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Through his youth and in his old age Lysander Spooner followed the voice of freedom. He never faltered in his quest for and his defense of liberty. From his first writing against the Massachusetts law licensing lawyers (1835), to his last work, *A Letter to Cleveland* (1887), the theme of non-coercion runs constant. Force always conflicted with human freedom, wherever he looked. It kept man enslaved, maintained post office monopoly, guided the military, and was the eternal watchword of government. In place of force, in place of coercion, Spooner sought to substitute an entirely voluntary system of human relations.

Understandably, the outlines of Spooner's visionary society are incomplete and fragmentary, but he went further than most writers in his time in searching out practical, concrete plans to give substance to his vision. His two most important "inventions" were his currency system and his outline of trial by jury. The former seems hopelessly dated today, but it was framed from the best economic ideas then current. His *Trial by Jury*, on the other hand, still offers a practical way "law" can be realized in a no-

government, anarchist community. Groups of peers would voluntarily assemble, assess blame, damages, and punishment. They would be entirely autonomous — responsible to no state or outside institution; the jury would be a genuinely representative sampling of the community, with each member responsible only to his own conscience. Thus the jury could express “the will of the people” in a much more direct and effective way than “representative” governments.

Spooner himself was a model for the good citizen, a man unencumbered by responsibilities to state or society. In some ways he was a representative man of the nineteenth century; his life was a remarkable series of careers: Deist, lawyer, bank clerk, western land speculator, businessman, abolitionist, inventor, legal writer, economist, and anarchist. He showed what an individual alone could do; he showed how an individualist should live.

In our time, both his example and his ideas concerning the absolute inadequacy of force and of government remain relevant. The liberation movements of our day are particularly concerned to end coercion and dominance — the dominance of one race over others, of men over women, of heterosexual over homosexual, of rich over poor, of old over young, of teacher over pupil, of the educated over the uneducated, of the ruler over the ruled. In place of these slave-master relationships there is a search for forms of cooperation among equals. In this search Spooner was a pioneer and a prophet.