
The Voluntaryist

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

August 1983

Interview With Carl Watner

MY EXPERIMENT WITH TRUTH

Editor's Note: Carl Watner, one of the co-organizers of The Voluntaryists, has received a forty day jail sentence for contempt of court specifically for his refusal to obey a summons to produce books and records requested by the IRS. Carl's statement of conscientious objection and his refusal to bear witness against himself were rejected by the judge, who, in accordance with a 60 day appeal period, ordered Carl to purge the contempt or be imprisoned on Nov. 14. As a matter of personal conscience, Carl has decided not to cooperate. The following interview took place several days before the Sept. 8th hearing.

Vol: How did this conflict with the IRS originate?

CW: For several years, the IRS has been after me to explain why I have not filed income tax returns since 1976. I have maintained that the burden is not on me to prove why I don't have to file, but on them to prove why I do. As a result, they finally issued a "Collection Summons" (July 1982) by which I was to appear before them with my books and records for 1976 through 1981. I ignored this. On March 31, 1983, the IRS filed a petition with the federal district court in Baltimore to enforce its Collection Summons. An agent attempted to serve me with papers in early June 1983 which notified me of a June 6th hearing to "show cause why the summons should not be enforced." Since I handed the papers back to the agent without looking at them, I was ignorant of the hearing date. On June 7, 1983, Federal District Court Judge Joseph Young, in Baltimore, issued an Order that I appear before the IRS on June 20 and "produce all of the books and records required and called for under the terms of the summons and give testimony in order to prepare tax returns."

Vol: How did you handle the June 20th hearing?

CW: I appeared before the IRS with a friend as a witness. I refused to give them any information (either testimony or records) and delivered to them instead a written statement affirming my refusal to bear witness against myself. It also expressed my conscientious objection to taxation in strong and absolute terms.

Then around August 10th, when I drove home from work, there was a strange car at the bottom of our driveway. In it was an IRS agent with another set of papers to serve on me—an "Order to Show Cause" why I should not be held in contempt of court for failure to obey the June 7th order. The hearing was set for

September 8, 1983.

Vol: What do you expect the outcome of that hearing will be?

CW: There are several possibilities. The most unlikely one is that the judge will agree that I am not required to bear witness against myself in matters which might possibly lead to criminal prosecution and, thus, find me not in contempt. Another way I could avoid prison would be to "purge myself of contempt" by cooperation with the IRS. But, given my non-cooperative stand, a lawyer I consulted believes I will be found guilty of contempt and jailed until I comply. Since this is a civil contempt and not a criminal one, there is no fixed time for the length of imprisonment. Theoretically, I could be held in jail for the rest of my life. I am at the judge's mercy. As long as I refuse to comply—to give testimony to the IRS and produce books and records—I am in contempt.

Vol: How does The Voluntaryists as an organization stand on this issue?

CW: As an organization, The Voluntaryists has nothing to do with this. My non-cooperation with the IRS goes back many years—long before George and Wendy and I conceived of the organization. While George and Wendy have expressed their individual support, we all consider it a personal matter. That is, none of us advocate going to jail as a strategy; it is more a matter of personal conscience. Our attitude is similar to how we approached Paul Jacob's resistance to draft registration. It is one of many strategies and we do not advocate it as something everyone should do. Not everyone could do it because of personal circumstances and mental outlook. Not everyone can be a Paul Jacob. How far one can oppose the government is a matter of conscience and circumstance. In short, neither I nor The Voluntaryists can decide this issue for anyone.

Vol: Like Paul, you will be described as both a martyr and a hero. Which label is appropriate?

CW: I don't claim to be either. When your conscience tells you it is wrong to cooperate with the government as a witness against yourself, then I say it is time to non-cooperate. I am not ignoring possible consequences. I am a little scared about what might happen but I can't honestly use that as an excuse to back down. Furthermore, I know from my study of the libertarian tradition that many resisters suffered far worse fates than going to jail for a couple of months. John Lilburne and Richard Overton, 17th Century liber-

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THE PARTY LINE ON A PARTY LINE

Individuals act. There is no such thing as a collective will. It is strange to have explain this to libertarians. It is disturbing to see how difficult it is for some of them to understand an organization which promotes differences of approach in an important area, which encourages individuals to think and act independently. *Where*, they insistently ask of The Voluntaryists, *is your party line on strategy?* If this were a request for the statement of principles of Voluntaryism—the essential characteristics which distinguish us from other libertarian groups—it would be a perfectly reasonable inquiry. And simply answered. We are an organization of anarchists with the dual purpose of developing antipolitical theory and investigating nonpolitical strategies. Our party line on strategy is that it must be consistent with Voluntaryist theory; in short, it must be nonpolitical.

Unfortunately, the quest for a party line is rarely motivated by a desire for information. It is part of a mindset. In this libertarian golden age of hammering out the platform and pushing the “pure” party line, many political libertarians find it inconceivable that an organization could function without words-to-purge by. And the demand for The Voluntaryist party line is not a request for the broad principles which tie Voluntaryists together, but for the specific positions to which they must conform or be purged as heretical. The reply that our position is, in a word, “nonpolitical” is considered to be an evasion. *Where specifically do The Voluntaryists stand on nonviolent resistance, parallel institutions, utopian communities, etc.?* Specifically, Voluntaryists stand as individuals using their individual judgments concerning the context of a situation and what they consider to be an appropriate strategy given their own weaknesses and strengths.

This is not to say that, as editor of *The Voluntaryist*, I do not have strong preferences or that I will give space to any and all nonpolitical approaches. Being open minded does not entail abandoning reason or suspending judgment. It does entail a commitment to consider any strategy which does not defy commonsense—eg. jumping off a cliff as a grand plan for liberty. I intend to pursue the ones I find most promising and I cheerfully grant other Voluntaryists the same freedom.

But why this open mindedness? If there is a strategy I prefer, one which I think is objectively the most

valuable, why not make it the official Voluntaryist methodology? There are at least three reasons why an official strategy would be a mistake. First, nonpolitical strategy within libertarianism is largely an uncharted area which requires far more of a pioneer spirit than a doctrinaire censoring. It is necessary to examine a wide range of strategies in the context of their histories and their compatibility with anarchist theory. Frankly, it is not presently apparent to me whether certain strategies are promising or a deadend.

Secondly, although moral questions adhere to strategy—i.e. is the strategy peaceful, is it political?—any number of approaches can satisfy these moral requirements and be equally valid. Given that a strategy satisfies basic anarchist principles, it should be judged solely on pragmatic grounds: how well does it address specific goals; how difficult is it to implement; does it have undesirable side effects; how well does it embody the personalities and talents of those using it? This somewhat contextual view of strategy is at odds with an apriori party line on what is acceptable.

Thirdly, even if The Voluntaryists had the arrogance to claim perfect knowledge on which strategy best fits any one context, contexts change and strategy must be flexible enough to address these shifts in situation. Flexibility and a party line are at odds.

The Voluntaryist have two goals: the development of antipolitical theory; and, the pursuit of nonpolitical means. The “party line” with reference to the first goal is that anarchism and the political process are mutually destructive and morally inconsistent positions. Here, we are pushing a very specific conclusion; to be consistent, anarchists must eschew the political process and truly oppose the State. For those who accept this conclusion in theory, no party line on strategy is necessary. For those who do not, no party line is possible.

I applaud all the inventiveness and creativity I find in the area of strategy. But, then, I’m an old fashioned libertarian. I still welcome diversity.

Wendy McElroy

FOR THE RECORD

In view of the recent absurd attacks on George Smith which label him as a mystic, a martyr and a Gandhi-cultist, I have reached into our files to reprint part of a letter written by George to Carl Watner during the formation of the Voluntaryists. George's position remains unchanged.

(W . M .)

Dear Carl,

May 2, 1982

The Voluntaryists is supposed to be an alternative group for those dissatisfied with LP activities. Our main *raison d’etre* is to educate libertarians away from the political means. This basic focus thereby defines our platform. We are, first and foremost, a nonpolitical, or anti-political, libertarian organization. One of the reasons for forming such a group is to act as a clearing house and incentive for libertarians to explore nonpolitical alternatives. (This is what I emphasized in the brief statement of purpose.) I think we should leave the issue of alternative strategies open-ended. We should

not include, as part of our platform, a nonviolent strategy. Instead, we should take a position neither for nor against. I believe this for the following reasons:

1. To include a definite concept of strategy as part of our organizational structure will discourage investigation into other alternatives. It will appear as if we have finalized this issue, which we have not.

2. I remain uncomfortable with nonviolent strategy (i.e., nonviolent in the broad sense, e.g., a Gandhian theory). There are important insights here, certainly, but they have not been fully adapted (to my satisfaction) to libertarian ends. In other words, more work remains in this area.

3. To include nonviolence will “turn-off” many libertarians who tend to regard Gandhianism, etc. as somewhat cranky (as does Murray, for example). We want to attract all the anti-political libertarians, whatever their views of strategy, or however well-formed they may be. We should cast as wide a net as possible.

Within this framework, of course, investigation of traditional nonviolent strategy can be undertaken, and adapted to libertarian goals. I by no means wish to exclude nonviolent theory; I only wish to relegate it to a topic of investigation, rather than a *defining characteristic* of membership.

On the means/ends distinction: You say the voluntaryist insight implies the rejection of violent acts. I disagree. If, as argued in my last letter, the voluntaryist insight pertains to the concept of *legitimacy*, then one way to destroy the legitimacy of the state is to convince a large number of people that *they have the right to use force to defend themselves against it, as they would against any criminal. Remember, there are two basic options here — two ways in which the withdrawal of tacit consent may make itself felt:*

1. *When confronted with nonviolent resistance on a mass scale, the state may resign itself to defeat and withdraw the oppressive measure.*

2. *When confronted with the withdrawal of consent on a mass scale by individuals who have become convinced that they have as much right to defend themselves by force against a tax collector as against a common thief, the state may resign in the face of this potential use of massive force against it.*

In other words, the state may concede a measure because (1) it recognizes the *futility* of attempting to enforce it; or (2) it recognizes the *danger* (threat of retaliation) of attempting to enforce it. The first is characteristic of nonviolent strategy and thinking. The second, however, appears to me quite plausible and realistic, or at least something that merits investigation. The withdrawal of consent and the dissolution of legitimacy may be effective precisely because the state now realizes that its moral authority alone will no longer elicit obedience, that the widespread use of force is now necessary to enforce its laws, and that it therefore faces the prospect of massive armed resistance (whether organized or sporadic).

So the voluntaryist insight by no means entails non-violence. It is easily adaptable to at least the potential threat of massive violence, even if that violence is not consciously organized and directed by an organization. And such violence, should it occur, would be aimed solely at the state on behalf of individual liberty. It would not aim, as much revolutionary violence does, at the establishment of a competing state.

In your “fourth” point, you refer, as you have previously, to the inadvisability of using violence against the state, even if we have superior firepower. You also reject the notion that we can “coerce” people to be free. I think you are somewhat mired in a conventional view of “revolutionary” violence. I too reject the notion that libertarians should march on Washington and capture it, even if we had the capability of doing so. But please consider the possibility I outlined above. If we concede the right of self-defense, then there is no way we can deny that right to a person confronted with a government official. But should we reject this kind of individual self-defense, as a matter of policy? I think not, for I think we abandon the second alternative I mentioned above. We need not come out pro-violence. But if we emphasize the concept of delegitimizing — moral leveling, as it were — then the natural implication is that one has a right of self-defense against government as against any thief. We need not advocate its use. But neither should we deny ourselves the prospect of an enlightened citizenry which is willing to defend itself with force of arms, if necessary.

To summarize, then, I think we must distinguish the voluntaryist insight (legitimization, tacit consent, etc.) from the issue of violence or nonviolence. Delegitimization of the state could be pursued by non-violent or by (potentially) violent means. By the latter, as I have indicated, I mean the possibility of large numbers of individuals resisting government laws by force, and *the resulting inability of the government to function after that point is reached*. Thus (potentially) violent resistance is as fully compatible with the voluntaryist insight as is the nonviolent strategy. It simply represents a different *manifestation* of the withdrawal of consent. This, if it happens at all, would arise spontaneously and thus is not something we would include as a definite strategy. But it is certainly a possible outcome of voluntaryism, owing to our emphasis on denying moral privilege to the state. Hence we should not advocate it in our platform, but neither should we exclude it out of hand with the inclusion of a nonviolent plank. After all, when and if this threatened use of mass force became realistic, it would be the *consequence* of a voluntaryist educational revolution, not a strategy or method per se. In other words, if we reached that point, our work would be largely completed and successful, because it would indicate that individuals are no longer willing to treat government as exempt from the moral standards applied to everyone else.

Cordially,
George Smith

REVOLUTION: THE ROAD TO FREEDOM?

By Ken Knudsen

There's an old story about a motorist who stopped a policeman in downtown Manhattan and asked him how he could get to the Brooklyn Bridge. The officer looked around, thought a minute, scratched his head, and finally replied, "I'm sorry, but you can't get there from here." Some anarchists are now wondering if you can get to the free society from where we stand today. I must confess that I, too, harbor some doubts. But if there is a way, it is incumbent upon all who wish to find that way to carefully examine the important end-means problem.

"The end justifies the means." Few people would argue with this trite statement. Certainly all apologists of government must ultimately fall back on such reasoning to justify their large police forces and standing armies. Revolutionary anarchists must also rely on this argument to justify their authoritarian methods "just one more time"; the revolution being for them "the unfreedom to end unfreedom." It sometimes seems that the only people who reject outright this article of faith are a handful of (mostly religious) pacifists. The question I'd like to consider here is not whether the end *justifies* the means, but rather whether the end is *affected by* the means and, if so, to what extent.

That the end is affected by the means should be obvious. Whether I obtain your watch by swindling you, buying it from you, stealing it from you, or soliciting it as a gift from you makes the same watch "graft", "my property", "booty", or "a donation". The same can be said for social change. Even so strong an advocate of violent revolution as Herbert Marcuse, in one of his rare lapses into sanity, realized this fact:

"Unless the revolution itself progresses through freedom, the need for domination and repression would be carried over into the new society, and the fateful separation between the 'immediate' and the 'true' interest of the individuals would be almost inevitable; the individuals would become the objects of their own liberation, and the freedom would be a matter of administration and decree. Progress would be progressive repression, and the 'delay' in freedom would threaten to become self-propelling and self-perpetuating."

But despite the truth of Marcuse's observation, we still find many anarchists looking for a shortcut to freedom by means of violent revolution. The idea that anarchism can be inaugurated by violence is as fallacious as the idea that it can be sustained by violence. The best that can be said for violence is that it may, in rare circumstances, be used as an expedient to save us from extinction. But the individualist's rejection of violence (except in cases of self-defense) is not due to any lofty pacifist principles; it's a matter of pure

pragmatism: we realize that violence just simply does not work.

The task of anarchism, as the individualist sees it, is *not* to destroy the state, but rather to destroy the *myth* of the state. Once people realize that they no longer need the state, it will—in the words of Frederick Engels—inevitably "wither away" (*Anti-Duhring*, 1877) and be consigned to the "Museum of Antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe" (*Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, 1884). But unless anarchists can create a general and well-grounded disbelief in the state as an *institution*, the existing state might be destroyed by violent revolution or it might fall through its own rottenness, but another would inevitably rise in its place. And why shouldn't it? As long as people believe the state to be necessary (even a "necessary evil", as Thomas Paine said), the state will always exist.

We have seen how Kropotkin would usher in the millennium by the complete expropriation of all property. "We must see clearly in private property what it really is, a conscious or unconscious robbery of the substance of all, and seize it joyfully for the common benefit." He cheerfully goes on to say, "The instinct of destruction, so natural and so just...will find ample room for satisfaction." Kropotkin's modern-day heirs are no different. Noam Chomsky, writing in the *New York Review of Books* and reprinted in a recent issue of *Anarchy*, applauds the heroism of the Paris Commune of 1871, mentioning only in passing the "the Commune, of course [!] was drowned in blood." Later in the same article he writes, "What is far more important is that these ideas [direct workers' control] have been realized in spontaneous revolutionary action, for example in Germany and Italy after World War I and in Spain (specifically, industrial Barcelona) in 1936." What Chomsky apparently finds relatively *unimportant* are the million-odd corpses which were the direct result of these "spontaneous revolutionary actions." He also somehow manages to ignore the fact that the three countries he mentions—Germany, Italy and Spain—were without exception victims of fascism within a few years of these glorious revolutions. One doesn't need a great deal of insight to be able to draw a parallel between these "spontaneous" actions with their reactionary aftermaths and the spontaneous "trashings" which are currently in fashion in the United States. But it seems the Weathermen really *do* "need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows."

The question of how to attain the anarchist society has divided anarchists nearly as much as the question of what the anarchist society actually is. While Bakunin insisted on the necessity of "bloody revolutions", Proudhon believed that violence was unnecessary—saying that "reason will serve us better." The same discord was echoed on the other side of the Atlantic some decades later when, in the wake of the infamous Haymarket bombing, the issue of violence came to a head. Benjamin Tucker, writing in the col-

umns of *Liberty*, had this to say about accusations leveled against him by John Most, the communist-anarchist editor of *Freiheit*:

"It makes very little difference to Herr Most what a man believes in economics. The test of fellowship with him lies in acceptance of dynamite as a cure-all. Though I should prove that my economic views, if realized, would turn our social system inside out, he would not therefore regard me as a revolutionist. He declares outright that I am no revolutionist, because the thought of the coming revolution (by dynamite, he means) makes my flesh creep. Well, I frankly confess that I take no pleasure in the thought of bloodshed and mutilation and death. At these things my feelings revolt. And if delight in them is a requisite of a revolutionist, then indeed I am no revolutionist. When revolutionist and cannibal become synonyms, count me out, if you please. But though my feelings revolt, I am not mastered by them or made a coward by them. More than from dynamite and blood do I shrink from the thought of a permanent system of society involving the slow starvation of the most industrious and deserving of its members. If I should ever become convinced that the policy of bloodshed is necessary to end our social system, the loudest of today's shriekers for blood would not surpass me in the stoicism with which I would face the inevitable. Indeed, a plumb-liner to the last, I am confident that under such circumstances many who now think me chicken-hearted would condemn the stony-heartedness with which I should favour the utter sacrifice of every feeling of pity to the necessities of the terroristic policy. Neither fear nor sentimentalism, then, dictates my opposition to forcible methods. Such being the case, how stupid, how unfair, in Herr Most, to picture me as crossing myself at the mention of the word revolution simply because I steadfastly act on my well-known belief that force cannot substitute truth for a lie in political economy!"

It is this issue of economics which generally sorts anarchists into the violent and non-violent wings of anarchism. Individualists, by and large, are pacifists in practice (if not in theory), whereas the communists tend toward violent revolution. Why is this so? One reason I think is that individualists are more concerned with changing the conditions which directly affect their lives than they are with reforming the whole world "for the good of all."

The communists, on the other hand, have a more evangelical spirit. Like all good missionaries, they are out to convert the unbeliever—whether he likes it or not. And inevitably this leads to violence. Another reason communists are more prone to violence than individualists can be found, I think, in looking at the nature of the force each is willing to use to secure and sustain his respective system. Individualists believe

that the only justifiable force is force used in preventing invasion (i.e. defensive force). Communists, however, would compel the worker to pool his products with the products of others and forbid him to sell his labor or the products of his labor. To "compel" and "forbid" requires the use of offensive force. It is no wonder, then, that most communists advocate violence to achieve their objectives.

If freedom is really what we anarchists crack it up to be, it shouldn't be necessary to force it down the throat of anyone. What an absurdity! Even so superficial a writer as Agatha Christie recognized that "if it is not possible to go back [from freedom], or to choose to go back, then it is not freedom." A. J. Muste used to say that "there is no way to peace—peace is the way." The same thing is true about freedom: the only way to freedom is by freedom. This statement is so nearly tautological that it should not need saying. The only way to realize anarchy is for a sufficient number of people to be convinced that their own interests demand it. Human society does not run on idealism—it runs on pragmatism. And unless people can be made to realize that anarchy actually works for *their* benefit, it will remain what it is today: an idle pipe dream; "a nice theory, but unrealistic." It is the anarchist's job to convince people otherwise.

Herbert Spencer—the great evolutionist of whom Darwin said, "He is about a dozen times my superior"—observed the following fact of nature:

"Metamorphosis is the universal law, exemplified throughout the Heavens and on Earth: especially throughout the organic world; and above all in the animal division of it. No creature, save the simplest and most minute, commences its existence in a form like that which it eventually assumes; and in most cases the unlikeness is great—so great that kinship between the first and the last forms would be incredible were it not daily demonstrated in every poultry-yard and every garden. More than this is true. The changes of form are often several: each of them being an apparently complete transformation—egg, larva, pupa, imago, for example...No one of them ends as it begins; and the difference between its original structure and its ultimate structure is such that, at the outset, change of the one into the other would have seemed incredible."

This universal law of metamorphosis holds not only for biology, but for society as well. Modern-day Christianity resembles the early Christian church about as much as a butterfly resembles a caterpillar. Thomas Jefferson would have been horrified if he could have foreseen the "government by the consent of the governed" which today is the heir of his Declaration of Independence. French revolutionaries took turns beheading one another until that great believer in "les droits de l'homme", Napoleon Bonaparte, came upon the scene to secure "liberte, egalite, fraternite" for all.

And wasn't it comrade Stalin who in 1906 so confidently forecast the nature of the coming revolution?: "The dictatorship of the proletariat as a class over the bourgeoisie and not the domination of a few individuals over the proletariat." The examples of these ugly duckling stories in reverse are endless. For as Robert Burns wrote nearly two centuries ago:

*"The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley;
An lea'a us nought but grief and pain
For promis'd joy."*

Why is it that Utopian dreams have a habit of turning into nightmares in practice? Very simply because people don't act the way the would-be architects of society would have them act. The mythical man never measures up to the real man. This point was brought home forcefully in a recent letter to *Freedom* by S. E. Parker who observed that our modern visionaries are bound for disappointment because they are "trying to deduce an 'is' from an 'ought'." Paper constitutions might work alright in a society of paper dolls, but they can only bring smiles to those who have observed their results in the real world. The same is true of paper revolutions which invariably have to go back to the drawing board once the reign of terror sets in. And if communist-anarchists think that their paper social systems are exempt from this, how do they explain the presence of anarchist "leaders" in high government positions during the Spanish Civil War?

Hasn't everyone been surprised at sometime or other with the behaviour of people they thought they knew well? Perhaps a relative or a good friend does something "totally out of character." We can never completely know even those people closest to us, let alone total strangers. How are we, then, to comprehend and predict the behaviour of complex groups of people? To make assumptions about how people must and will act under a hypothetical social system is idle conjecture. We know from daily experience that men don't act as they "ought" to act or think as they "ought" to think. Why should things be any different after the revolution? Yet we still find an abundance of revolutionaries willing to kill and be killed for a cause which more likely than not, if realized, would bear no recognizable resemblance to what they were fighting for. This reason alone should be sufficient to give these people second thoughts about their methods. But apparently they are too carried away by the violence of their own rhetoric to be bothered with where it will lead them.

There is but one effective way to rid ourselves of the oppressive power of the state. It is not to shoot it to death; it is not to vote it to death; it is not even to persuade it to death. It is rather to starve it to death. Power feeds on its spoils, and dies when its victims refuse to be despoiled. There is much truth in the well-known pacifist slogan, "Wars will cease when people refuse to fight." This slogan can be generalized to say that "government will cease when people refuse to be governed." As Tucker put it, "There is not a tyrant in

the civilized world today who would not do anything in his power to precipitate a bloody revolution rather than see himself confronted by any large fraction of his subjects determined not to obey. An insurrection is easily quelled; but no army is willing or even able to train its guns on inoffensive people who do not even gather in the streets but stay back at home and stand back on their rights."

A particularly effective weapon could be massive tax refusal. If (say) one-fifth of the population of the United States refused to pay their taxes, the government would be impaled on the horns of a dilemma. Should they ignore the problem, it would only get worse—for who is going to willingly contribute to the government's coffers when his neighbours are getting away scotfree? Or should they opt to prosecute, the burden just to feed and guard so many "parasites"—not to mention the loss of revenue—would be so great that the other four-fifths of the population would soon rebel. But in order to succeed, this type of action would require massive numbers. Isolated tax refusal—like isolated draft refusal—is a useless waste of resources. It is like trying to purify the salty ocean by dumping a cup of distilled water into it. The individualist-anarchist would no more advocate such sacrificial offerings than the violent revolutionary would advocate walking into his neighborhood police station and "offing the pig." As he would tell you, "It is not wise warfare to throw your ammunition to the enemy unless you throw it from the cannon's mouth." Tucker agreed. Replying to a critic who felt otherwise he said, "Placed in a situation where, from the choice of one or the other horn of a dilemma, it must follow either that fools will think a man a coward or that wise men will think him a fool, I can conceive of no possible ground for hesitancy in the selection."

There is a tendency among anarchists these days—particularly in the United States—to talk about "alternatives" and "parallel institutions". This is a healthy sign which individualists very much encourage. The best argument one can possibly present against "the system" is to *demonstrate* a better one. Some communist-anarchists (let it be said to their credit) are now trying to do just that. Communal farms, schools, etc. have been sprouting up all over the States. Individualists, of course, welcome these experiments—especially where they fulfill the needs of those involved and contribute to their happiness. But we can't help questioning the over-all futility of such social landscape gardening. The vast majority of these experiments collapse in dismal failure within the first year or two, proving nothing but the difficulty of communal living. And should any isolated communities manage to survive, their success could not be judged as conclusive since it would be said that their principles were applicable only to people well-nigh perfect. They might well be considered as the exceptions which proved the rule. If anarchy is to succeed to any appreciable extent, it has to be brought within the reach of everyone. I'm afraid that tepees in New Mexico don't

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tarians, were in jail for years; even their wives and other family members were imprisoned. Yet, they continued to oppose tyranny wherever they saw it. In deference to what they went through, I don't think I could maintain my self-respect if I were not willing to see this through to the end. Lilburne and Overton literally helped to establish the right I am fighting for—the right to refuse to bear witness against one's self. If they were uncompromising, then I can be.

Vol: What sort of psychological pressures have you been under and what made you finally decide to resist?

CW: For the last year or two, I realized that the ultimate outcome of my refusal to deal with the IRS could be jail. I was never happy with this, but it was a real possibility. During this period, my scholarly studies and readings brought into consideration the theory and practice of nonviolent resistance, of non-cooperation. Of course, I had seen the Gandhi movie.

The War Resisters League in New York and another anarcho-pacifist group had documented cases of their people refusing to cooperate with federal judges and being jailed for contempt. I did as much research as I could about what might happen. Finally, I realized that if I let the threat of jail make me cooperate then I would lose my own self-respect. As Gandhi put it, they can have my body, but not my obedience. If, in fact, the government depends on our cooperation, if they need the sanction of their victims, then I felt a personal obligation to experiment with truth and see what would happen if I refused to cooperate with them.

Vol: What are the "legal" and "natural law" issues involved?

CW: The issues are interesting. The government denies my right to raise the 5th amendment plea at this stage of the proceeding. They say I should have raised it at the June 6th hearing before the judge issued his enforcement order. Once the judge issues his order to comply, that is it.

On the other hand, under the natural law of self-ownership, it never should be too late to raise such an issue. The right to refuse to bear witness against one's self was established long before the 5th amendment was ratified and will exist long after the U.S. Constitution is gone. I am not basing my plea on the 5th amendment, however, because as an anarchist I do not accept the Constitution. Furthermore, the implication would be that if the 5th amendment were deleted or changed, I would no longer have the right not to bear witness against myself.

Another issue concerns the burden of proof. According to the "show cause order", the court assumes I am guilty (based on the IRS's contention that I have to provide them with a valid reason for not filing) until proven innocent. My intention in court is to offer them a statement of conscientious objection to taxation and an explanation as to why it is never too late to refuse to bear witness against one's self. I have no intention of cooperating.

Vol: Will you have a lawyer represent you in court?

CW: No, for two simple reasons. First, no lawyer could ever represent my moral objections to taxation in the same way that I would. Secondly, I think the judge will be much more careful of riding over my rights if I am not represented by counsel. But the main point is that I do not intend to defend myself "legally", according to the system.

Vol: Why would you even show up in court? After all, that is voluntary on your part, isn't it?

CW: Yes, and I realize that I didn't have to cooperate by appearing before the IRS on June 20th. But I decided to go because they would have sent the federal marshalls after me. My family has been through a lot of emotional strain and I wanted to spare them the sight of marshalls coming out to our home or place of business and dragging me off. This way, when they drag me off, it will be in the courtroom. My intention, if remanded to jail by the judge, is to immobilize myself and make them carry me out of court.

Vol: Won't that make matters worse for you?

CW: It might, but I see this as an important existential verification of the anarchist insight into the nature of the state. The state must initiate aggression or it must cease being a state. Despite the threats I have been under, when the federal marshalls finally lay hold of me, it will be the first time my own personal boundaries will have been violated. Their dragging me out of court will be proof (to me, the judges and everyone else there) that government employees must, sooner or later, initiate coercion. Although there are risks involved, I like to think of Thoreau's essay *On Civil Disobedience*. He says those who have experienced injustice in their own person are more likely to combat it more eloquently and effectively than those who have not.

Vol: Don't you have more to lose than to gain by going to jail?

CW: There is never a good time to stand up for one's rights and principles, but I will probably never have better circumstances than now. Right now, I do not know for sure that I will end up in jail. The lawyers say it is most likely and, of course, there are the stories of war tax resisters who have been jailed in like circumstances. If I started cooperating with the government, I would never really know just how far they would carry this or how far I could resist. If I resist and don't end up in jail, I will still have stood up for my principles of non-cooperation. If I resist and do end up in jail, then I will be prepared for it. I joked with my friend the other night that I was preparing for this like a general for war and there is a lot of truth in this observation.

Vol: If you go to jail, what do you intend to do?

CW: Most of the war tax resisters jailed for contempt have engaged in hunger strikes and have immobilized themselves for their captors. This is the only way that I see to protest the judge's unjust confinement of my body. The second part of my experiment with truth, if I am jailed, is to see how effective these strategies of non-cooperation actually are in such a situation.

Vol: What has been your family's reaction to all of this and how did you prepare them for it?

CW: My family are not libertarians and none of them are anarchists, but they understand my ideas. They are not surprised, but they are very upset that I might go to jail. I have two grandmothers and a grandfather, all in their 80's and there was concern about what this would do to them. I don't feel any guilt about the possibility of jail or about what it might do to other people. Their reactions are subjective and there is nothing I can do to change them. All I can do is stand up for the truth as I see it and accept the consequences. I am not out to purposefully hurt my family and I can only hope that, although they do not agree with my principles, they respect me for honoring them.

A copy of Carl's statement to the IRS may be obtained by mailing a stamped, self-addressed envelope to The Voluntaryists. Two manuscripts providing more information on Carl's outlooks are available: "Watner's Concept of VOLUNTARYIST RESISTANCE" and "Watner's Concept of THE VOLUNTARYIST SPIRIT". \$3.00 each postpaid or \$5.00 for the pair. Make checks payable to and mail to The Voluntaryists.

This issue has been delayed to provide the above interview.

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satisfy that criterion.

The parallel institution I would like to see tried would be something called a "mutual bank". The beauty of this proposal is that it can be carried out under the very nose of the man-in-the-street. I would hope that in this way people could see for themselves the practical advantages it has to offer *them*, and ultimately accept the plan as their own. I'm well aware that this scheme, like any other, is subject to the law of metamorphosis referred to earlier. But should this plan fail, unlike those plans which require bloody revolutions for their implementation, the only thing hurt would be the pride of a few hair-brained individualists.

Statement of Purpose

The Voluntaryists are libertarians who have organized to promote non-political strategies to achieve a free society. We reject electoral politics, in theory and in practice, as incompatible with libertarian principles. Governments must cloak their actions in an aura of moral legitimacy in order to sustain their power, and political methods invariably strengthen that legitimacy. Voluntaryists seek instead to delegitimize the State through education, and we advocate withdrawal of the co-operation and tacit consent on which State power ultimately depends.

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Part II of George Smith's article on Gandhism has been unavoidably delayed.