are they in the Libertarian Party at all? It turns out that what the opposition wants, in varying degrees, is not real-world politics but the contemplation of various space fantasies of what a libertarian future would presumably look like. To them, the real world is equated with gloom; optimism they only equate with technocratic fancies and millennial dreams of the alleged future. Not freedom, but these visions, are their motivation.

My own reaction to this may be found in the February issue of *Libertarian Review* ("The Menace of the Space Cult"). I have found, over the weeks since, that friends whom I've told about the controversy think that I'm exaggerating the problem, until I send them the various documents that have piled up since the Jan. 14 meeting. For shortly after the meeting, L. Richard White, regional nat.com. representative from Nevada, kicked off a series of hot and heavy letters that have been circulating within the national committee. There is White's first letter; replies by myself and by Ed Crane, followed by a pro "futurist" letter by Tonie Nathan, regional rep. from Oregon and Vice-Presidential candidate for the LP in 1972. Followed next by White's second letter and by my reply to Nathan. Some of the material is basically procedural maneuvering (e.g. discussion of the nat.com. "veto" over local party conventions), but the important material—the sharply clashing

philosophical and strategic views held by the two different camps—shines through and is well worth reading. There are other letters, some written from outside the nat.com. and some within, but these are the major documents in the dispute. They deserve to be read by all libertarians and LP members and not just by nat.com. members, and so the *Lib. Forum* presents these documents, **completely unedited**, as a public service to the movement and to the party—and maybe, to future historians. Let everyone make up his or her own mind!

An amusing footnote to this affair: The monthly *frontlines*, the movement's own *National Enquirer* published by the Reason clique, wrote up the Vegas committee meeting with nary a mention of the space dispute (Feb. 1979 issue). So much for the intrepid "reporting" so typical of *frontlines* (or shall we call it *backbites*?) Perhaps the reason for the oversight is that *frontlines* was too busy trumpeting the majesty and greatness of one Michael Emerling, Bill Hunscher's campaign manager in the contest for the LP Presidential nomination. At any rate, in their March issue, *frontlines* made up for this lack by publishing an edited version of only one side of the space dispute: Tonie Nathan's manifesto. The new version, for example, omits Ms. Nathan's statement that "Freedom is not necessary for grub eaters." So much for *frontlines*' much vaunted "objectivity" and claim to be above all factions!

At any rate, there now follows, in sequence, the documents in the great space war dispute. Happy reading!

by Rick White

January 17, 1979

Dear Natcom member,

Before proceeding to the real meat of this letter, I would like to address another issue. In the discussion at the Las Vegas Natcom meeting, there was never any question of using veto power, at least not in my mind. In fact, according to the new rules, if I am not mistaken, only Dave Bergland has this power.

Since Dave does have the veto power in this particular case, it was unquestionably a sound tactical move to include him on the '79 convention program committee. He is much less likely to veto something he has had, to all appearances, a direct hand in. Though from another viewpoint Dave has iron-handed control over the program, should he choose to exercise it, since any aspect he doesn't like is subject to immediate veto. It must be pointed out in this context that Dave resisted intense pressure to use the veto in the past, and in fact is one of the few people I know of in whose hands this perilous power does not make me overly nervous.

During the whole Natcom discussion, I was thinking in terms of input and "moral suasion." These are not veto power. What I believe is desirable here is a positive change of attitude which will lead to a different emphasis in the entire philosophy of the program. Obviously the veto, a negative measure, is entirely helpless to accomplish this. However, since the new veto rule was suggested and passed at the behest

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of, among others, Ed Crane, it is difficult for me to see what objections he could possibly raise if this power were indeed leveled against him.

Now to the meat. The political process is only part of other large processes, not the least of these being the mental processes that motivate those individuals participating in it. Why do libertarians choose to become politically active? Undoubtedly, there are those in the movement to whom the lure of political activity and power per se are sufficient motivation to keep them spending inordinate amounts of time and money pursuing their goals. They of course do have their place in the movement. I would suggest, however, that they are and should remain in the minority. I would further suggest that for the majority of libertarians, it is a vibrant, glowing, free vision of the future which most effectively motivates us to spend inordinate amounts of time and money, not visions of press release writing and petition circulating!!

It might be argued that all those attending Libertarian Party conventions are already so motivated and don't need further encouragement. If this were indeed a valid point, then salesmen, who have the strongest motivation around, namely a quick buck, wouldn't need a sales manager and constant pep-talks. And speaking as a rather strongly motivated "hard-core" libertarian, I would like to say that I can always use a little more motivation myself. Besides, people don't become instant Libertarians (or for that matter, instant anything). It's a gradual process. Many, if not most, of those attending the '79 convention will be somewhere on this road. For them, the motivational aspects of the convention will be by far the most important aspects. It will be these aspects which encourage them to willingly attend the "nuts and bolts" political action workshops which are also an indispensable part of the convention. They will attend not because there isn't anything else available, but because they have been motivated and actually, wonder of wonders, WANT to be there.

In this context, it is not entirely irrelevant to note that probably the main problem with public education is that the majority of students don't WANT to be involved, and so don't take an active part in the learning process—and so don't learn!! In fact, if the program doesn't offer anything other than "nuts and bolts," many people who would otherwise attend and be further exposed to our philosophy and positive view of life and man—won't! If we wish to be bored to death by "nuts and bolts" politics alone, we might just as well become Democrats or Republicans. We already know that's all they have to offer.

I believe the preceding to be a pivotal issue in the future of the Libertarian Party, and I believe that because of its self-evident nature it will eventually be accepted. If so, why not now?

In summation, I would strongly urge a reevaluation of the '79 convention/proposal and theme to incorporate less limited and more motivational viewpoints than that of isolated political action alone. I would strongly suggest motivational aspects, vivid and concrete views of an expressly libertarian future, be built into the convention as individual events (specific speakers and topics, or possibly panels (it might be helpful to consult Neil Smith and/or Tom Laurent for specific suggestions)). Motivational themes should also be consciously woven into the fabric of every event, no matter how "nuts and boltsy," and indeed, into the very fabric of the convention itself. An appropriate theme for such a convention might be something like "WHAT THE COMING LIBERTARIAN SOCIETY WILL BE LIKE AND HOW THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY WILL BRING IT ABOUT!!"

P.S. If you agree with this analysis, at least in general, please let the members of the program committee know. No vetoes, please! The members of the committee are: Ed Crane, Dave Bergland, Bill Webster, and Ed Clark. Write to them **NOW**, while you're still thinking about it!!

by Murray Rothbard

Jan. 20, 1979

Dear Fellow National Committee Member:

Rick White's letter of the 17th performs an important service in drawing the lines of disagreement and in confirming my view of the extreme importance of the debate within the committee on Jan. 14.

The L.P. stands at a crossroads, and the Raleigh meeting may well be the most important one we have ever had. It is no accident that just at this time, just when libertarianism and the Libertarian Party stand on the verge of making a major impact on American political life, that the anti-politics forces within the Party should make a last-ditch stand to block that progress and to deflect us toward the contemplation of space fantasy and science fiction.

As someone who has battled for liberty for over thirty years and who has seen the movement grow from a literal handful to near-major party status, I may be pardoned for becoming emotional over this issue. I for one am interested in fighting for liberty in the real world of politics. I have zero, indeed negative, interest in being part of a space fantasy cult. To me the choice is clear. And the great puzzle is: what are those people opposed to politics and political action doing in a political party

by Ed Crane

January 22, 1979

Dear National Committee Member,

Rick White's letter of January 17 raises several important points to which I would like to respond. Before addressing the more substantive issues I'd like to see if you agree with my assessment of the first three paragraphs of his letter. Am I wrong or is Rick trying to cloak himself in the purity of being opposed to the "perilous power" of the veto while at the same time encouraging Dave Bergland to invoke it? Rick's right, I did argue in favor of giving the National Chair that power over the program director—and I'm perfectly willing to have it used against me. I would not want to be hypocritical. But what about Rick? Although he clearly favored the program that was being put together in Boston he argued against the veto, we were told at the Seattle meeting, not because he favored the program but because as a self-described "radical decentralist" he was opposed to the veto **on principle**. Now it seems his principles move him to suggest that some kind of poetic justice would be served if the veto were to be used against me. Certainly the last sentence of his third paragraph seems to indicate that he would experience something less than moral revulsion if the veto were invoked as a means of implementing his ideas instead of mine. But perhaps I've simply misinterpreted what Rick was getting at.

Less ambiguous is what Rick refers to as the "meat" of his letter. Although there are no names named, it is clear that Rick has divided the movement into two groups: there are those futurists like Rick White who believe in a "vibrant, glowing, free vision of the future"; and there are those like Ed Crane and his ilk who are motivated by the "lure of political activity and power per se." As I say, there is no ambiguity here. Now, for one libertarian to accuse another of lusting after political power is a very serious matter. I believe Rick has unjustly insulted some very committed libertarians—including myself—with this specious and irresponsible analysis of what "motivates" a libertarian. I hope you agree with me that Rick owes most members of the National Committee an apology.

But on the main issue. Why do we have a Libertarian Party? Because we seek Liberty. Period. The Libertarian Party has proven to be the most effective vehicle for spreading the ideals of a free society in two centuries. Its potential for actually rolling back the power of the state has grown immeasurably as a result of the recent elections. The media has developed a solid respect for our ideas and our potential. In short, we stand on the threshold of creating—with our very own hands and against overwhelming odds—a three party system in America.

It has been suggested that such a development would not be very exciting, that it would merely be "political" and, hence, a "downer". I beg to differ. Think for a moment what the emergence of the Libertarian Party as the third major party means. It means our ideas and philosophy will at last have an opportunity to compete on equal footing with the statist parties. It means people will come to understand that there exists a consistent alternative to the status quo which places their rights as individuals above all else. Are there any among us who don't believe that we will prevail under those circumstances?

But we will achieve none of this unless we devote every ounce of our energy to the task of building the LP organizationally, learning the issues,

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electing the candidates and ultimately returning to the people the right to run their own lives. That, I suppose, is political. It's also what the LP is all about. Our job is to throw off the chains of the state and put an end to its disruptive, oppressive and sometimes devastating activities. It is to set men and women free to **choose their own future**—not to tell them what that future may be. For one thing, a simple understanding of economics tells us that we have no way of knowing what the future holds. For another, what's an appealing and appropriate goal for one person is unappealing and inappropriate for another. Rick White's cup of tea probably ain't mine. It is simply wrong-headed to claim to know what a future "libertarian" society "ought" to be. Such visions are for fortunetellers, not libertarians. As Hayek puts it, "A free society is a pluralistic society without a common hierarchy of particular ends". I say, laissez-faire to the future.

And why can't a convention devoted to the "real world" of politics be exciting? What does it take to charge people's batteries—spaceships or freedom? Were the American revolutionaries driven by a vision of horseless carriages in their future or by a passion for liberty? Was Thomas Paine fighting for the chance to see television one day or for the dignity of free men and women?

We live in a society that oppresses people with divergent lifestyles and interests. We can end the oppression and for me that's exciting. We live in a world constantly threatened with a nuclear holocaust. We can decrease and even end that threat and to me that's exciting. We live in a society that systematically robs men and women through taxation and inflation. We can end that robbery and to me that's exciting. The list is endless and, I fear, hopelessly "political." But goddammit that's why we started the Libertarian Party: To engage in political activity in order to roll back the state. Let's not blow it just when people are starting to listen.

by Tonie Nathan

Jan. 19, 1979

Towards a free Society

Politics has been defined by some as the "art of the possible." Traditionally, political organizations survey and document voters' views, then plot strategy catering to those views. Occasionally, in some creative instances, political party leaders attempt to move voters towards new positions. Such actions require much money, highly skilled promotional help and persuasive leaders who are visible and charismatic. Then, slowly, after being bombarded with media clout, the voting public begins to react, rejecting or accepting the change aimed in its direction.

Obviously, this is what the 1979 LP Convention Committee had in mind when it adopted the theme, "Toward a Three Party System." "We should attempt to tie the LP into the 'real world' of major party politics," says Edward H. Crane, III, convention director. "The program should emphasize politics and not philosophical/social/business concerns." This may be what the LP wishes to do, but I am disappointed.

As one of the party's founders, I believe the LP's appeal has been to those who are sick of "politics as usual." Yet here we are, joining the club. . . . On convention stationery, the theme bleats forth its self-conscious status in sallow green and is so conspicuously "me-tooism" that it almost obliterates any distinction the LP may have justifiably won in the past.

Look! the logo seems to say. Another party has arrived on the scene. Move over, tweedle dee and tweedle dum—here comes tweedle doo! See? We, too, can play the game . . .

Strange, I thought we had spent the last six years carefully explaining that we did not belong on the same political spectrum with the other political parties in this country and that we were practicing a different kind of politics. Everywhere I spoke, my emphasis was on the uniqueness of the LP. We were a party of principle, I said. We were not just seeking votes or political power. First, we wanted to educate, to change minds, to change society. The votes would come when people recognized that freedom, justice and individual rights were moral absolutes that could not be watered down to pour into a politically expedient vase labelled, "Third Party." Our political activity was necessary in order to carry our

ideas effectively to the public. Running candidates was one way of spreading ideas. But electing Libertarians would be meaningless **unless** the electorate was committed to the concept of a voluntary society. People had to understand why freedom (and therefore, the Libertarian Party.) was necessary.

Well, why are freedom and the Libertarian Party necessary? Here one finds some revealing differences of opinion. Some Libertarian leaders say we need a free society so each of us can do our own thing. "Some people may want to live in trees and eat grubs," Murray Rothbard says. "Who knows what a Libertarian society will be."

I agree that no one can know the shape of the future and that, indeed, some may want to live in trees and eat grubs. But this is not a cogent nor inspiring argument for liberty. Mr. Rothbard then says he has become emotional over the issue of "fighting for liberty in the 'real world' of politics" and asks, "What are those opposed to politics doing in a political party?"

Personally, I have never believed that politics, as currently practiced, is the "real world." Further, I have never considered the LP merely another political party, but primarily, an educational party. In the "real world," as Ayn Rand points out in her powerful novel, *Atlas Shrugged*, the battle is ideological, not political. It is ideas, not votes, that ultimately solve social problems.

It is not a three party system that Libertarians desire, but a free society. It is not recognition of the LP as a third member of the non-real political system that we desire, but recognition of the principles of Libertarianism. And I certainly hope it is not a powerful party we are building, but a powerful political philosophy. Perhaps we can do both. Perhaps we can engage in political action without acting like other parties. There are several reasons why we should do this.

Access to the media is one obvious reason for playing the conventional political game. Most of us who have been engaged in building the Libertarian Party have recognized all along that political action is one of the quickest ways of getting our ideas before the public. It is also an excellent way of influencing those in office who see the logic of Libertarian rhetoric.

But now that we have established some degree of influence and visibility, it is no time to divorce the means from the ends. We need not let the unfortunate choice of convention theme set the tone of the convention. Instead, we should focus on the difference between rational politics based on Libertarian ideology and the irrational self-defeating politics of other parties.

In outlook and practice, the LP is not like other parties and should not attempt to be. Activists in other parties want political solutions enforced by law; we want political freedom unrestricted by law. They want politicians to make decisions for them; we want politicians to allow us to make our own decisions.

Among other political parties, politics is simulated war. Political conventions are training grounds for the troops where they learn non-violent ways of subjugating the people. Activists vie for the unearned spoils their leaders plan to confer after winning power. All the hoopla, speeches and publicity surrounding such events are the positionings of factions within opposing camps that seek control over their party. Each party's leaders win allegiance in proportion to the favors they can bestow on their supporting delegations or constituency. "Who will rule?" is the question the Reprocats ask of each other.

Is this what we want at the LP convention—power brokering? I think not. Libertarians seek something different. Libertarian delegates seek leaders worthy of their ideals—leaders who use ideas, not favors, to woo their supporters. Instead of money or power, libertarians are more attracted by clarity of thought, hard truth and inspirational personality.

Libertarians attend LP functions hoping to find objective evidence of the workings of a free society—hoping to experience an atmosphere of creative thought, of new horizons. Libertarians sniff out new lines of reasoning new solutions to old problems and new products or services with market potential.

In contrast to other political groups, Libertarians do not look for provider patrons or authoritarian decision makers. Instead they seek

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ideologues who project moral fervor into the arguments for liberty. Libertarians look for inspiration, not directives.

Perhaps the major difference between Libertarians and other party activists is genuine optimism, idealism and a positive view of human nature. We Libertarians have a boundless faith in a beautiful, productive and fruitful future because we know what a free society can produce. We tend to believe most persons who are introduced to our vision of a free society will produce, not people who live in trees, but people who can travel to stars—people who aspire to new experiences, new delights, new challenges and independent thinking. If this is not what attracts Libertarians, why else seek freedom? Freedom is not necessary for grub eaters. Freedom is necessary for creative persons who want to put their ideas into action.

Looking back, historians and economists can explain why freedom is good in the aggregate. They can see the results the invisible hand has produced. Historians and economists can explain business, artistic and scientific successes after the fact. But they cannot document or analyze what is yet to be. They cannot know beforehand what special circumstances will motivate individuals to produce the goods, services and ideas that enrich human life. It is the artists, poets and writers who paint the future and inspire action. Their dreams, their imagination, their inquiries, light fires in the brains of inventors, entrepreneurs and workers. And the human spirit, unquenchable in its search for new values, soars forth crystallizing dreams into attainable goals.

I do not believe grub eaters dream; Grub eaters look for grubs. Grub eaters are the natural constituency of other political parties that promise grubs.

But Libertarians dream. And because they dream, they create.

Let us, therefore, lace our Libertarian Convention with dreams. Let us interface our politics with imagination and project the future for those who want a vision of something worth striving for. We need not offer a non-contestable plan or mandatory goal. Nor need we produce fiction or fantasy. But we can suggest possibilities and rewards, non-existent under the present repressive society, that can become available in a free society. Let us explore the shape of the future.

What is the shape of the the future? No one knows. But show me your vision and I will show you mine. To reach a star, I will willingly follow a path untrod by others, even if, at last, I end up alone in a strange world. But I suspect I will not be alone, but in a Libertarian society. For Libertarians are motivated—not by security and an ample supply of grubs, but by challenge, opportunity and a vision of a better life. We act, not on behalf of a system, but on behalf of ourselves. Our loyalty is not to our party, but to our principles and ideals.

Encourage us to dream at our convention. Stimulate our minds, whet our appetites and show us a vision of future freedom. Achievement and growth will come, and they will be our own.

by Rick White

Feb. 9, 1979

Dear NATCOM member,

I was quite surprised at all the furor surrounding my last letter. There are many possible reasons for the furor; I prefer to think it's mostly a matter of misunderstanding.

Apparently I had better begin by indicating what I'm NOT doing here first. First, I am NOT touting science fiction or fantasy. Just as Murray, I have negative interest in being part of a "space fantasy cult." Nor am I speaking here for the Prometheus Award.

Secondly, I am NOT putting down Libertarian political action or activists. At the time I wrote about "power per se" libertarians, I was creating a straw man to help me make my point. I'm truly sorry if Ed or any other libertarian took it personally. (The veto thing however is another matter.) It is in fact because I am dedicated to effective Libertarian political action that I am writing.

There was only one important issue in my last letter. It is the same one I wish to address in this one. It involves no personalities, no institutions,

but only ideas. That issue is the program theme of the '79' convention.

The present theme reflects a conscious decision on the part of the program committee to emphasize political action at the 1979 convention. Unfortunately, the committee seems to believe that to emphasize politics, something else equally important must be de-emphasized, perhaps even excluded, from the convention program. Political action, yes; but political action in what context?

It is in fact ironic that the very thing which is presently marked for de-emphasis in favor of politics is the most potent political tool ever known. That element marked for de-emphasis is a positive, inspiring vision of the near future, in this case, a Libertarian future! It is I believe, this vision, this dream of a multiplicity of non-conflicting individualized futures and a world with a minimum of need and a maximum of pleasure which not only motivates us as Libertarians, but which is also our strongest political weapon. — If we will only begin to use it!! DREAMS SELL!!

What's wrong with the **Libertarian** dream? An often asked question is, "What would things be like if you Libertarians got elected?" The stock Libertarian answer is, "Well, I don't really know." The only proper response to that is something like, "Well, if you're crazy enough to try to change the world into something else, but don't know what that something else will be like, don't expect me to waste my time with you. I've got more important things to do—like sleep and watch cartoons on TV."

As Tonie Nathan pointed out in her article, "It is the artists, poets and writers who paint the future and inspire action." Too corny? Not "real world" enough? Please consider: Individuals have consistently had notable success from just the rhetoric of the vision, the talk of the dream. John Kennedy sold his presidency on the "Dream of Camelot." Meaningless? Perhaps—but effective! It's well known that Martin Luther King "Had a dream." Bobby Kennedy often used this quotation: "Some men see things as they are and ask 'Why?' I dream dreams that have never been and ask 'Why not?'" All three were successful **political** leaders. It was not an accident that the dream/vision was a central element of each style. Indeed, dreams **do** sell!

But those dreams were somehow dishonest, and besides people are diverse and we don't want to dictate how they will live? About that vision of the future: there are probably as many as there are libertarians—and people—to dream them. And, strangely enough, in a libertarian society they can ALL come true. We are the only group around that can speak of such dreams and make them believable in the real world. That's because we know the incredible power of the free market to satisfy not only diverse needs, but desires, whims, yes, and perhaps even a fantasy here and there. **WE CAN DELIVER!!** So where's the harm in painting some of these futures for others to see? Ed's vision of the future comes through in the last paragraph of his last letter. And Murray paints an optimistic and bequiling picture with his "Future of Freedom" talk. I think they're both great—and should sell like hotcakes at a sausage dinner! Practical politics? The Libertarian dream IS practical politics! Come on fellas, don't ditch our most potent weapons—**cultivate** them!

There's nothing **really** magic about the kind of dreams we're talking about here, only about their results. Dave Nolan had a dream of a Libertarian Party and, lo, it came to pass. **THE RIGHT DREAMS WORK!!** Dreams, the type we're discussing here, serve simple and indispensable functions. Let's put this on a simpler scale. Suppose you have a pile of wood and you want to build a table. Before you can do anything meaningful to build that table, you have to have a picture in your mind, and preferably on paper, of just what you want that table to look like. This isn't to say that the picture can't be changed and modified as you proceed. However, the picture, vision, or dream of what you want to accomplish is the primary requirement. It is only after you have this vision firmly in mind that the project can begin in earnest. The best tools in the world won't help you if you don't have your vision, your goal, to guide you.

THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY IS A TOOL, NOT AN END IN ITSELF. We might look at it as a special jig we need to help us build the table of a libertarian society. Our **ultimate** goal IS a libertarian society is it not? And while the construction of the jig does require special attention, this only makes sense in the context of the table it is designed to build. This is

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especially true when the construction of the tool requires aid. If we focus merely on the building of the tool, those we recruit to aid us will just naturally tend to think of the tool as an end in itself. And those people, should they take over the project, may decide to use it for things other than building the table. We may indeed gradually evolve into just another political party, but please, let's not hasten the process.

I want to make it clear that I am not arguing for the exclusion of political action from the convention. Quite the contrary. DREAMS AREN'T PREDICTIONS OF WHAT THINGS OVER WHICH WE HAVE NO CONTROL WILL BE LIKE; THEY ARE SPECIFICATIONS FOR WHAT WE WILL MAKE HAPPEN. We need tools and techniques to make the dreams happen. We can't build the table without tools anymore than we can use the tools without a design! It is the tools and techniques Department where most dreams break down in fact.

In terms of the convention and its theme, this means we need BOTH our vision of the future AND "nuts and bolts" politics. It is because I believe both aspects must be strongly bound that I suggested as a possible alternative theme "WHAT THE COMING LIBERTARIAN SOCIETY WILL BE LIKE (a vision of the (near) future) AND HOW THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY WILL BRING IT ABOUT!! (That's the political action part.) Either half is useless without the other. If we fail to emphasize either, we cannot hope to succeed as quickly, or perhaps, not at all. It is simply NOT a matter of either political action or visions of a libertarian future. It is more a matter of BOTH—or nothing at all.

And it is clear from the choice of theme and Ed's explicit mind-set that at present, the program is leaning dangerously to the "nothing-at-all" side. It is true that some of the speakers are inspirational, and also true that, on occasion, Ed himself lets a Libertarian dream or two slip out, but the theme itself makes absolutely no mention or implication of the Libertarian dream. And the theme is very important because it, more than any other single factor, influences the atmosphere of the convention, the actual verbal content of the talks and workshops, the convention's effect on Libertarians, and the overall perception by outsiders and the press of just what the Libertarian Party's all about. Do we wish to appear to the press as just another third party? Because without constant explicit exhibition of what it is we are working for, that is exactly how we will appear.

At a time when the other two major parties are grabbing at least the rhetoric of every politically advantageous Libertarian issue from deregulation to balancing the federal budget, the one thing we have that sets us apart, the one thing they can't grab, is the Libertarian Dream. And they can't field any convincing dreams of their own—the only dreams they have are of more power for them and higher taxes for everyone else. If you doubt they can offer no dreams, listen to Jerry Brown. So, in the present political atmosphere, we have one of the few remaining natural monopolies. Let's not burn our stock.

We can't even take it for granted that every "Libertarian" knows just what it is we are working for, unless we tell them, any more than we can assume everyone knows how to do political action. Partly because of our permanent ballot status here in Nevada we have had a large influx of new members who know little or nothing concerning what we are really about: some of them will be attending, others will be delegates. Especially at this point in our history, when we can expect explosive growth and a great influx of neophytes, the vision aspect of the libertarian movement must be made as explicit as the advice on how to form a campus organization, raise money, or write a press release.

If indeed we must err in the balance between dream and politics, and I hope we won't, it would be far better to err on the side of the dream. Political savvy can be obtained better through direct experience than through a convention. It can also be found in books and learned from P.R. firms and politicians. If people are motivated enough, they will get this knowledge there as well as from the convention. The motivation which comes from dreams is much harder to come by. One of the few places from which it is obtainable is at a gathering of other libertarians—like for example, at a convention!

One final observation on dreams. Some of us have been rather good at using negative dreams about the Libertarian future. You know "There will be a greatly reduced danger of nuclear holocaust, you won't be

mugged as much, etc." That's good. But positive dreams are even better! If we really want to super-charge our success, I suggest we master something I've just been getting the knack of recently. That something is the POSITIVE dream. Things like "You'll have twice the spendable income, you'll be able to travel at only half the present cost, etc." So, if it's decided to maintain the present "politics only" theme, might I suggest one a bit more positive. It appeared on Colorado stationary. It said, "THE TWO PARTY SYSTEM IS NOW A THREE PARTY SYSTEM." IS NOW A THREE PARTY SYSTEM" Why not claim we've arrived? I think we have. And, as Thomas Szasz says "Define or be defined."

I'm quite sure this will leave some Libertarians still feeling ill-at-ease with dreams, and preferring to deal with the "real world." May I respectfully suggest that the "real world" of today was yesterday's dream. And if we don't dream the dream that becomes tomorrow's "real world," we can be sure someone else will. And dreaming isn't enough—the blueprint must always be available for everyone to see.

by Murray Rothbard

Feb. 7, 1979

To Fellow Members of the National Committee:

I have no desire to prolong this debate *ad infinitum*, but Tonie Nathan's paper "Towards a Free Society" articulates some of the ideas that animate the "pro-space" wing of the committee. It is surely an unfortunate presentation.

Ms. Nathan writes that "freedom is not necessary for grub eaters. Freedom is necessary for creative persons . . ." Later, she writes that "grub eaters are the natural constituency of other political parties . . ." We, apparently, are supposed to rely on the creative "artists, poets and writers." Ms. Nathan's doctrine is shockingly elitist. The whole point of liberty, of individual rights, is that they belong to *everyone*, regardless of how plodding or how creative. The grub-eaters as well as the visionaries. It is no wonder that Ms. Nathan appears to believe that accepting the votes of the public is somehow deplorable; for she would restrict the constituency of liberty to a handful of creative artists, in which case, of course, the LP would *deserve* to be doomed.

Ms. Nathan denounces the professionalism of the convention presentation (including the green color) because, she asserts, we are thereby "joining the club" and being just like the other political parties. The remarkable thing is that Ms. Nathan omits the distinctive feature of

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An Anarchist Without Adjectives

by Wendy Grosscup

To Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre was "the greatest woman Anarchist in America." But because most of her influence was through unrecorded lectures and articles now buried in obscure journals, she herself is obscure. This is an oversight that Paul Avrich has corrected in his excellent biography of Voltairine de Cleyre, *An American Anarchist*. Drawing from previously unknown or unused documents, and using what first hand accounts still exist, Avrich provides what libertarianism so sadly lacks—a sense of its own history.

Voltairine de Cleyre (1866-1912) lived through and influenced the most turbulent period of American Anarchism: the Haymarket hangings (1887), the Homestead strike (1892), McKinley's assassination (1901), and the Mexican Revolution (1911). She was broader, in many ways, than her contemporaries and more fully reflected the radical spirit of the late 1800's. She became a freethinker at nineteen and shortly thereafter declared herself a socialist—a position which proved to be only a way-station on her road to anarchism. De Cleyre ran the anarchist continuum: beginning as a Tuckerite individualist, she evolved into mutualism and finally came to advocate "anarchism without adjectives". "I am an Anarchist," she told Emma Goldman, "without economic labels attached . . ." (She was not, as commonly believed, a Communist; she explicitly rejected that title.) As an ardent feminist, she demanded equal liberty for women while recognizing that the State—as the common enemy of men and women—must never be used as a tool of enlightenment. She was,

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The Political Economy Of Inflation: Government and Money

by Tom G. Palmer

The relationship between government and money is of a more complex nature than that between government and other commodities because of the special role played by money in an exchange economy. When the state redistributes goods by means of open violence, e.g., by forcibly seizing A's house and awarding it to his neighbor B, the effect is obvious; B had benefited at the expense of A. Hence, regulatory activity by the state (to take one example) benefits some, typically those with political power, at the expense of others, usually those whose pecuniary interests are not sufficiently concentrated to make counter-action in the political arena cost-effective. Because of the unique function of money as a facilitator of exchange, as an intermediary good between the exchange of one commodity for another, the situation becomes more complex and hence less easy to analyze in terms applicable to other state actions. Nevertheless, despite difficulties of understanding, the fundamental relationship remains the same; wealth is transferred to one group of people, usually those able to exert political influence, from another group. The former are beneficiaries of the latter's victimization.

MONEY: DISSEMINATOR OF INFORMATION

Complicating the fundamental gain/loss relationship basic to governmental economic policy, monetary or otherwise, is the fact that prices, the exchange ratios between particular goods and money (the most marketable of all goods insofar as it is capable of having exchange ratios with nearly all other commodities), are the means by which knowledge, held by numerous and diverse market participants, is disseminated to investors, entrepreneurs, and consumers. This "division of knowledge is no less fundamental to an advanced economy than the more often cited division of labor. In an advanced market economy, a printer need not know the specific facts about timber production all around the world in order to allocate his limited funds for paper products. All of this information is "encapsulated" in the prices for such products presented to him as a buyer. If there is a shortage of wood due to a shortage of labor arising from plague conditions in Brazil, all of this information is presented in the prices charged by 1) laborers (now in short supply due to the sick workers' absence), and 2) wood dealers (some of whom are forced out of the market by rising costs), faced with an unchanged demand, who charge a higher price for a smaller output in order to maximize their income (and thus "clear the market"). The printer then allocates his resources to his most highly valued ends based on the higher prices presented to him, that is the say (other things being equal) he conserves his paper, e.g., by printing more words per page.

This complex and "spontaneously evolved" system for the dissemination of knowledge is hindered by government interference. In certain circumstances this intervention results in incorrect information being presented to market participants, that is, in prices which do not reflect the real conditions underlying economic activity. We shall investigate this more thoroughly later.

RISE IN PRICES

One of the central problems in current public debate over governmental "monetary policy" is: what constitutes inflation? For members of the general public, the most obvious thing one can say about inflation is that it is a condition of "ever-rising prices." The complexities arising from money's position as an intermediary good lead many to lay the blame for inflation on businesses ("after all, they're the ones charging the higher prices"), unions ("they're always demanding higher wages"), or "piggish consumers" ("they're the ones who consistently pay the higher prices"). Such views are subject to criticism and rejection on logical and empirical grounds. First, one need not have read Book V of Euclid's Elements to know that if a ratio is increased while the consequent term remains constant (or itself increases), the increase in the ratio must be due to a relative increase in the antecedent term. While "goods in general" (the consequent term in the ratio) remain constant, yet "prices in general" (the cumulative expression of the ratio between money and other goods) rise, it must be due to a relative increase in the antecedent term, money. In the market, if the price of one good rises, then the purchaser retains less money to spend on other goods (assuming that the same amount was still purchased, or at least that the reduction in purchases amounted to less than the rise in price, both cases resulting in greater expenditures on the now more expensive good), and the demand

for those other goods falls, leading to lower prices for such other goods. Hence, without an increase in the money stock (and/or stock of money substitutes) there can be no "general" rise in prices. Second, the view that unions or businesses are responsible for inflation (in this view, defined in terms of ever-rising prices) is founded on the fallacy that sellers can "pass on" all of their costs to buyers. If this were so, then sellers could incur infinite costs and hence charge infinite prices without experiencing a loss of sales. As prices are not infinite, we must conclude that sellers do not simply "pass on" their costs to purchasers; such a one-dimensional view only incorporates the supply side of the transaction, leaving out the unwillingness of purchasers to buy at prices which they deem to be too high. (The commonly held notion that increased costs, e.g., new taxes, are "passed on" to the consumer is not altogether unfounded, in as much as consumers do in fact bear the burden of new "business taxes." This is effected through a reduction in the number of suppliers, not through a "passing on" of costs. The increase in costs results in the elimination of marginal competitors, now faced with a diminished cost-price differential; this decreased supply of good leads to a higher marginal utility per commodity unit, and hence to higher prices.)

MONETARY INCREASE AND INCOME REDISTRIBUTION

The general rise in prices then, in the absence of a decrease in the quantity of goods (a case that need not be considered here), must be attributed to an increase in the stock of money and money substitutes. As this new money enters the market, some people are awarded a larger monetary fund and are therefore able to bid away goods from others by offering to pay higher prices. The important word in the foregoing sentence is **some**. New money must enter the economy somewhere; there is no "helicopter effect" to distribute money evenly over all sectors of the economy and to all market participants. Milton Friedman, a noted proponent of the "helicopter effect" view, is correct when he remarks that poor people and people on fixed incomes are harmed most by inflation of the money supply, but this is in direct contradiction to the "helicopter effect" hypothesis which states that there are no distribution effects to monetary inflation. It **does** make a difference who gets the new money first, for by this means the exploitative relationship central to government policy is effected. If A receives a windfall of one million dollars in new fiat money from the government, his increased purchasing power comes at the expense of B, C, D, E, . . . , etc. For when A enters the market to purchase goods he is able, by means of his new money, to bid goods away from others. A enters the market before the prices of goods in general have risen due to the monetary increase. When he buys a good from R, it is at a higher price than R was able to get from his other customers. R now has an increased stock of money before prices in general have gone up. He purchases a good from Z, etc. By the time B and C, e.g., recipients of relatively fixed incomes, receive a portion of the new funds, the prices of goods have already gone up relative to their incomes. There has been a net transfer of buying power from B to and C to A.

MONEY AND THE BUSINESS CYCLE

Further complicating the whole procedure is the manner in which a great deal of the new money enters the economy. Rarely is it in the form of outright one-time grants of counterfeit cash, printed up by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and then handed out to political favorites (though this has not been unknown to happen). Rather, much of the new money enters the economic system in the form of expanded bank credit, either through central bank creation of paper assets ("open market operations") or through a lowering of reserve requirements within a fractional reserve system. The former creates credit (loanable funds) out of whole cloth and then makes it available to investors and other borrowers. The latter allows banks to engage in what would be condemned as fraud in any other enterprise, namely, to loan out more funds than they actually have on hand. In both cases the rate of interest is depressed below its market level where the plans of savers and investors are coordinated such that the sum of funds saved tends to equal the sum invested.

It is in this manner, namely a lowering of the interest rate, that the

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Inflation — (Continued From Page 6)

pricing system, whereby information is disseminated throughout the market, is distorted. Such a distortion of interest rates (viewed by the entrepreneur as the "price of loanable funds") leads to an amount of investment greater than the amount of planned savings. Hence, the real conditions of the market are misrepresented to entrepreneurs, who overinvest in "production goods" (distinguished from "consumer goods" because they are not immediately consumed; "production goods" serve to produce goods which produce goods . . . which produce goods which are consumed). Such malinvestments must eventually be liquidated as consumers reassert their desired ratio of savings to consumption after receiving in turn the "fiat credit" as wages, rents, and other income. Such a liquidation of assets means a reallocation of capital goods and labor which, being heterogeneous and at least to some extent specific in their productive capacity, remain unemployed during the process of adjustment. These hardships go under the name of depression, another charming aspect of governmental policy.

Hence, we see that it is government action which must be blamed not only for ever-rising prices (which impose so many hardships on so many people), but also for the disruptive crises into which interventionist "political capitalism" is periodically thrown. In contrast, increases in the money supply on the free market (e.g., an increase in the stock of gold specie) do not lead to such hardships because, while admittedly causing a relative increase in the prices of goods (or a decrease in the price of money expressed in terms of goods), such an increase in the stock of money does not redistribute goods or purchasing power in a manner different from other voluntary market transactions, where goods are traded between transactors in order for more favorable states of affairs to be realized by each one. This is so because the "rate of return" on gold production will tend to be equilibrated with the "rates of return" in other industries. In short, such market increases in specie do not constitute a veiled form of theft or fraud. Also, increases in specie do not lead to the malinvestment and subsequent dislocation of the trade cycle of "boom and bust" outlined above. Specie increases, when loaned out or placed in banks by their holders, do lead to increased investment through a lower interest rate. However, such increases in loanable funds, unlike increases in "fiat credit," do represent a real increase in the ratio of savings to consumption because the new gold-holder did, in fact, save his new money holdings rather than spend them on consumption. Hence, in a market economy planned savings will tend to equal planned investment, and no capital or labor reallocation will be necessary at a later date beyond those due to everyday self-correcting entrepreneurial error.

MARCO AND MICRO

In any analysis of complex economic phenomena, it is the task of the analyst to reduce "macro-economic" movements to their "micro-economic" foundations, that is, to explain aggregate states of affairs (mass unemployment, depression, etc.) in terms of the goals, plans, and actions of consumers, investors, entrepreneurs, and other market participants. The problem with orthodox analysis (including the "Keynesian" and "Friedmanite" versions) is that it focuses on phenomena which are not considered by market participants. The general price level, for example, is not relevant to the actions of entrepreneurs; they are concerned with the relative prices presented to them when making decisions to allocate resources among various opportunities. Such relative prices are distorted by monetary manipulation, leading entrepreneurs to make mistakes on the basis of incorrect information. This explains why it is that, while entrepreneurs are constantly making mistakes (and experiencing the consequences, thus providing incentives for self-correcting behavior) large numbers of such mistakes often come in great clusters, namely as widespread economic dislocation (i.e., depression, recession, side-wise movements, panics, etc.). Entrepreneurs do not act on the basis of a mythical price-level (in any case an arbitrary collection of averaged prices which is often misleading with respect to the real conditions of production, trade, and consumption) but on the basis of a system of relative prices; when governmental credit expansion distorts this system of relative prices incorrect information is transmitted and the coordinative mechanism of the market is thwarted, leading to painful consequences.

CUI BONO?

Further, when investigating governmental policy entailing net beneficiaries and net victims, it should be a goal of the conscientious

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the LP: that we are the only political party that consistently and uncompromisingly upholds the idea of liberty and applies it to the political arena. That she seems not to care one iota for this distinction belies her claim that she is especially interested in the idea of liberty. Instead, the convention proposal adheres to Point IV of the National Committee's Strategy statement passed in October 1977: that "Since our goals and principles are radical enough, we should avoid any extra alienation of people by the form of our presentation or by our image. In short, our content should be embodied in an image appropriate to our status as a national party aiming to become a new majority." But, of course, if Ms. Nathan wants to turn away the voters, and restrict the LP to a party of creative artists, then her approach makes sense.

Ms. Nathan states that the LP should not be "merely another political party, but, primarily, an educational party . . . It is ideas, not votes, that ultimately solve social problems." But the LP can only educate to the extent that we obtain votes, and therefore make the media and the voters sit up and take notice. Seeking votes is what a political party is supposed to be doing, and that is what the LP should do so long as we set forth and do not compromise our libertarian principles. Moreover, ideas *per se* never accomplish anything; ideas do not float by themselves in a vacuum. They must be adopted and carried forward by **people**, and by people working in institutional structures. The Libertarian Party is the institutional embodiment of the ideas of libertarianism in the political realm.

Let us then, while holding high our libertarian principles, advance, as rapidly and professionally as possible and without shame or apology, into the political arena. First as a third major party and eventually as the majority party. Let us proceed, not only to educate, but roll back the Leviathan State.

policy analyst to ask the time-honored question, who benefits? Governmental inflation of the supply of money and credit entails a massive transferral of income from one group to another. Who are the beneficiaries, and is it possible to draw a clear link between their political power and the governmental policies which benefit them? Such links can be drawn (and have, in fact, been drawn by others in the past), but it is beyond the scope of the present inquiry to do so. The matter of indentifying the beneficiaries, proponents, and opponents of inflationary policies is of great relevance to a satisfactory solution to the problem in political terms.

A WAY OUT

Is there a way out of this system of monetary manipulation and exploitation? Happily, the answer is yes. The solution is obvious and simple. Remove government entirely from any and all control over money. In Nobel Laureate F. A. Hayek's terms, "de-nationalize" money. Money is too important a commodity, incorporating all of the important functions described above, to allow its supply and allocation to be determined by political means. Money is a commodity and can be and has been provided on the market, where it is responsive to and serves the needs of voluntary transactions rather than those of political manipulation and fraud.

The practical problems involved in disengaging the state from control over this vital commodity are great but are not insurmountable. As in any political strategy, the beneficiaries and "behind-the-scenes" proponents of a particular policy must be identified and assessed (the victims, in this case the bulk of the population, are not hard to identify). Unfortunately, in "political-capitalism" mere economic interest is often insufficient to provide a motive for reduction or elimination of state involvement while, on the other hand, it provides motives in plenty for increasing such involvement. The interests of the recipients of state largesse and privilege are "concentrated;" the benefits accruing to them as individuals are typically far greater than the individual losses to very large numbers of people victimized by the particular state intervention in question. Hence, in addition to the economic interests of the victimized masses of the population, a great campaign, an "ideology," must be set forth which will reveal and condemn interventionism as **immoral** and **unjust**. The motivating ideology of the American and classical liberal revolutions must be resurrected to once again bring down a system whereby power preys on man and society.

Anarchist Without Adjectives —

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moreover, a poet and an artist who deeply regretted her failure to achieve recognition in literature.

In spite of this diversity, Voltairine de Cleyre represents important trends within the early anarchist movement, such as the shift from pacifism to the condonation or advocacy of violence. At the time of the Haymarket explosion—in which the deaths of several policemen were blamed on a group of demonstrably innocent anarchists—Voltairine was nineteen. Four of the anarchists were hanged and Voltairine de Cleyre became an anarchist. She did not become so radical, however, as to sanction the violent inclinations of her mentor, Dyer D. Lum. "I see no end to retaliation, unless some one ceases to retaliate," she declared—a Tolstoyan stance for which Lum labelled her "Moraline" and "Gusherine". Nevertheless, she believed it was "not the business of Anarchists to preach . . . acts of violence. For truly Anarchism has nothing in common with violence, and can never come about save through the conquest of men's minds." Although not approving of their actions, Voltairine de Cleyre, a few years later, came to the defense of those who used discriminatory violence; she viewed their acts as inevitable responses to the greater violence of the State. Her defense of Czolgosz, President McKinley's assassin, solidified this shift away from pacifism. She previously maintained that to admit resistance "is at once to admit—the State." But she now wrote of the State:

"These creatures who drill men in the science of killing, who put guns and clubs in hands they train to shoot and strike, who hail with delight the latest inventions in explosives, who exult in the machine that can kill the most with the least expenditure of energy . . . who ravish, and burn, and garrote, and guillotine, and hang, and electrocute, they have the impertinence to talk about the unrighteousness of force!"

She became the loudest American advocate of the Mexican Revolution. The last year and one-half of her life was devoted to publicizing and collecting funds for this cause. With the Mexican Revolution, Voltairine de Cleyre shed the last vestige of pacifism.

Another trend de Cleyre exemplified is expressed by the label "anarchist without adjectives". "Anarchy without adjectives" was coined by the Spanish anarchist Fernando Tarrida del Marmol to designate that Anarchism is the axiom compared to which economic systems are, at best, secondary. This was in contrast with the individualists who maintained that anarchism could not be divorced from economics, that one's view of compulsion rested on one's view of property rights. Voltairine de Cleyre's adoption and advocacy of this term was perhaps due to her inability to find an economic system that fit her conception of liberty. For "Socialism and Communism would beget more regulation than is consistent with ideal Anarchism," and "Individualism and Mutualism . . . involve a development of the private policemen not at

all compatible with my notions of freedom." Moreover, she was distressed by the in-fighting, typified by Benjamin Tucker, which splintered the movement into groups more willing to fight than to cooperate. Along with such prominent anarchists as Malatesta, Reclus, and Nettlau, de Cleyre attempted to unite anarchism under one title, an attempt foredoomed to fail.

There were many ways in which Voltairine differed from her fellow American anarchists. She took little part in international anarchism; she condemned prison systems of any sort; she refused to substitute the word "liberation" for "anarchist"; and, unlike Emma Goldman, she accepted no money for her activities. In many ways, she resembled the European anarchists for whom she had so much admiration: Kropotkin, Proudhon, Louise Michel, Tarrida del Marmol. When a former student attempted to kill her, she followed the example of Louise Michel and refused to testify against him, preferring instead to collect funds for his defense and to appeal for his release. Like Rudolph Rocker, she lived and worked among Jews—in her case, the Russian immigrant population of Philadelphia. She tutored them and in the process developed such respect for their independence that she learned Yiddish and contributed often to *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, the leading Jewish anarchist paper. Like Kropotkin, her ideal society was a rural one of farmers and craftsmen.

Paul Avrich has done a remarkable job of original research in *An American Anarchist*, the first in his projected biographies of American anarchists. His clear and entertaining style makes this densely-written book a delight to read. Unlike so many biographers, Avrich does not psychologize or interject his own opinion. He gives a balanced, scholarly account of a woman totally dedicated to liberty. His knowledge of Voltairine de Cleyre and of her context is both comprehensive and detailed. Of particular interest is his account of the Jewish immigrant influence in the anarchist movement. He reports, for example, that at one time there were 400 to 500 anarchists in Philadelphia, of whom 145 were active. Fully 75 of these activists were Russian Jews.

The one disagreement I have with Avrich is his high assessment of Voltairine de Cleyre's artistic ability. "She possessed a greater literary talent than any other American anarchist . . ."; to this statement, and similar ones, I must object. Thoreau was a far better writer. In fact, having examined the prose and poetry in Voltairine de Cleyre's *Selected Works* (Mother Earth, 1914), I find her to be a competent essayist and a poor poet. Her poetry is so overwhelmed by exclamation marks, flowery adjectives and the-moral-of-it-all that it resembles an actor badly overplaying his part. There is no subtlety and little technique. Carried away by excesses of language, she never manages to tame it.

But this criticism is a small matter beside Voltairine de Cleyre herself, as a radical and as the sensitive human being revealed in *An American Anarchist*.

To neglect a heritage is almost to disown it. Libertarian history is rich with individuals who cared deeply about the future of mankind. We are their future. The least we can do is to care about them. □

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