A N S A S became the first state to enact municipal woman-suffrage laws, but that token victory came only after a twenty-year struggle. Kansas was one of the first states after the Civil War to put both the woman- and the black-suffrage questions to its voters, but its white males in 1867 voted down black suffrage, 19,421 to 10,483, and rejected woman suffrage, 19,857 to 9,070. Though women had contributed importantly in the struggle that brought constitutional amendments that freed the blacks from slavery and enfranchised the black male, the “weaker sex” could expect no such recognition of their own claims to citizenship.1

The 1887 enactment of a municipal woman-suffrage law in Kansas again brought wide attention to the “great experimental ground of the nation,” as the New York Times called Kansas. In that year Argonia became the first town in the United States to have a woman mayor. Oskaloosa, the county-seat town near Valley Falls, also received a moment of notoriety in 1887 as news wires spread the story that it had become the first city in the United States to be entirely governed by women; it reelected the female slate in 1889. Cottonwood Falls and Rossville also elected completely female governments in 1889.2

Out of 1,406 women registered in Topeka in 1887, 1,200 went to the polls; three-fourths of them voted Republican. They almost held the balance of power, noted a contemporary observer, who reported that a wave of relief swept the drawing rooms of the city when the vote of the “degraded and ignorant class of women” did not “overbalance the vote of the respectable ladies,” as had been predicted by opponents of woman suffrage.
Lighter moments, of course, occurred. In Wichita one-third of the 600 registered female voters listed their occupation as “Sports.” The Sports drove en masse to the polls, where a throng of 5,000 greeted them with cheers and insults. The Sports voted solidly for the labor ticket, defeating the Republican candidate for mayor. In Leavenworth’s 1887 election, women arrayed themselves against their own sex to the delight of the men and the Democratic party. A reported slur on the moral character of Leavenworth’s “exclusive social set” by the WCTU organizer from Indiana provoked the ladies of the privileged class to reprisal. On election day the ladies “pressed into service carriages of all kinds, and ordered them driven hither and thither to pick up all classes of women, irrespective of social standing, to cast their ballots for their particular candidates.” The retainer vote got the ladies their revenge, and the WCTU-Republican candidate was defeated.  

In 1889 a large turnout of women voters benefited the Democratic candidates in mayoralty races in Topeka, Leavenworth, and Atchison. Susan B. Anthony campaigned for her Republican brother in the Leavenworth race, but to no avail—the “notorious” Col. D. R. Anthony, editor of the *Leavenworth Times*, suffered defeat by seven hundred votes. One of the valuable lessons that the women seemed to have learned in two years was to get out the vote by providing transportation for registration and polling.

Woman suffrage presented a dilemma to *Lucifer* and to its libertarian readership, because of their no-government bias. On the one hand, Harman and his paper strongly advocated women’s rights, including all those enjoyed by man, yet according to its anarchistic analysis, voting was merely the affirmation of the state’s coerciveness. *Lucifer* argued that so long as a woman has not the right to the control of her own person, “it is useless to give woman the ballot, to talk about social emancipation, to claim intellectual equality.” As a representative sex radical, Harman’s view of the entire Woman Question sheds light on the subsidiary question of voting.

The Woman Question encompassed the whole problem of sexual relations—coital, social, personal, and political. Like his fore-runner Stephen Pearl Andrews and his contemporaries Ezra and Angela Heywood, Harman sought a natural law of sexual relations to replace the prevailing discriminatory standards of sexual moral-
ity—one based on truth ("science") rather than on myth. The most debasing aspect of conventional morality, he felt, was not the differential of license between the sexes, but its cause, the differential of power.

Like conventional writers, he viewed motherhood as the highest function of woman. This office, he argued, required a well-developed, vigorous sexual nature. But how, he asked, could woman "preserve the purity, the holiness, wholesomeness or healthfulness, of her sex-hood when that sex-hood is not under her control?" The utopian solution would be centralized control of mating guided by some ideal of quality, if only the state could be trusted with this responsibility. However, no state could be wise or responsible enough to do this, and so governments should completely remove their "meddling hands" from the regulation of sex and marriage. As it was, government sanctioned and protected an unjust system of sexual accommodation which obstructed man's destiny of greater freedom and, in Harman's opinion, also arrested man's genetic development.6

Harman voiced a theory of eugenics that was popular with free lovers. Moses Hull, Lois Waisbrooker, the Heywoods—all leaders of the free-love cause after the abdication of Victoria Woodhull—based their "Social Freedom movement" on an anarchistic eugenics. In their 1875 convention in Boston, the first resolution of the free-love votaries asserted that "the most important work to be done now for the present and future generations of humanity is to discover and practice the science of producing the most harmonious children." They agreed, as Ezra Heywood declared, that "since every human being has a clear right to be well-born, the marriage institution is a State Intrusion which destroys love, hinders intelligent reproduction, causes domestic discord, and enervates, corrupts and poisons the sources of life."7

This early eugenics reflected the basic premise of Francis Galton's Hereditary Genius (1869), that one's character and capabilities depended principally upon one's hereditary program and "that the improvement of the natural gifts of future generations of the human race is largely, though indirectly, under our [present] control." Although this brilliant Englishman exerted a wide if often oblique influence upon American thought (in the 1870s the Popular Science Monthly reprinted several of his essays), there
was nothing new in his premise. The taproots of pre-Galtonian free-love eugenics lay in the stirpiculture experiments of John Humphrey Noyes and in the writings of such figures as Stephen Pearl Andrews and Henry C. Wright. A precept of this eugenics, that woman’s superiority derived from her motherhood function, would be developed in more systematic fashion by Lester Frank Ward in the 1880s, but in the meantime this primitive eugenics found wide voice through the popular home medical books of Dr. Edward Bliss Foote, later one of Harman’s most dedicated supporters. Harman himself published the first two periodicals devoted to eugenics in America—a quarterly in the nineties, called *Our New Humanity*, and, as successor to *Lucifer* in 1907, the *American Journal of Eugenics*.  

Not to be confused with the later prescriptive eugenics of the Progressive Era, anarchistic eugenics held that enslaved, male-dominated mothers could only perpetuate a race of slavish humans. This belief depended upon the prevalent notion that a child’s character could be prenatally influenced; a mother’s submission to sexist laws, it was believed, would affect the unborn child. In his justification of the Markland letter, Harman had explained that present laws exploited the difference between the sexual natures of male and female and thus contributed to the birth of deficient children. Harman shared the common belief that the male had a selfish and insatiable sexual appetite, whereas the female was prudently subdued or downright antipathetic toward coitus. This being the case, Harman argued, most instances of sexual intercourse and the consequent conception of offspring could be presumed to be initiated by the male against the will of the female. Children conceived under such conditions of coercion would naturally develop traits of inferiority and malevolence, he believed.

Sex radicals also utilized a theory of “natural selection” in order to justify their idea of free motherhood: a woman should be able to choose freely a father for her child from the best example of manhood available. Partly an application of Darwin’s evolutionary theory, this idea had pre-Darwinian roots in Stephen Pearl Andrews’s feminist thought. The dysgenics that Andrews believed was caused by legal marriage could be remedied, he wrote, by restoring “to outraged woman the right to choose freely, at all
times, the father of her own child. Till that be granted, all the rest of your ‘Woman’s Rights’ are not worth contending for.’”

This idea surfaced in the 1890s in respectable as well as radical quarters. “In order to cleanse society of the unfit we must give to woman the power of selection in marriage,” said Alfred Russel Wallace, the naturalist who discovered natural selection independently of Darwin. But Wallace added important qualifications to female selection—he had in mind educated, trained, and self-supporting women of a future reformed society. Women in such a society would not marry, as they now did, for reasons of a “bare living or a comfortable home.” With rewarding alternatives to marriage available, woman, the less passionate sex, would be less inclined to marry, and those who did could take their pick from numerous eager suitors. “I think we may trust the cultivated minds and pure instincts of the women of the future in the choice of partners,” Wallace said, for “the enlightened woman would know that she was committing an offence against society, against humanity at large, in choosing a husband who might be the means of transmitting disease of body or mind to his offspring.”

Wallace took pains to distinguish his ideas from those of Grant Allen, the English biologist and popular writer who, despite his socialism, came very close to the Lucifer radicals on the subject of free marriage. Wallace thought that Allen’s idea of replacing legal marriage with libertarian contracts for the purpose of breeding a better crop of children would be disastrous. It would not only impair the nurture function of the family, but, he believed, it would also favor “the increase of pure sensualism, the most degrading and most fatal of all the qualities that tend to the deterioration of races and the downfall of nations.” The Lucifer radicals, of course, associated “pure sensualism” with legal marriage; their ideals of natural selection and free motherhood later became reality when Lillian Harman bore her daughter in bachelor motherhood, having made a contract with the father before birth for his share of support for the child.

Although the work of the German zoologist August Weismann in the eighties and nineties helped to demonstrate that acquired characteristics could not be transmitted, the belief in inheritance of acquired characteristics remained in force, and it controlled hereditary thought into the twentieth century. And for a still
longer period the question of whether the character of the child could be affected through prenatal influence remained an open one to scientists, doctors, and laymen. In a letter to the editor of *Nature* in 1893 Alfred Russel Wallace wrote that while most current opinion rejected the idea that prenatal influences could physically mark the child, he was "not aware that the question of purely mental effects arising from prenatal mental influences on the mother has been separately studied. Our ignorance of the causes, or at least of the whole series of causes, that determine individual character is so great, that such transmission of mental influences will hardly be held to be impossible or even very improbable. It is one of those questions on which our minds should remain open."

In volume 5 (1906) of his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Havelock Ellis traced the historical genesis of prenatal beliefs, reviewed current professional opinion, and cited reputable reports of apparent prenatal influence. He cautiously concluded that while definite effects of maternal influence upon the fetus had not been proven, neither had they been positively disproven. Later on he spoke with more assurance: "The mother is the child's supreme parent," he wrote in volume 6 (1910), "and during the period from conception to birth the hygiene of the future man can only be affected by influences which work through her."¹¹

It was just this stress on characterological and psychic determinants that prompted the interest of the late Victorians in heredity. The first significant call by a "regular" physician for birth-control and sex education was, as well, a call to enlighten the masses about "the wonderful and almost unlimited extent of prenatal influence." If parents took advantage of the knowledge of this influence, wrote Sydney Barrington Elliott in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, they "would have only those who were well born, free from all contamination, capable of almost unlimited attainment; and if those not fit to have children, whether from disease, vice or imperfection, were informed as to how to prevent conception in a proper, hygienic way, then all classes of unfortunates would soon be no more."¹²

In the nineties, Benjamin O. Flower's *Arena* did much to publicize heredity and prenatal influence as social issues. In muted
form, this journal brought to a wide readership some of the reform notions of the free lovers, such as sexual autonomy, radical sex education, and free expression, but it became, ironically, an early platform for state eugenicists, who would later become an important component of Progressive reform. As opposed to the anarchistic eugenics of the Lucifereans, this Progressive eugenics of the first decade of the twentieth century stressed positive governmental measures to rid society of the insane, criminal, and pauper elements. These reformers worked intensively for permanent custodial care for the feeble-minded and for sterilization of defectives. At the same time a significant portion of these eugenicists urged the "fit" to reproduce as much as possible in order that the "unfit" might be eliminated.  

Although Francis Galton served as the patriarch of the Progressive eugenic movement, the document that called Americans to action was the 1875 study of the Juke family, written by Richard Dugdale, a New York merchant whose avocation was the study of social problems. On a tour of jails for the Prison Association of New York, Dugdale found six members of one family in the same jail, and he decided to look further into their backgrounds. The study that emerged, *The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease, and Heredity*, revealed that of 709 Jukes and those married to Jukes in seven generations, only 22 had acquired property, 128 had been prostitutes, 91 had been of illegitimate parentage, 67 had had syphilis, 76 had been convicted of crime, and over 200 had received some sort of public relief. The total cost in "social damage" he estimated at $1,308,000, which included imprisonment, relief, medical care, and other items.

As present-day writers have pointed out, many of Dugdale's sources were faulty by today's standards, and he had no data on Jukes who had escaped the wretched ancestral environment. But the apparently scientific approach of the study and the dramatic results it derived from a simple genealogical methodology made the study appealing. Dugdale's own conclusion to part 1 suggested the uses to which the study would be put. Recounting the amount of social damage caused by the lone family in a relatively short span (without reckoning, he wrote, either the cash paid for whiskey or the crime, pauperism, and mental and physical disease caused to future generations), "it is getting to be time to ask, do
our courts, our laws, our alms-houses and our jails deal with the question presented?"  

Dugdale did not, however, see heredity as the exclusive cause for the ills he chronicled; he carefully suggested that both hereditary and environmental elements worked upon the Jukes, and he labeled his important conclusions as tentative. His readers were not so careful. They misinterpreted the study as proof that crime, pauperism, and degeneracy were primarily problems of heredity. Other researchers turned out more studies of the ancestral type, proclaiming to corroborate the hereditarianism that, in fact, Dugdale did not assert. Those who read a eugenic "solution" into the study used it first to create a myth of the feeble-minded and then as a weapon to eradicate that element. They saw prescriptive eugenics as an easy, economical, and encompassing social solution that could be effected with little threat to worthy elements of society, which, of course, contained the eugenicists. Put in other terms, this eugenics provided an apparent method for a conservative elite to adjust social problems without adjusting social conditions. From John Humphrey Noyes to William Shockley, this aspect of American eugenics has been a disturbing specter, which is profoundly at odds with democratic and equalitarian thought.

In the late eighties, anarchistic eugenics came to play a central role in the reform scheme of *Lucifer's* editor. Commenting favorably upon the eugenic consciousness displayed by the International Woman's Council meeting in Washington in 1888, he observed that women were slowly coming to see that "the only rational hope for human improvement, and for the abolition of vice, crime, pauperism and misery, is through better conditions of heredity and maternity and that superlatively the most important of these conditions is the self-ownership of woman." Harman now affirmed that the right to be born well, free from avoidable physical or mental handicaps, was the most basic and transcendent of all rights. In the fall of 1889 he published a manifesto, "*Lucifer's Object,"* that called specifically for a revolution in the laws and customs of sex relations. Indeed *Lucifer's* platform for the past three years—basic sex education, contraception, eugenics, sexual autonomy (free love, free marriage, free divorce, free motherhood)
—did have radical implications for American culture and politics. Long before Rosa Luxemburg and Margaret Sanger would do so, Harman saw the political potential of sex as he urged that birth control be used as a weapon against capitalism:

It matters little to the Parasitic Classes . . . what reforms are agitated so long as the supply of mental and moral imbeciles is not cut off! And just so long as our present laws and customs in regard to Woman’s Rights in the Sex-Relation remain in tact, just so long will the vast majority of children be born mental and moral imbeciles—fit for nothing else than to be ruled and exploited by the cunning, the capable, the narrowly selfish few.¹⁶

Readers of Lucifer on both ends of the spectrum dissented from Harman’s special hereditarian views. The anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre and the sisters Lizzie M. Holmes and Lillie D. White insisted that reformers should focus on economic and social conditions rather than blame the victims of those conditions for some unclear hereditary deficiencies. Who really knew anything about how heredity or prenatal influence affected socialization? they asked; in practice, nothing conclusive enough to base a whole reform scheme upon had been discovered. White ridiculed Harman’s notions that an ill-shaped head revealed a hereditary defect that would be reflected in crime or pauperism. “I have a good-shaped head and was well born [in Harman’s terms],” she wrote, yet, “I feel myself very closely related to this hungry fellow in spite of his bad-shaped head, for I am nearly in the same fix”—she had no property, no land, and not “a week’s security this side of starvation or his condition,” she declared. She also questioned the bedrock assumptions of Harman’s feminist eugenics:

But what is the process, what the conditions necessary for the well-born child? Mr. Harman talks of free motherhood, free women, free choice of fathers, and repeatedly quotes Ingersoll, “Woman the owner, the mistress of herself”—all of which I endorse, for I do not believe in the ownership or tyranny of any person over another—but is it “the solution of the whole question”? Is woman herself so powerful, so good, so scientific, so wise that she needs only to be let alone to produce perfect beings who cannot be made victims of the conspiracies of the ruling classes?¹⁷

On the other side of these critics and of Harman also, Joseph
Rodes Buchanan espoused race culture through widespread castration. Citing the Jukes study and believing in such concepts as "hereditary burglars," this forerunner of Progressive eugenics insisted that "castration is the supreme remedy for a diseased and bestialized race." Applied to criminals to begin with, it would become an adjunct to his "New Education" theories of practical and industrial training which made him well known to Arena readers and to educators. "But even with the New Education the surgeon's knife would be its most powerful aid and carry it still higher," he asserted. "What would our vineyards and orchards be without pruning?" He believed that the higher faculties of the mind—reverence, love, justice—were antagonized and, in weaker persons, overcome by the lower faculties of amativeness or animality. Those who exhibited the lower tendencies—such as rapists, other criminals, and paupers—could have the higher faculties enforced by disarming the lower faculties through castration.

As acting editor of Lucifer, Lillian Harman printed Buchanan's contribution but disclaimed it, reminding readers that suppression and mutilation were as ineffectual in literature as they were in the treatment of the criminal classes. She could not resist chiding Buchanan for his simple-minded correlation of crime with unfitness. After all, she, William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., and others were the offspring of apparently "habitual" criminals. George E. MacDonald of the Truth Seeker wrote a brilliant rejoinder, which demolished in most conceivable ways Buchanan's frightening propositions. Speaking for the majority of Lucifereans, he concluded that "congenital criminals have not as much to do with retarding the improvement of the race as that more influential class of offenders against mankind who pass laws and establish customs, and prescribe penalties for their violation."18

For one who saw progress in terms of individual amelioration rather than in governmental solutions, Harman's emerging position was consistent. Although he later tempered his extreme hereditarianism with the belief that early environment also affected the child, his eugenics revealed a deepening cynicism toward political solutions of social problems, a departure for the former abolitionist, radical Republican, Liberal Leaguer, and anarchist. Believing that progress could be determined by the advancement in individual freedom, Harman had at first been intensely at-
tracted by the myth of individual freedom in the United States. Yet the American experiment, for all the rhetoric and good intentions of Paine or Jefferson, had to him obviously failed: he faced persecution, he believed, because he tried to be free and tried to help others to be free. If the United States represented, in terms of freedom, the highest attainment of organized government on earth, then surely politics could not be depended upon to bring man to his destiny of freedom. At least such a speculation seems to be a likely way to explain how Harman arrived at his eugenic "solution" for reforming society.

Concerned radically with individual choice, theories of free love and free motherhood naturally raised the issue of contraception. For feminist and eugenic reasons, sex radicals tried to make existing knowledge about birth control available to the public. Emma Goldman wrote that "neither my birth-control discussion nor Margaret Sanger's efforts were pioneer work. The trail was blazed in the United States by the grand old fighter Moses Harman, his daughter Lillian, Ezra Heywood, Dr. Foote and his son, E. C. Walker, and their collaborators of a previous generation."

The latest argument for contraception (and eugenics) in the eighties, E. B. Foote, Jr.'s, Radical Remedy in Social Science (1886), offered no improvement in technique over Robert Dale Owen's Moral Physiology (1830) or Charles Knowlton's Fruits of Philosophy (1832). Most of Lucifer's readers knew that Owen's crude prescriptions could be fairly effective—withdrawal of the penis from the vagina before emission, use of a skin sheath for the penis, and the use of a vaginal sponge. Later editions of the work, however, omitted the last two methods. In a more thorough approach than Owen's, Knowlton recommended douching with various solutions as the best method of contraception. The contributions of Owen and Knowlton did not represent new scientific advances in the field but only publicized certain traditional methods. Recent scholarship suggests that these methods, particularly vaginal douching as described by Knowlton, were increasingly used in the nineteenth century among the middle and upper social strata. The thousands of "immoral" rubber articles confiscated by Anthony Comstock between 1873 and 1888 denoted the significant demand for contraceptives.

Prevailing ignorance about contraception, however, com-
pounded by Comstock statutes outlawing birth-control items and ideas, and Comstockish linguistics which regarded, for instance, a condom as an instrument of abortion, forced contraception to take on the aspects of an occult science. Quack remedies and ideas thrived. Poignant cries for relief from the despotism of nature prompted experiments based on little more than blind hope. One mother of five sounded just the right chord of desperation and propaganda for the *Lucifer* radicals. Overworked and married to a farmer who would not control his "lusts," she became frantic when she learned that she was pregnant again. She ran off into the countryside and by dangerous means aborted the fetus. "I know I am dreadful wicked," she wrote, "but I am sure to be in the condition again from which I risked my life to get free, and I cannot stand it... How long will we poor wives have to bear so much? Is there no redress for us? Do you know any appliance that will prevent conception? I have heard of such things. If there is anything reliable you will save my life by telling me of it."20

Even mighty vice-fighters were directly involved in birth-control quackery. The "Colgate prescription case"—an anti-Comstock coup of the type that had supremely delighted D. M. Bennett—featured the famous soap magnate and president of the Society for Suppression of Vice, Samuel Colgate, as a promoter of contraceptives. Colgate's company, which was the agent for a product of the Cheeseborough Manufacturing Co.—Vaseline—began a promotion campaign for the petroleum jelly in 1878. In a pamphlet extolling the many uses of the product, one doctor's testimonial supplied the (erroneous) information "that Vaseline, charged with four or five grains of salicylic acid," made a satisfactory contraceptive agent. D. M. Bennett's *Truth Seeker* and *Dr. Foote's Health Monthly* ventilated the faux pas and energetically set about to undo the president of the Vice Society. The evidence for Colgate's promotion of contraceptives was even presented to President Hayes by Robert Ingersoll. Hasty withdrawal of the pamphlet and a plea of ignorance of its content cleared the blot on Colgate and the Vice Society, however.21

Another canard—which made the rounds and which *Lucifer*, with its marketplace-of-ideas approach toward discovering truth, reprinted—was something called the "Clough Circular." In a variation upon theories that electricity was the "vital force" and
must therefore play a part in genesis, Clough asserted that conception could not occur unless the two sexes "connected in at least two places, thus allowing the electric current to make a complete circuit through the spinal column properly." This explained why people, birds, and animals sought to connect the top parts of their bodies as well as their reproductive organs in the act of intercourse. The lesson was simple: "If you do not want children keep your head away from your companion in sexual intercourse." Clough put forth his "Circular" expressly to "lengthen" sexual pleasure by allowing parents to control contraception.

Although Lucifer's national constituency barely noticed the "Circular," it sent shock waves through the Valley Falls area, which had only recently been jolted by "awful letters." The community was upset, it appeared, not because the information was erroneous—who would know for several months?—or outrageous to logic, but because it promised coition without toll. The crowning blow to the vigilant adult community was the sight of the Lucifer article in "the hands of the school children of Valley Falls." 22

Besides eugenics, autonomy, and birth control, the Woman Question among the Lucifereans involved a particular analysis of woman's subjugation. Harman pointed out that the increasingly influential class analysis of social problems should be extended to include sex: woman should be viewed as an oppressed class much as the miner or factory worker. Of course, compared to men, women faced a physical handicap because they had to bear the burden of maternity, but such natural differences had been falsely extended to include a class denial (1) of a voice in making laws that governed her, (2) of the right to serve as judge or juror, (3) of the right to adopt rational dress, and (4) of the right to control "her own person, her sex-hood, her maternity."

In emphasizing the importance of the last item, Harman amended Robert Ingersoll's statement that woman merited all rights claimed by man, plus the additional right to be protected. Alert to the subtleties of exploitation, Harman suggested that a more just statement would be: "Woman is entitled to all the rights accorded to man, including the right to protect herself against invasion by her so-called protectors." The parallels among chattel slavery, capitalist "wage slavery," and sex slavery were too obvious to Harman to be overlooked. The former abolitionist
saw that the ignorance of the oppressed and the perversion of their natural aspirations in the interests of the master class were common to all of these relationships. Thus he asserted that “the most formidable difficulty lies in the apathy of woman herself. Besotted by countless generations of willing or enforced submission to the will of man[,] her slightest ambition is that she may have a good lord and master in the sex-relation. Man-made laws and customs, based upon and buttressed up by ‘divine’ laws, have made the sex-hood of woman the property of man.” Women themselves would have to play the central role in obtaining their own freedom; to do less—to allow men to assume the role of “liberator”—would only further the myth of woman’s subservience to man; to be truly free, woman must free herself.

St. Paul’s admonition to wives to “submit yourselves unto your own husbands” (Ephesians 5:22–24) not only illustrated woman’s inferior place in Christian theology, but more importantly, it gave holy sanction to woman’s subordination. Since marriage appeared to most women as preeminently a sacrament, the theological authority controlled to an extreme degree the other aspects of her life. Reiterating an earlier stand, Harman declared that as long as church teachings effectively controlled woman’s moral education, just so long would woman refuse to protect herself and her children from the tyranny of her legal husband-master—whom she had taken forever for better or for worse. In the view of most Lucifer radicals, the church served as a prime enforcer and promotor of the sexual status quo, and thus it existed, together with the state, as a main agent of woman’s enslavement. The right of woman to control her own person, Harman pointed out, was absolutely incompatible with the Christian view of wifely obedience.23

Harman excelled at pointing out subtle disabilities that men inflicted upon women. The trailing skirt, required dress for women, he termed a badge of immaturity. Men had made it a criminal offense for women to don the garments of maturity—short skirts or trouser-type clothing. Long dresses were a sort of swaddling clothes that played upon man’s “protector” image of himself. Women’s cumbersome dress, moreover, kept her limbs from vigorous exercise and thus perpetuated her weakness. “Man wants woman to be a timid, clinging, trustful, grateful creature.
He wants her to be the vine and he the oak that lifts her into sunshine and prosperity. Hence the most determined opposition to dress reform comes from men." Industry took advantage of this image of weakness in order to justify discrimination in jobs and wages. In practically every case, he pointed out, women received less wages than men for equal work. Again, psychological exploitation accompanied economic: those in positions of authority and those with particularly responsible jobs nearly always seemed to be the same self-perpetuating class—men.

The essential factor in the gross and subtle exploitation of women, the keystone of the whole structure of enslavement, in fact, was conventional marriage. In Harman's analysis, man had very cannily manipulated the unique child-bearing function of woman into a self-serving, exploitative relationship—marriage—"the most pitiable, most degrading of all dependencies." Man's law recognized no alternative to marriage for sex relations or childbirth. To be born outside the existent structure was to be, in fact, illegitimate. This seemed a particularly perverse manipulation of what Harman believed to be "the greatest want of woman . . . her greatest joy," that of maternity.24

The editor of *Lucifer* sought to heed his own doctrine that woman's liberation must be primarily her own doing. It was only through a series of events in 1889 that he resolved the disparity between his sex and his cause and found a viable place in the movement.

The columns of *Lucifer* had for some months been filled with a discussion of how often and under what conditions a man and woman should indulge in coitus. Alfred Cridge, a reform journalist from the San Francisco area, had begun the debate by attacking the idea of sexual asceticism, particularly the doctrine called Alphaism, which justified sexual intercourse only for the purpose of propagating children. Very quickly he drew the fire of several female writers in a debate which divided approximately along sexual lines, the women arguing the merits of continence and of exclusive sexual relations, while the men argued for indulgence and "varietism" of relations. Observing that he could publish only a portion of the letters that *Lucifer* received, Harman announced a policy "giv[ing] precedence to our lady contributors, compelling
those of masculine persuasion to take back seats until the sisters
and mothers could be heard."

"The sex question," he explained, "is pre-eminently woman's
question," since she is the bearer of the natural result and burden
of intercourse, children. She should be the final arbiter, then, on
the questions of sex relations. So saying, Harman devised his
place in the movement: His \textit{Lucifer} would not only be a medium
for women's liberation, it would be a medium that gave priority
to women contributors.

As the editor conscientiously attempted to rid himself of what
one day would be termed "male chauvinism," he became increas­
ingly aware of the anomaly of \textit{Lucifer}'s being edited by a lone
male. Moreover, since Lillian and Edwin Walker had left \textit{Lucifer}
to begin their own \textit{Fair Play} in 1888, the heavy workload
prompted Harman to look for a coeditor, preferably female. Har­
man sent a circular letter to friends, asking advice on the matter
of a new editor and seeking names of likely candidates. He also
sought suggestions about the future direction of \textit{Lucifer}.

Of the responses published in \textit{Lucifer}, most favored the idea of
a woman editor. Juliet Severance of Milwaukee—a prominent
physician, sex reformer, and radical feminist who was well known
to \textit{Lucifer} readers—received most mention as candidate for co­
editor. Lucinda Chandler, who was a Christian socialist and
reform author, Lois Waisbrooker, Celia B. Whitehead, and Elmina
Slenker were also mentioned. Of some sixteen letters of advice about the matter printed in \textit{Lucifer}, five were from women. Three of them favored a woman
coeditor, and one, Celia B. Whitehead, perhaps out of modesty,
opposed. Of the eleven male responses published, five opposed and
five favored the idea. W. G. Markland, sender of the "Markland
letter" three years earlier, most strongly favored a woman co­
editor, specifically Lois Waisbrooker. "I think the appeal and
arguments [of \textit{Lucifer}] should be largely directed to the common
people," he wrote. "Eminent scholarship is too frigid, selfish,
unemotional. . . . There is a contagious disease among reform
papers—'Respectability.' \textit{Lucifer} has no symptoms yet, therefore
I love it. Don't call a 'respectable' woman to your aid."

On the other hand, the advice of Edward W. Chamberlain, the
New York free-thought lawyer who had successfully defended
Elmina Slenker in her recent obscenity trial, provided the most extreme opposing view. Other negative replies had been on the order of "paddle your own canoe," with no blatant antiwoman attitudes apparent. Chamberlain, however, advised: "By No Means. You can get all the earnest women you want without admitting to association as editors. Do you hold the reins yourself. . . . The trouble is that many of these earnest women lack tact and management and policy and that kind of discretion which is needful to have." He suggested that *Lucifer* continue merely to print their articles.\(^{27}\)

In early January 1890, Harman announced that current financial difficulties had necessitated postponement of the contemplated changes in *Lucifer*. Women would eventually edit *Lucifer*—Lois Waisbrooker, Lillie D. White, and Lillian Harman—but not until Harman's imprisonments.

In upholding the cause of women's liberation, the editor of *Lucifer* confronted other distinct problems. If he supported women in all their efforts for rights, particularly those of voting and office holding, then as an anarchist he would be working for goals that theoretically he considered irrelevant. He believed that ballots for women would not solve their fundamental problems, yet in the case of woman suffrage, he resolved his logical difficulty by arguing that females should enjoy the same chances that males did to work with existing governing tools, however inferior. He did not require liberated women to be anarchists, and in fact he professed respect for woman suffragists, particularly such feminists as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, even though he regarded their analyses as superficial. To him the injustice of the legal system was particularly glaring, perhaps because he suffered personally at its hands as he sought to challenge the laws. A man may have a jury of his peers, but a woman was forced to accept a jury of men; "the judge who passes sentence upon a woman culprit is always a man!" Neither ballots nor bullets, he sloganized, should be denied woman in her struggle for self-protection.\(^{28}\)

But when the problem appeared in practical, specific terms Harman had an interesting response. In 1889, when the women of Valley Falls put up an all-female slate for municipal offices, Harman explained why he did not support the women's ticket.
The votes of women as demonstrated in Kansas, he argued, meant votes for prohibition and for increased power to the Church element. The WCTU, which Harman early criticized in the Valley Falls Liberal, appeared to him to be a particularly insidious organization. The Victorian female, as a repository of moral and Christian virtues, was nothing if not dangerous with the vote: "When we remember the well-known power of the clergy over the average woman, especially over the women who have enrolled themselves under the banner of the 'Woman's Christian Temperance Union,' we may well tremble for the immediate results of putting civil and political power in the hands of women."

The already potent force of the clergy in American politics would be strengthened to overwhelming proportions with the aid of women's votes, Harman felt. On a strictly local level, Harman noted that part of the platform of the women's ticket included a promise to "clean out" a local pastime club and then do the same to Lucifer. However, the women lost the election.29

Lucifer's editor chose not to dwell upon the problem of anti-Lucifer woman-suffragists. Harman's own opposition to voting, in fact, only dated from the anarchistic influence of Edwin Walker, who served as assistant editor of Lucifer from 1883 to 1887. As Harman and Walker became estranged in 1887, Harman became increasingly influenced by pre-Populist reform schemes which were attracting interest throughout the Midwest. Usually socialistic in some degree and advocating monetary reform and direct democracy in the interest of the farmer and the workingman, the groups went under the aegis of older organizations such as the Greenback party, or they formed new organizations such as the Union Labor party.

The lectures of Moses Hull—a veteran Greenbacker, influential spiritualist, and one-time crusading free lover—seemed to sway Harman on the voting issue at this time. Before his Greenback days, Hull had aided in the formation of the Equal Rights party of Victoria Woodhull and Stephen Pearl Andrews, which, in 1872, ran Woodhull as the first woman candidate for president. Hull placed the name of Frederick Douglass, the black abolitionist, in nomination for the party's vice-presidential slot. "We have had the oppressed sex represented by Woodhull, we must have the oppressed race represented by Douglass," announced Hull at the
time. In the 1880s Hull had moved to the Midwest, where he continued to lecture on political reform and spiritualist topics and to publish his perennial journal, then called *New Thought*. He lived in Iowa for most of the eighties, and during that period he worked in the campaigns of the well-known Greenback Democrat congressman James B. Weaver. In the fall of 1887 Hull lectured in Kansas at enthusiastic rallies of the Union Labor party. After one such meeting in Wellington, he came to Valley Falls for a series of lectures.30

Hull preached a message of direct democracy as a cure for the ills of a corrupted society. According to his analysis, America had never been governed democratically; it had been a scantily disguised oligarchy from the outset. He offered several reform proposals, notably the abolition of obstructive political forms such as caucuses, nominating conventions, and law-making bodies. The people, he suggested, should directly propose and vote on issues and laws, with the House serving only as a recommending body. The Senate and all other appointive posts should be abolished, all officers of the government being directly elected. The presidency, not being necessary, should likewise be abolished.

Hull’s programs intrigued *Lucifer’s* editor enough that the reform liberal in him overcame the anarchist. By voting on issues that would eliminate the despotic features of society, Harman reasoned, even the anarchist could support such “ballot-box” reform. He felt that although anarchistic demands for the abolition of governmental compulsion were just, most people would not accede to these demands. Meanwhile one could work through the ballot for the practical goal of eliminating some despotisms.31

Immediately, Walker called his senior editor to task for advocating such patchwork methods of reform. Pointing out that anarchists must direct people to a condition of autonomy rather than follow a majority, he faulted Harman for seeking reforms in law-making instead of advocating repeals of laws. The elimination of formal coercive governments, Walker stressed, would give rise to private noncoercive associations, while the advent of direct democracy would simply mean that the will of an ignorant majority would replace that of the present privileged minority.32

Though he shared Walker’s elitism and had few illusions about the ability of the masses to govern themselves well, Harman never-
theless saw the problem in different terms than Walker did. At this period of his development, Harman was willing to gamble that man had progressed further than Walker believed he had; he could now begin to vote himself to freedom.

The conflict raged in the pages of *Lucifer*. Walker met head-on Harman's arguments that "ballot-boxism" served as a necessary crutch which could only slowly be discarded: "So long as the existing governmental machine is running, all who take a hand in operating it [by voting] are enemies of the 'let-alone' principle . . . voting for repeal is a tacit admission of the right of the majority to decide how much of the citizen's private concerns shall be under the control of said majority."

Walker cited the methods of reform that he thought they had both agreed upon: passive resistance to invasion, abstention from voting, and association for business and other purposes outside the state. The question finally developed of whether Harman had in the past regarded voting as he did now—as "distinctly and emphatically . . . one of the best methods of repeal." This argument on former positions began to have its hollow aspects, particularly since neither party claimed a great deal of respect for dogmatism. After five issues the editors dropped the argument.33

As a demonstration of some classical ironies within anarchism, the debate was of special interest, since it occurred as four of the famous Chicago Seven "anarchists" faced execution. *Lucifer* had devoted much space to the trial and to a critique of the Chicago police and the Chicago legal methods. Both Harman and Walker believed that the Seven were being punished for their unpopular socialist and free-thought ideas. Continued harassment and cruelty on the part of the Chicago police had spawned the protest meeting in Haymarket Square in the first place, and the subsequent case involving the Seven in bombing had been constructed, so it appeared to *Lucifer*, on specious evidence. "Four men were hung . . . for exercising their equal right of free speech . . . The oligarchy can say what it pleases—they do and did counsel lawless violence and their paid retainers have often committed acts of lawless violence, and yet they go unpunished. . . . Freedom of speech is only for the oligarchy and their servants."34

While arguing for the absolute right to advocate such a position, *Lucifer* refused to endorse the violent methods of redress that were
espoused by the Haymarket radicals. Its editors felt that conditions did not justify revolutionary violence, although the action of the Chicago police symbolized to *Lucifer* the increasing level of governmental violence toward citizens. *Lucifer* did not condemn force itself, but rather it defended the right of self-defense as necessary and absolute, especially against the police and other "public servants." But passive resistance, as a program for change, should be used so long as it remained practicable. When the freedom of dissent disappeared, it would then "be time to consider the expediency of meeting force with force."35

Walker and Harman both took pains to distinguish *Lucifer's* anarchism from what they termed the "socialism" of the Chicago Seven. Walker, claiming solidarity with the general goals of the Chicago group in working for "labor's emancipation from ignorance, fear, authority and want," nevertheless could not fully support the ideology of the Chicago radicals because of its acceptance of state socialism. Yet the immediate duty in 1887, he felt, was not to split ideological hairs but to save the Seven from the hands of a wrathful state.36

*Lucifer* criticized the generally biased and slanted press coverage of the Haymarket affair, and it sought to publish the most objective accounts available. One of the best of these contemporary accounts—"Was It a Fair Trial? An Appeal to the Governor of Illinois" by Gen. M. M. Trumbull—appeared serially in *Lucifer*. Trumbull, a man with conventionally impressive credentials, hardly supported violent revolutionary ideology, but he was aghast at the mockery of justice that his close study of the trials revealed.37

In the issue of *Lucifer* memorializing the death of the five Haymarket prisoners, Walker resolved, as best he could, the argument with Harman on methods and voting. In view of the overwhelming catastrophe in Chicago, Walker admitted that he did not have the heart to continue the debate. In such times as this, he reflected, differences should be minimized and a "united phalanx toward the common enemy" should be presented.38

The following spring, Walker and his wife Lillian would launch their own journal, *Fair Play*. The conflict with Harman perhaps hastened such a move.
The Prairie Cauldron

The years 1887 and 1888 were years of drouth and depression in Kansas, and the prevailing unrest encouraged a surge of Populist reform spirit which extended well into the nineties. This same unrest, however, gave rise to fear of extreme solutions, particularly among those in established positions of power, and to the consequent valuing of order over justice. The prospect of social upheaval, however, could be exploited and distorted to the benefit of those who sought no change. Panicky cries of “anarchism!” could help to obscure real problems whose solutions might require radical changes in the makeup of institutions.

In such a charged atmosphere as this, the issue of anarchism and violence raised by the Haymarket affair lived on in Kansas. As the 1888 election approached, antianarchist feelings agitated the eastern portion of the state. A diatribe against the *Lucifer* group constituted the main oration at Memorial Day services that year in Valley Falls. L. H. Gest, a former GAR post commander, launched a predictable list of criticisms against anarchists. Asserting that the “anarchical demon” was a foreign influence that America had no place for, he howled at home-grown *Lucifer*: “Government is wrong, laws are wrong, marriage is wrong, all is wrong [to the anarchists].” The crowd, Harman reported, showered the speaker with applause. The oratory of 4 July 1888 aimed with a particular fury at the anarchist “threat.” At the Valley Falls ceremonies, a prominent Republican lawyer delivered the featured address. Directing his remarks to the young people present, he urged violent handling of all anarchists and other such traitors.

The antianarchist unrest burgeoned into a full-blown panic in the autumn days before the election of 1888. A catalyzing Red scare, involving some reform editors, bomb explosions, and political conspiracy, gave rise to a hysteria which, in *Lucifer’s* view, rivaled that of the Civil War or of the Haymarket “Red scare.” Although anarchism figured in the case only as a broad smear term, what occurred did demonstrate the popular identification of the terms with bombs, confusion, organized labor, conspiracy, and social change. Moreover, real-life anarchists, such as the well-known *Lucifer* editors, were not even involved. “Anarchism” seemed to have been injected into the affair because a prolabor paper named in the conspiracy accusations had once been sympathetic to the Haymarket radicals.
The Winfield (Kans.) Daily Courier, a Republican paper edited by Edwin Greer, published exposés in October charging that the secret and paramilitary National Order of Videttes controlled the Union Labor party, a fresh reform party that was hopeful of its chances in the coming elections. Released simultaneously a few weeks before election to all the Republican papers in the state, the sensational Courier reports implicated, among others, the Vincent brothers, editors of the strongly prolabor American Non-Conformist, which was also published at Winfield. The crusading Vincents—Henry, Leo, and Cuthbert—urged that the Knights of Labor increase their involvement in radical politics and promoted a many-planked “Voice of the Farmer” platform, which was aimed at redistributing the benefits of capitalism from the hands of a corporate minority to those of the farmer and laborer.41

The Videttes of Greer’s exposé were indeed a strange group; even a judiciously written account of their secret society would have raised some suspicions. A lurid account, however, presented in the atmosphere of the nation’s first Red scare could, assuredly, raise irrational fears. Greer’s exposés consisted of presumably authentic documentary materials larded with inflammatory interpretations of the Videttes as a revolutionary, anarchistic, and treasonable organization whose leaders had direct links to the Haymarket “anarchists.”42

According to standard accounts, the National Order of Videttes began at the Union Labor party’s national organization meeting in Cincinnati on 22 February 1887. The party itself, evidence suggests, came about as urban labor attempted to rescue itself after the discredit of the Haymarket affair.43 A party of discontent, it attracted a variety of members ranging from the merely peeved to the militantly radical. Its platforms gave primary emphasis to opposing usury, monopoly, and trusts. Among other reforms, it urged a “national monetary system in the interest of the producer,” free silver, a postal savings bank, and nationalization of communication and transportation systems; in addition it picked up the 1880 Greenback demand for a graduated income tax. The party’s demands substantially foreshadowed the reform-party platforms of the next decade, while displaying the influence of such forerunners as the Prohibition, Greenback, and Antimonopoly parties.44
The short-lived party scored substantial victories, particularly in Chicago and Milwaukee, before internal dissension dissolved it in 1889. On the Kansas level, the 1888 Union Labor platform backed off from a nearly-proposed single-tax platform to advocate a thirteen-point program broadly aimed at helping the working man. It found its chief support among the farmers of Kansas, particularly those in the southern part of the state. Campaign rhetoric of all political parties in that depression year dealt with questions of mortgage, interest, and other monetary reforms.45

Apparently without the knowledge of the party rank and file, from the outset the Videttes programmed and controlled the Union Labor party, both on the national level and in Kansas. The Vidette organization, a combination of national-guard militarism and fraternal hocus-pocus, required members to swear a secret oath of absolute obedience. Organized as a military hierarchy, its ritual and constitution were in code. Only white men of superior intelligence who were not worth over $100,000 and who believed in God could join the Videttes.

The Kansas Videttes met as Brigade No. 34 in March 1888 at Yates Center to map a secret strategy for political victory. It directed thirteen members to infiltrate all other state parties and to work for the nominations of fellow Videttes. If this proved impossible, then the conspirators pledged "to work for the worst stick the party has, and thus weaken the party." In the Union Labor party, on the other hand, strategy called for the nomination of the best man, whether a fellow Vidette or not. At this meeting the Vincent brothers of Winfield, who were deeply involved in Vidette affairs, were chosen as the publishing house for the organization.46

The day before the state convention of the Union Labor party in August, the Kansas Videttes met at the convention site at Wichita and completed the party's platform. They allowed the rank and file to submit planks the next day, but under a Vidette management that protected the platform from substantial change. The Videttes controlled the state Union Labor party, but this did not necessarily make them powerful in state politics. Union Labor had yet to demonstrate a wide appeal.

After Greer's initial exposé the Republican State Central Committee met to consider the charge of conspiracy. From this meeting
came the decision to have all Kansas Republican papers simultaneously feature the exposé. This lent credence to the charge that the Republicans had concocted the whole affair—a charge that, according to *Lucifer*, was widely accepted in the non-Republican state press. Although *Lucifer* reprinted several articles that were critical of the Republicans, it did not become directly involved in the fray.

The second and more comprehensive installment of Greer's revelations appeared on 18 October 1888, connecting the Vidette leadership—chief among them the Vincent clan—directly with the Chicago anarchists and painting a lurid picture of a violent Vidette revolutionary conspiracy. On the same day that this article appeared, a bomb disguised as an express parcel exploded while in the keeping of the express agent at Coffeyville. The agent escaped injury, but the explosion severely wounded his wife and daughter.

The parcel bore the address "L. Louden, Winfield, Kansas," from "P. Jason"—both apparently fictitious names. Accusations flew in all directions: some interpreted it as a deed of anarchist terror; others believed that the bomb had been meant for the Vincents at the *Non-Conformist*. Vidette sources identified P. Jason as C. A. Henrie, a printer for the Vincents who had helped to prepare an edition of the Vidette ritual and who had then given the documents to the Republicans. None of this was ever proved, and the bombing remained an unsolved mystery. *Lucifer* cautiously suggested that the explosion had been planned in order to discredit the Vincents and the whole of the Union Labor party, and it recommended the Vincent's "Dynamite Extra" edition of the *Non-Conformist* to those seeking more information.\(^{47}\)

When several candidates of the People's party won election to the Kansas House in 1890, they mounted, true to their campaign promises, a legislative investigation of the affair.\(^{48}\) The state Union Labor forces had by that time fused with the People's (Populist) party, and the charges lodged by the Populists included one against the Republican State Central Committee for "conspiracy to destroy the property, reputation, and possibly ... people, for political effect." They also charged the Republicans with having rewarded C. A. Henrie for his alleged part in the explosion by securing him a clerkship in the Bureau of Labor. A magnificent
noninvestigation followed, carried out by a joint committee composed of four Populists and one Republican from the House, and two Republicans and one Democrat from the Senate. The “findings” consisted of further magnification of earlier party positions on the affair. The joint report failed even to determine whether a dynamite explosion had actually occurred. Three separate reports were filed by the committee, one for each party.

In the 1888 election, the Republicans won overwhelming victories. Many believed that neither anti-Union Labor sentiment nor a Red scare could account for such a landslide. *Lucifer* speculated that the “party lash” had kept rank and file members from voting for the reform tickets. As evidence of this, Harman reported that in one county precinct where Union Labor had 75 registered voters, one-half either stayed home or voted with the old parties on election day. He speculated that the total Union Labor vote would be only about one-fourth of the 100,000 expected by the Union Labor papers. The actual outcome of the governor’s race gave the Republican candidate, Lyman U. Humphrey, 180,841 votes, while Democrat John A. Martin received 107,480 and Peter P. Elder for Union Labor received 35,837. The similarly reform-oriented Prohibition party, which had, like Union Labor, an enthusiastic and well-supported campaign, produced its usual very small showing. To the chagrin of radicals, the anarchist-conspiracy charges did not backlash against the Republicans as some papers had predicted—and hoped—that they would.

The poor showing of the Union Labor party disappointed the sex radicals at *Lucifer*, as well as most other Kansas radicals, not necessarily because of support for the party but because the results signaled a reactionary swing in the state. The prolabor *Ottawa Journal and Triumph* offered a thoughtful explanation of the Republican sweep. It had argued that the Union Labor party drew its strength from the Republican party, which had once been the party of reform in Kansas. However, the reform-minded had deserted the party in such great numbers that many came to regard the Republican party as deeply eroded and weakened. The Democrats had exploited this idea; its editors and politicians “loudly boasted in every quarter of the State that the Democrats would carry Kansas because the U[nion] L[abor] party was making fearful inroads on the strength of the Republicans.” Reacting to this
alarm on election day, Laborites stayed with the Republicans, fearing that to vote the Union Labor ticket would allow the Democrats to get into power.50

In addition to providing rhetoric for election campaigns and excuses for suppressing radicals in Kansas, the Haymarket affair caused other repercussions in the Midwest heartland. James Culverwell, a farmer from Jewell County, Kansas, organized a "National Army of Rescue" for the purpose of liberating the three remaining Chicago radicals from the Joliet prison. Culverwell's scheme did not receive effective support, but his ideas attracted interest. Culverwell, a self-educated Londoner who had immigrated to the Kansas farmlands, was something of an instinctual anarchist. His History of the National Army of Rescue (1888) described both his attempt to organize a liberating army and the opposition that his group met from local officialdom and the press. Harman, considered by many as no minor crank himself, looked with a degree of wonderment upon this crusading hayseed revolutionary. Although Harman had little faith in Culverwell's program of change through mass public demonstration, he printed his contributions in Lucifer and offered his History for sale alongside the works of Bakunin, Proudhon, and George Drysdale.51

In the early 1890s, out-of-state editors who saw copies of Lucifer often assumed that the radical paper, published in Topeka, was an organ of populism. This misconception revealed more about national confusions surrounding populism than about Lucifer's relationship to populism.

In June 1890, members of the Farmers' Alliance, Knights of Labor, Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association, Patrons of Husbandry, and some single taxers met in the Kansas capitol to form a new political organization known as the People's party. It took as its platform the essential demands of the 1889 St. Louis convention of Farmers' Alliances and labor groups. Its most significant planks called for nationalization of transportation and communication, inflationary financial policies, and restrictions on land ownership that were aimed at large corporations and aliens. The party, called among kinder terms the Populist party, grew in strength in the first two years of the decade until it unseated the entrenched Republican establishment of Kansas with the election
of a Populist governor and a majority in the state Senate. Conflict over the makeup of the House culminated in the "Kansas statehouse war" of 1893, in which Populist and Republican representatives and armed troops of both sides took turns seizing Representative Hall from one another.\textsuperscript{52}

\textit{Lucifer} was at one with the Populists in its sympathies for the laboring classes, and its editor read the tenor of the movement correctly when he saw it as an attempt to enlist government in the cause of neglected economic elements for a change, rather than in the cause of industrialists, financiers, and big capitalists. But writing from prison at the time of the much-heralded inauguration of the "first People's party government on earth," he expressed little hope that the Populist prescription for reform through more laws—"governmentalism"—would bring man to a greater realization of his freedom, particularly since the nation's basic law, in practice, did not even provide for free speech in support of sex education and reform.\textsuperscript{53} Although in a state so traditionally dominated by Republican politics as Kansas it was not surprising that the justice meted out to \textit{Lucifer} by judges, prosecutors, and elected officials was largely Republican justice, there is little evidence that any other representative party in power would have acted differently toward \textit{Lucifer}. Populists and sex radicals shared a common Republican opponent, but this did not make them allies. The 1891 case of Clarence Lee Swartz, who had edited \textit{Lucifer} during part of Harman's first imprisonment the year before, seemed to prove to the libertarians of \textit{Lucifer} that the People's party was as repressive as any other.

Swartz, who formerly edited \textit{Voice of the People} in Kingman, Kansas, gained an exposure as interim editor of \textit{Lucifer} that gave him a push upward into the national circles of radicalism and anarchism. He would eventually write a notable study of anarchist economics, \textit{What is Mutualism} (1927), edit a collection of Benjamin Tucker's writings, publish his own periodicals, and write the definitive article on "Anarchism Communism" in W. D. P. Bliss and R. M. Binder's \textit{New Encyclopedia of Social Reform} (1908). With a Populist House and a Republican Senate, the Kansas legislature in 1891 investigated the Coffeyville bombings, defeated woman-suffrage attempts, passed some reform bills, and also whisked through an anti-sensational-literature bill which made it
a felony, punishable by from two to five years imprisonment, to publish or distribute a paper "devoted largely to the publication of scandals." The lawmakers carefully included a provision that extended the bill to include papers that were published out of state and then sent into Kansas. This lent credence to those who claimed that the bill was aimed specifically at a Kansas City, Missouri, paper called the *Sunday Sun*, which Clarence Lee Swartz distributed in Topeka.\(^54\)

Advocating "Reform and the Exposure of Frauds and Hypocrites," the *Sunday Sun* delighted in embarrassing the high jandrums, of whatever political persuasion, with stories about their scandalous drinking bouts and sexual carousing. It aimed its blend of scandal, satire, and drollery at a national audience, and it attracted some brilliant writers, as well as more than one lawsuit. The legislature's anti-sensational-literature bill received the overwhelming support of both Populists and Republicans, and when the bill passed into law, its first fruit was the arrest of Swartz for circulating the *Sun* in Topeka. Identified in newspaper accounts as a printer for "Harmon's paper known as *Lucifer*," Swartz was placed under $4,000 bond, which was subsequently lowered to $2,000; and he languished in jail for thirty-six days before raising bail. When the Kansas Supreme Court met to hear the case in October 1891, the county attorney failed to appear to prosecute, and the charges against Swartz had to be dropped. In a later test, the court ruled that the law was constitutional and valid.\(^55\)

This case of newspaper suppression by legislative action aroused comment in the East, from the *New York Recorder*, from Ezra Heywood at *The Word*, and from Benjamin Tucker's *Liberty*. Edwin Walker, who in his regular column in *Liberty* had once called the People's party "more paternalistic, therefore more dangerous to liberty, than the Republican and Democratic parties," now saw the Swartz case as a portent of what the Populists would do if they won national power. He censured those who privately professed support for libertarian goals yet continued to work as "active hustlers for the People's Party, chaplain-fenced and Comstock-blessed!" Addressing the Populists Annie Diggs, Moses Hull, and others, he wrote: "I exhort you to separate yourselves from the unclean thing and come over to help us. Have you noted the banner under which you serve? It is the ominous black cross of
The radicals surrounding *Lucifer* also faulted the People's party for its failure to unite behind the women's-rights issue, particularly the issue of suffrage. The Populist Speaker of the House, in fact, led the fight against suffrage in the 1891 session. Speaker Peter P. Elder, an ardent antifeminist, warned against the danger of "ambitious and designing women" who would exploit the franchise and by feminine trickery add to the corruption of politics while debasing the moral standards of the female sex; the vote "hurls women out from their central orb fixed by their Creator to an external place in the order of things," pronounced the Populist leader.57

The theological appeal of the 1890 state Populist platform also alienated the freethinkers of *Lucifer*. The preamble asserted that the People's party of Kansas recognized Almighty God as the rightful sovereign of nations, "from whom all just powers of government are derived, and to whose will all human enactments ought to conform." Other radicals in the *Lucifer* orbit generally were drawn to the Populist party to a greater or lesser degree, depending upon whether their affinities lay toward socialism or anarchism. In the state of New York in 1894, for instance, Dr. Edward Bliss Foote, an important sex reformer and supporter of *Lucifer*, ran for congress as a Populist, while the energetic Liberal Leaguer Thaddeus B. Wakeman sought election to the court of appeals on the ticket. *Lucifer*'s faithful attorneys, David Overmeyer and Gaspar C. Clemens, both identified with populism. An outstanding figure in Kansas' weak Democratic party, Overmeyer aided in fusion attempts in 1892, and later in the decade he campaigned for the Populist ticket. Clemens played an important role as a left-wing propagandist for the Populists, eventually leaving the party for the Socialists in 1897; and in 1900 he headed the Socialist ticket in Kansas.58

George Harman, less extreme in his politics than his father, Moses, helped to edit one of the first Populist papers in Kansas, the *Farmers' Vindicator* of Valley Falls. Its publisher, Noah Harman, was himself a farmer and a relative of *Lucifer*'s editor. In less than a year of operation the Republican "ring" in Jefferson County filed two libel suits against the paper. The famous Populist speaker Mary Elizabeth Lease took time to praise *Lucifer*
feminist Lois Waisbrooker for her *A Sex Revolution* (1893), although Lease's inconsistent positions on women's rights did not show much lasting influence from Waisbrooker.

Waisbrooker did not herself profess populism, but she came out in support of some of its planks in her paper in June 1894. Comstock's western agent, R. W. McAfee, arrested her shortly thereafter for an "indecent" letter published in her paper, leading Waisbrooker to wonder if the resurgent Republicans were enforcing an anti-Populist strategy against her. Ben Henderson, the strongest woman-suffrage man in the People's party, undertook Waisbrooker's legal defense. 59

During the 1893 inauguration of the Populist government in Kansas, Lillie D. White edited *Lucifer*. Known as a left-wing Populist, she showed more concern in *Lucifer* for radical reform within the home and family than for party politics. During her six months' tenure as editor, *Lucifer* demonstrated a level of intellectual engagement with the question of women's rights which it never achieved under Moses Harman's sloppy and martyristic style of editing. When Harman returned from prison in the spring of 1893, White left *Lucifer* to work in the extreme antifusion wing of populism that was led by Cyrus Corning. She continued to write on women in feminist and Populist journals. 60

Although several radicals who identified with populism also identified with *Lucifer's* sex reform, the mainstream press of the People's party had few good words for *Lucifer*. Annie L. Diggs, editorialist for the party's main paper, the *Topeka Advocate*, once coedited the *Kansas Liberal* with Moses Harman, but she gave no support to the sexual efforts of her former colleague. Shortly before Diggs signed on as full-time editor, the *Advocate* aimed some hard words at *Lucifer*. Its liberality on social questions notwithstanding, said the *Advocate*, it considered sex education a delicate matter, to be broached only "within the sacred precincts of the home." *Lucifer's* "constant parade of obscenity in a publication designed for miscellaneous distribution among the people, in our opinion oversteps the bounds of educational necessity and propriety, and panders to the passions of the vulgar instead of improving the morals of the masses." From its agrarian pedestal, the *Advocate* concluded its judgment of *Lucifer*: "It partakes too
much of the character of an exponent of the literature of the slums of society.” 61

In the half-decade of populism’s ascendancy, *Lucifer* gave the party a relatively good press when it noted it at all, but Moses Harman did not consider the party as a serious means for social, economic, or sexual revolution; it was merely another brand of reformism. Judging from the past, Harman wrote in 1894, the only good that new parties seemed to do was to eliminate the old parties; if after killing off the old parties, the Pops “would have the grace to quietly commit suicide and leave mankind to live each his or her own life on the plane of equal freedom, then we might be safe in saying that the right party has at last been found.” 62