
The Berlin *Abendpost*

A Stirnerite and Individualist Anarchist Newspaper from 1850

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In 1850, German free traders published the *Abendpost* (Evening post), whose political philosophy was individualist anarchism. Little is known about this Berlin newspaper. It existed for only five and a half months before it was suppressed by the Prussian state. It had a small readership of approximately one thousand and was frequently confiscated by the police. Its journalists later remained silent or obscured their involvement with it when they became respected public figures because the paper took a radical anarchist and nihilist position. Even more, most issues of it—except for three—have been lost, and sources on it are not easily accessible. The American historian Ralph Raico is one of the few researchers who investigated the *Abendpost* (1999, 62–67), but he did not look at its extant issues or at other Berlin newspapers from 1850. This essay attempts to close the gap. Its results are relevant for researchers of the history of political ideas because the *Abendpost* advanced a completely new political philosophy. Moreover, the findings can be interesting for researchers on Max Stirner who want to know how his contemporaries received *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* ([1844] 1893, translated as *The Ego and Its Own* in 1913).¹ I begin by presenting the history of the *Abendpost*, then give a short overview of Stirner’s philosophy. Next I

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1. In his history of anarchism, Ernst Viktor Zenker views the *Abendpost* and Faucher as the only representatives of Stirnerite thought in the mid-nineteenth century (1895, 87–88).

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examine five main ideas of the newspaper—egoism, atheism, free association, economic liberalism, and individualist anarchism—and close by situating the *Abendpost* in relation to individualist anarchist thought of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

The *Abendpost's* History

The origins of the *Abendpost* are closely tied to an important figure of the German free-trade movement: Julius Faucher. A journalist and politician, Faucher was probably the first to synthesize free-trade, anarchist, and Stirnerite ideas. He was born on June 13, 1820, in Berlin and died one day before his fifty-eighth birthday in Rome.² He studied philosophy at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-University in Berlin and was a member of the first German free trade association in Berlin founded in 1847, together with the leader of the German free traders, John Prince-Smith, and others. Around this time, he became a journalist for the Stettin liberal newspaper *Börsennachrichten der Ostsee* and met Richard Cobden at a banquet of the Stettin free-trade association. In January 1850, Faucher was cofounder of the *Abendpost*. He immigrated to London afterward and worked as both Cobden's secretary and a journalist at Cobden's paper, the *Morning Star*, in London. After living for ten years in England, he returned to Germany in 1861 and entered the Prussian House of Representatives, the second chamber of the Prussian Parliament. Faucher regularly attended the annual meetings of the Economic Congress, which debated economic policy and was founded in 1858, "where he immediately impressed the listeners by the plentifulness of his practical knowledge and urbane experiences and by a unique fiery eloquence" (Böhmert 1878, 60).³ He was one of the most laissez-faire at the congress.

Faucher advocated a gold standard for Germany, was against unbacked banknotes, and agitated for the Franco-Prussian trade treaty of 1862. In 1863, together with Otto Michaelis, he cofounded the *Vierteljahrschrift für Volkswirtschaftslehre, Politik und Kulturgeschichte* (Quarterly journal of economics, politics, and cultural history). He favored a Lesser German solution and supported the Indemnity Bill of 1866, which granted impunity to Bismarck and his government. The bill led to a division of the liberals in the German Progress Party, and Faucher joined the newly founded National Liberal Party in 1867. He continued to work as a journalist in the 1870s, but, due to his deteriorating health, he eventually traveled to southern European countries and wrote travelogues. He stood out due to "a certain genius dilettantism" (Hentschel 1975, 67). His friend Max Wirth believed that Faucher could have been a great poet or reached any other position if he had had enough discipline and energy to work (see Wirth 1878). Otto Hübner, another free-trade companion and friend, said, "Julius Faucher finds a diamond and throws it away, another man picks it up and a third one polishes it" (qtd. in Wirth 1878, 7). Faucher's

2. See Böhmert 1878, Wirth 1878, and Lippert 1900.

3. All translations of German-language material are my own unless otherwise noted in the references.

writings cover topics of cultural history and economics and were usually stimulated by some event in daily politics. He was an excellent rhetorician who often spoke in front of workers, about whose social situation he was especially concerned.

Faucher attended meetings of Young Hegelians from the early 1840s on, the so-called group of the Free—or, in German, die Freien—which discussed politics, philosophy, and other topics in informal gatherings at various Berlin restaurants. Another participant of the Free was Max Stirner, the philosopher whose magnum opus *The Ego and Its Own* was published in 1844. Stirner's biographer, John Henry Mackay, writes that Faucher and Stirner were a part of the inner core of the group, together with the subsequent editor of the *Abendpost*, Eduard Meyen (1898, 70–76). Other German free traders occasionally visited the Free gatherings, in particular John Prince-Smith, Heinrich Beta, Otto Wolff, Eduard Wiss, and Otto Michaelis (Mackay 1898, 80–81). Five members of the group wrote for the *Abendpost*: the editors Faucher and Meyen and the free traders Michaelis, Wolff, and Prince-Smith.⁴ Faucher and Meyen probably met for the first time in the Free.

At that time, Meyen was the editor of the *Demokratische Zeitung* (Democratic newspaper), the predecessor of the *Abendpost*. This newspaper was the successor of the *Wächter an der Ostsee* (Guardian at the Baltic Sea), released in Stettin from 1847 on and founded by the democratic and free-trade journalist Wilhelm Lüders (Wolff 1880, 313). According to Otto Wolff, due to the small circulation of the *Demokratische Zeitung*, Meyen accepted the offer from Faucher to enter the editorial team with other free traders (1880, 313–14). The *Abendpost* was then launched at the end of January 1850, probably on January 28 or 29.⁵ The circulation of the Berlin paper was small. The unknown author A. M. speaks of seven hundred to eight hundred issues in his article about the Berlin press of 1850.⁶ This small circulation was “because it was written in a way that was too reflective for the workmen, and it was not sufficient for the sophisticated newspaper reader in terms of the manifoldness of its political content” (A. M. 1850, 414). Nevertheless, the *Abendpost* managed to attract many new readers during its short existence, so when it was finally shut down, the number of subscribers was likely greater than one thousand.⁷ This was still a small readership compared to the readership of other Berlin newspapers, though.

4. See Faucher 1870, 164; Wolff 1880, 313–17; Braun 1893, 132; and Max Wirth in the *Neue Freie Presse*, July 26, 1894, no. 10748, morning issue, 2. Faucher also identified as collaborators Eduard Fischel; Walter Rogge; C. Hoppe; and Dankwart (first name unknown), who wrote about law and philosophy of law; the writer Adolf Mützelburg, who reviewed theater; and the famous conductor Hans von Bülow, who was responsible for music (1870, 164). According to Mackay, Bülow was an admirer of Stirner and personally knew the philosopher (1898, 10–11).

5. *Kreuzzeitung*, January 29, 1850, no. 23, 2. See also *Urwählerzeitung*, January 28, 1850, no. 24, 2, and *Die Presse*, January 29, 1850, no. 34, 2. The *Kreuzzeitung* speaks of January 29 as the first day of the *Abendpost*'s publication, but the *Urwählerzeitung* names January 28.

6. The *Kreuzzeitung* reported that the precursor of the *Abendpost*, the *Demokratische Zeitung*, spoke of eight hundred subscribers as well. See *Kreuzzeitung*, January 26, 1850, no. 21, 1.

7. See A. M. 1850, 418; *Die Presse*, May 3, 1850, no. 106, 2; and Varnhagen von Ense 1865, 139.

The adjective *radical* was often used to describe the paper. In explaining why it often cited the *Abendpost*, the *Deutsche Reform* (German reform) wrote that “this radical newspaper has a certain vividness in its reporting; it is characterized by a great sincerity of confession.”⁸ The Austrian paper *Die Presse* (The press) praised the “soundness of its economic knowledge and views” and added that the *Abendpost* was not afraid to criticize “the favorite ideas of the German democratic movement.”⁹ Indeed, the *Abendpost* was not afraid to speak its mind in defending anarchist and nihilist ideas, which most contemporaries certainly considered to be extreme. As a consequence, it often had problems with the authorities. Karl Braun, a leading German free trader, claimed that almost every third issue was seized (1893, 132). In 1850, Prussian newspapers had to deliver a specimen copy of each issue to the police as soon as distribution began. If the police considered the issue to be a danger to public order, it could be confiscated (Kohnen 1995, 100–102).

The three surviving issues of the *Abendpost* are from April 3, May 11, and May 16, 1850.¹⁰ The lead articles in these issues contain, respectively, a critique of democracy, a comment on the Tories in England, and a critique of the Prussian election system. Then on May 22 an incident occurred that marked the downfall of the *Abendpost*. Max Sefeloge, a former soldier, shot at Frederick William IV, who was entering a train at a Berlin railroad station. The Prussian king was only slightly injured because he shielded his body with his forearm.¹¹ The monarchist paper *Kreuzzeitung* (Cross newspaper) and *Deutsche Reform* wrote after the attack that the democratic press—the *Urwählerzeitung* (Primary voter newspaper), the *Nationalzeitung* (National newspaper), and the *Abendpost*—was indirectly responsible for the assassination attempt in that Sefeloge was motivated by democratic propaganda and had shouted “long live freedom.”¹² The democratic papers argued in response that Sefeloge was mentally ill, which later turned out to be true (Damerow 1853, 42). Despite this defense, the *Abendpost* was confiscated on May 23, and the police searched Meyen’s house, arrested Meyen, and set him free a day later.¹³ The *Abendpost* reacted by relating Sefeloge to the political establishment: “It becomes more and more apparent that the initiator of the murder attempt on the Prussian king suffers from mental illness and that he was *formerly*

8. *Deutsche Reform*, April 22, 1850, no. 862, evening issue, 1.

9. *Die Presse*, May 3, 1850, no. 106, 2.

10. Issue number 76 from April 3 is located at the Internationales Zeitungsmuseum in Aachen, Germany. Issue number 107 from May 11 is at the Institut für Zeitungsforschung in Dortmund, Germany. Issue number 111 from May 16 can be found in the National Library of France in Paris. Some sources indicate that the university library of Jena possesses several issues, but the library could not locate them upon request.

11. *Deutsche Reform*, May 22, 1850, no. 908, evening issue, 1. See also *Nationalzeitung*, May 24, 1850, no. 232, morning issue, 2.

12. *Deutsche Reform*, May 24, 1850, no. 912, evening issue, 1. See also *Kreuzzeitung*, May 26, 1850, no. 118, 1. For the claim regarding the declaration “long live freedom,” see *Nationalzeitung*, May 26, 1850, no. 236, morning issue, 1.

13. *Kreuzzeitung*, May 24, 1850, no. 116, 2. See also *Deutsche allgemeine Zeitung*, May 24, 1850, no. 266, morning issue, 2.

connected to the *royal party*.”¹⁴ It pointed out that the establishment was the only party that benefitted from the attack: “If the death of the king would have been a consequence of the insane crime, the prince of Prussia, who did not swear on the constitution, would have taken over government and would have hardly resisted the pressure by the reaction for its entire elimination. If you have the nerve to put blame on the democratic movement, it should harmonize with its interests. There is only harmony with the opposite interests. *Understood?*”¹⁵ Shortly thereafter, on June 5, the Prussian government passed a new press edict that allowed the state postal service to refuse to deliver newspapers (Kohnen 1995, 105). The edict introduced a caution system that forced a Berlin newspaper to pay 5,000 thalers if it wanted to be released six times per week or 2,500 thalers to be released three times per week. In addition, editorials had to obtain a license, which could be withdrawn.¹⁶ The *Abendpost* opposed the press edict because it saw the regulation as an attempt to censor government-critical media. It promoted passive resistance:

Passive resistance is not accomplished if one does not vote and sends out unsuccessful protests into the world; passive resistance is always resistance and has its activity as well but does not consist in barricades, gunpowder, and lead. It consists in the fact that everybody fights in every moment for every inch of land against forward-pushing despotism. We have made only very poor attempts to do it. We live in the hope that the new press edict will be a turning point for public consciousness. This keen attack on the last bulwark of freedom will make it clear to everybody that the bad practice of waiting has to be given up and must be replaced by action.¹⁷

The *Abendpost* continued by stating that everybody must do his best to prevent the oppression of the press—for instance, by spending money on newspapers, by distributing issues if one did not have money, or by founding a private postal service to circumvent the state post. At the end of June, Meyen resigned his position as editor of the *Abendpost* and left Faucher alone in charge.¹⁸ Around June 20, it became apparent that the *Abendpost* would not receive permission for delivery.¹⁹ Ultimately, the paper

14. Qtd. in *Kreuzzeitung*, May 29, 1850, no. 120, 2, emphasis in original.

15. Qtd. in *Kreuzzeitung*, May 26, 1850, no. 118, 1, emphasis in original.

16. The full text of the press edict can be found in *Deutsche Reform*, June 8, 1850, no. 937, morning issue, 1–2.

17. Qtd. in *Deutsche Reform*, June 18, 1850, no. 954, evening issue, 1.

18. This was possibly because Meyen was sentenced to four months in jail for an article in the *Demokratische Zeitung*; see *Wiener Zeitung*, June 20, 1850, no. 146, 5. Shortly afterward, Meyen was sentenced to four weeks in jail or a fine of 35 thalers because the specimen copy was delivered too late to the police station seven times; see *Nationalzeitung*, July 6, 1850, no. 306, morning issue, 3.

19. *Die Presse*, June 20, 1850, no. 147, 2. See also Faucher 1870, 164–65, and Wolff 1880, 317.

was not able to collect the 2,500 thalers needed to publish three issues per week.²⁰ As the *Abendpost* explained in mid-July, potential donors had not delivered part of the money they had promised, and the time left for collecting the money was too short.²¹ On July 25, the *Kreuzzeitung* noted that the *Abendpost* had not been released again.²²

Max Stirner and *The Ego and Its Own*

In Leipzig in November 1844, a book appeared that received a great deal of public attention but was forgotten in the following years and decades (Mackay 1898, 138–41). It was the magnum opus of the philosopher Max Stirner, titled *The Ego and Its Own*. In his book, Stirner defended philosophical egoism. For Stirner, “egoistic” meant that one does not give an absolute or ideal value to anything but looks only for its value in oneself (Stirner 1913, 221).²³ With the idea of looking inside oneself, he referred to what Freud called the “super ego,” the internalization of cultural rules through education. An egoist does not blindly submit himself to the values instilled by parents in one’s childhood but instead follows his egoistic “true” ends. Stirner explained:

Those [feelings] which are aroused are my own, egoistic, because they are not *as feelings* drilled into me, dictated to me, and pressed upon me; but those which are imparted to me I receive, with open arms—I cherish them in me as a heritage, cultivate them, and am *possessed* by them. Who is there that has never, more or less consciously, noticed that our whole education is calculated to produce *feelings* in us, *i.e.* impart them to us, instead of leaving their production to ourselves however they may turn out? If we hear the name of God, we are to feel veneration; if we hear that of the prince’s majesty, it is to be received with reverence, deference, submission; if we hear that of morality, we are to think that we hear something inviolable; if we hear of the Evil One or evil ones, we are to shudder. (1913, 83–84, emphasis in original)

This view led Stirner to oppose following such social institutions as the state, religion, or family out of a feeling of moral obligation instilled by early education. He wrote: “What is imparted is *alien* to us, is not our own, and therefore is ‘sacred,’ and it is hard work to lay aside the ‘sacred dread of it’” (1913, 85, emphasis in original). In the case of religion, he went beyond even harsh critics of Christianity such as Bruno Bauer

20. *Kreuzzeitung*, July 20, 1850, no. 165, 2.

21. As indicated in *Deutsche Reform*, July 16, 1850, no. 1002, evening issue, 1.

22. *Kreuzzeitung*, July 25, 1850, no. 169, 2.

23. Quotations from Stirner 1913 are from that English translation, *The Ego and Its Own*, but quotations from Stirner 1896 are my translations of the original German text.

and Ludwig Feuerbach. The latter presented his criticism of religion in *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1841, translated as *The Essence of Christianity* [1854]). Feuerbach's central argument was that human beings project essential parts of their personality onto God so that God is a reflection of a human species-essence or nature (Gooch 2016). Stirner opposed Feuerbach's argument because he felt that the philosopher had simply transferred God from the afterlife into the present life and into each human being (1913, 41–42). Stirner did not believe in the existence of a species-essence: "I am neither God nor Man, neither the supreme essence nor my essence, and therefore it is all one in the main whether I think of the essence as in me or outside me" (1913, 41). Accordingly, Stirner accused Feuerbach and other Young Hegelians of still being influenced by Christian thought, stating: "Our atheists are pious people" (1913, 241). They simply had replaced God with the species-essence, adhered to Christian values, and discarded egoism—for example, when Feuerbach praised love as "the supreme practical maxim" (Stirner 1913, 74). For Stirner, love is when an individual places other ends—such as those of the nation or the common good—above his own egoistic ends (1913, 380–81). Stirner called Feuerbach's view "morality" (*Sittlichkeit*) and spoke of a "change of masters" (1913, 74, emphasis in original) that had taken place: the substitution of morality for religion.

Regarding philosophy of law, Stirner viewed the sole restriction to the rights of the individual to be his power to obtain what he desires. Stirner stated: "He who has might has—right; if you have not the former, neither have you the latter" (1913, 251–52). Property is acquired by using one's power, so it follows that "[w]ith this the war of all against all is declared. I alone decide what I will have" (1913, 341). There is no legal source other than one's capability to exert one's power: "Owner and creator of my right, I recognize no other source of right than—me, neither God nor the State nor nature nor even man himself with his 'eternal rights of man,' neither divine nor human right" (1913, 268–69). For Stirner, then, the just owner is the one who disposes of the power to acquire or defend property against invasions from others. Because the state is the only force that is allowed to use power, the individual does not truly own his property but is "enfeoffed" (1913, 333). Individual property does not exist as long as a state exists (1913, 338). However, Stirner did not want to eliminate the institution of private property and opposed the communists of his time: "Property, therefore, should not and cannot be abolished; it must rather be torn from ghostly hands and become *my* property" (1913, 342–43, emphasis in original).

Many interpreters view Stirner as an anarchist or an individualist anarchist. Indeed, Stirner proposed to replace the state by a union of property owners (Stirner 1913, 233–34, 409–10): "But war might rather be declared against establishment itself, the *State*, not a particular State, not any such thing as the mere condition of the State at the time; it is not another State (e.g., a 'people's State') that one aims at, but its [the state's] *union*, the coalition, this ever-fluid coalition of everything standing" (Stirner 1896, 260, emphasis in original). In Stirner's theory, the union is an association of egoists who coordinate their behavior to reach a mutual goal. Each member joins the union "from

selfishness” (Stirner 1913, 417, emphasis in original), and membership is voluntary.²⁴ Stirner usually contrasted the union with the state. The latter interferes with the individuality of each person (Stirner 1913, 408) because it indoctrinates its citizens so that they accept its rule—for instance, by censoring the press (Stirner 1913, 315–16). Stirner called the interaction between egoists and unions “intercourse.” The philosopher hardly touched upon economic questions in his writings, although he translated Jean-Baptiste Say’s *Cours* (1843) and Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* ([1776] 1904) into German, as well as perhaps Pierre-Joseph Proudhon’s *System of Economic Contradictions* ([1846] 1888) (Senft 2006, 2). This essay, however, does not answer the question whether Stirner was an anarchist or even an individualist anarchist. It only shows how his philosophy found its way into the *Abendpost*.

The *Abendpost*’s Main Ideas

After the revolution of 1848, Stirner disappeared from the public eye, and the *Abendpost* did not mention him. Faucher and Stirner had nonetheless known each other from the Free. Mackay also indicates that both men’s wives were friends (1898, 128). It is, therefore, no surprise that three of *Abendpost*’s five main ideas resemble Stirner’s thought: egoism, atheism, and free association. Ideas number four and five are economic liberalism and individualist anarchism.

Egoism

The *Abendpost* defended an egoist and nihilist view in condemning traditional norms and institutions. The *Kreuzzeitung* explained: “It is known that the conductors of the *Abendpost* rage against all convention, against all that is traditional; they explain with a remarkable openness that everything propagated from prehistory to the present has to be destroyed root and branch, before the new life of the individualist republic can flourish from the ruins provided by the *Abendpost*.”²⁵ On March 28, 1850, the *Abendpost* advocated “a total break with the ‘traditional’” in rejecting state, religion, and custom in an article that the *Deutsche Reform* quoted as follows: “Not justice or injustice, but the ability or inability to live is the measure that it [the consequent democratic movement] applies to them [these powers]. But because it has to deny all these powers—state, religion, conventional custom—the ability to live, but because it cannot approve of authority and the belief in authority, the basic features of those

24. In the following passage, Stirner implicitly stated that voluntary membership is a characteristic of the union: “As I am not willing to be a slave of my maxims, but lay them bare to my continual criticism without *any warrant*, and admit no bail at all for their persistence, so still less do I obligate myself to the union *for my future* and pledge my soul to it, as is said to be done with the devil, and is really the case with the State and all spiritual authority” (1913, 410, second emphasis added).

25. *Kreuzzeitung*, April 10, 1850, no. 81, 1.

powers, *it is the total break with the 'traditional,'* it is the opposite of authority, namely, the absolute liberty and autonomy of the individual.”²⁶

The individual whom the *Abendpost* had in mind when it opposed any authority or tradition seems to be an egoist who follows only his own ends. This is indicated by another quote in the *Deutsche Reform* on April 13: “The *Abendpost* itself explains what it means by order, namely: ‘Free association with the simple principle as a basis: everybody lives according to his own arbitrariness [*Willkür*] on his own responsibility.’”²⁷ The quote in this passage comes directly from the *Abendpost*. The term *Willkür* means a behavior that ignores common norms or laws and is oriented only toward self-interest. Similarly, Faucher had written as early as in 1845 in his book *Die Vereinigung von Sparkasse und Hypothekenbank und der Anschluss eines Häuserbauvereins* (The coalition of savings bank and mortgage bank and the addition of a union for housing construction): “The interest that just associates for its own sake, for this purpose with one, for that purpose with another, is the only organic impetus. For us, the competition of interests is the only true life principle” (4). The *Deutsche allgemeine Zeitung* (German general newspaper) commented, before quoting this passage, that Faucher “has placed the principle of Stirnerite egoism in the forefront of his practical proposals.”²⁸ Indeed, the *Abendpost* seemed to defend a type of egoist similar to Stirner’s.

Atheism

Another Stirner-like idea was the opposition to the belief in the existence of God. The *Abendpost* wrote on February 25 that the revolution in France was not successful because so far the revolutionaries had been theoretical but not practical atheists: “In France . . . the revolution already ferments for more than sixty years, and it will maybe ferment longer because the revolutionary men brought themselves *to theoretical atheism at most* but repudiated practical atheism.”²⁹ On March 28, the *Abendpost* explained more fully what it meant by practical atheism:

Religion, that is otherworldliness, that has vanished into morality and hence into the state—“embodied morality”—makes way for the practical atheism of this-worldliness. The individual does not struggle for otherworldly salvation—he tries to achieve this-worldly bliss. The spiritualization, the refinement, by which one attained heaven, gives place to the formation of all natural powers by which one subdues the earth. *The war of all against all,*

26. Qtd. in *Deutsche Reform*, March 28, 1850, no. 824, evening issue, 2, emphasis in original.

27. *Deutsche Reform*, April 13, 1850, no. 848, evening issue, 1.

28. *Deutsche allgemeine Zeitung*, December 7, 1845, no. 341, 3.

29. Qtd. in *Deutsche Reform*, February 25, 1850, no. 770, evening issue, 1, emphasis in original. If not indicated otherwise, ellipses are always set by me in place of material that I have taken out of a quoted passage.

which arises from that, is the first law of all becoming, free movement and as such nothing else than “eternal peace.” These are the demands of the German democratic movement, which calls itself “German” not because it strives for a national Germany, but because it is the child of the German philosophy.³⁰

Like Stirner, the *Abendpost* made an argument that morality was substituted for religion, using the same German term for morality Stirner used, *Sittlichkeit*. As seen, Stirner advanced this point against Feuerbach’s criticism of religion in *The Essence of Christianity*. The *Abendpost* repeated Stirner’s argument when it wrote, “Religion . . . has vanished into morality,” and when it advocated, as an alternative, an individual who develops “all natural powers” to pursue his own interests. Thus, theoretical atheism likely refers to Feuerbach’s and other Young Hegelians’ standpoint, while practical atheism might correspond with Stirner’s view. The *Abendpost* used Stirnerite (and Hobbesian) vocabulary again when it spoke of “the war of all against all [der Krieg aller gegen Alle].” Stirner wrote in *The Ego and Its Own* that the egoist uses his power to obtain property when he deems it suitable and concluded: “With this the war of all against all [der Krieg aller gegen Alle] is declared. I alone decide what I will have” (1913, 341). This was not the only time the *Abendpost* advocated atheism. On February 28, it declared: “We fear that a jury of devout moral democrats could convict us if we declare: ‘Atheism,’ not ‘Pantheism,’ ‘anarchy,’ and ‘masterlessness,’ not ‘rule of all.’”³¹ In the May 11 issue, the *Abendpost* included a lengthy text with the title “The People to Pius IX,” in which it criticized the pope.³²

Free Association

Like Stirner regarding union(s), the *Abendpost* advanced the concepts of *Vereinigung* (coalition) and *freie Association* (free association). In anarchy, individuals should organize themselves by voluntarily associating in coalitions. It contrasted these concepts to the state, which it denounced as a coercive institution. The *Abendpost* wrote on April 3:

The postulate of the *Nationalzeitung* is the common right to vote, the representation on the widest ground, whereas we want self-representation. . . . We do not want the coercive state and the coercive society at all, even if it is based on the widest ground of representation, because the individual does not win his case. We do not recognize any other societal ribbon than free

30. Qtd. in *Deutsche Reform*, March 28, 1850, no. 824, evening issue, 2, emphasis in original.

31. Qtd. in *Deutsche Reform*, February 28, 1850, no. 776, evening issue, 1, emphasis in original.

32. *Abendpost*, May 11, 1850, no. 107, 1–2.

association. How could rule of the majority satisfy us? Whether I am oppressed on behalf of one or several or on behalf of the most does not matter if I do not want to be oppressed at all. We are not against the principle of majority as such, but against its application inside the coercive society. I can submit to the decision of a free coalition because it [the majority] grants me the freedom to leave, but never to the majority of a coercive union because here it is just another form of despotism. Thus, it is self-evident that we, who want to eliminate the coercive state, and the *Nationalzeitung*, which wants to give it solely a wider ground, must take a complete different standpoint in all important social issues.³³

The *Abendpost* made the point that a coalition is not coercive because membership is voluntary. The state is by contrast a “coercive society” because one cannot leave it. As seen, Stirner contrasted the state with the union as well and implicitly named voluntary membership as a characteristic of the union. There is no disagreement between them when the *Abendpost* spoke of “coalition” (*Vereinigung*) instead of “union” (*Verein*) because Stirner used both terms synonymously.³⁴ The *Abendpost* went beyond Stirner, however, in identifying far more explicitly voluntary membership as a characteristic of the union. In general, the *Abendpost* used the phrase *free association* very frequently. On May 27, it wrote after the attack on the Prussian king that a czar does not count more than any other person “as soon as the belief in the necessity of the state is destroyed. For us, it is only important to clear up terms until that belief left the minds and is replaced by the principle of free association.”³⁵ Thus, the *Abendpost* seemed to echo Stirner’s concept of the union.

Economic Liberalism

A fourth main theme is the advocacy of laissez-faire. The *Abendpost* favored free trade and assigned to the state the production of security at most. Its decided pro-free-trade position is illustrated in the lead article “The Torys and Sir Robert Peel” on March 11.³⁶ There, the Berlin newspaper denounced any intent to reintroduce tariffs in England as impracticable. Tariffs would cause a famine because England had to import 13 million quarter crops during a good harvest year. The paper praised Robert Peel for implementing free trade and emancipating the Catholics. It called him “the last English ‘statesman’ ever”

33. *Abendpost*, April 3, 1850, no. 76, 2.

34. Stirner does so in the following passage: “But the dissolution of *society* is *intercourse* or *union* [*Verein*]. . . . If a union has crystallized into a society, it has ceased to be a coalition [*Vereinigung*]; for coalition is an incessant self-uniting; it has become a unitedness, come to a standstill, degenerated into a fixity; it is—*dead* as a union, it is the corpse of the union or the coalition, *i.e.*, it is—society, community” (1913, 407–8, emphasis in original).

35. Qtd. in *Deutsche Reform*, May 27, 1850, no. 916, evening issue, 1, emphasis in original.

36. *Abendpost*, May 11, 1850, no. 107, 1.

and wrote that “he represents . . . the ‘dying state’ with a wonderful firmness and clearness.”³⁷ Its position on economic policy is displayed in an article about tax reform:

[T]here remains no other task for the state than police and justice. Police and courts exist to protect against crime. But the mother of crime is poverty. If no slaughter and milling tax drives a man to nourishment that just belongs to the cattle; if no beer and vine tax denies him the strengthening pleasures of wealthy people; if no tariff raises the price of clothes for him and his family; if no property and rental tax raise the price of his apartment; if no commercial tax eats up a part of the income of the craftsman that he wants to put away for the days of his seniority and illness; if no trade regulation act prevents man from employing his workforce where it is most beneficial to him; if no master craftsman examination and a thousand other guild or police obstacles for self-employment consume his small capital before it can be the basis of his business; if absolute free movement persuades workers to go to places where they receive the best wage; if no expulsion turns the worker away from lucrative earnings and uninterrupted occupation and toward hunger and desperation; if no withdrawal of license reduces the father of a family to beggary; if no stamp and no judicial agony hinder capital to flow into the hands of the producer who employs it most advantageously for himself and society; if no conscription calls the individual away from work and business during the years of his youthful vigor and casts him upon the alienated business world after three years of unproductive work; if no standing army of society takes away the strongest work hands letting them live, while being employed for unnecessary work, at the expense of society; if no budget directs the tenth part of national income to unproductive consumption and hence the tenth part of the people to poverty; if free education causes selfishness of the nation and arrogance of concession, which make crime appear in the highest glance of virtue in stupid eyes, to vanish from the minds of men; if free commerce of nations distributes wealth equally on the whole earth and no smuggler educates people to crime due to the inviting advantage—can we indeed say what police and courts will then have to do and what they will cost? The voluntary tax presents itself to us to cover this small rest of the budget, which the wealthy nation can easily pay.³⁸

37. Ibid. A month later, when Peel died, the *Abendpost* wrote, “Thank God, again one *statesman* less” (qtd. in Rogge 1850, 220, emphasis in original).

38. Qtd. in *Deutsche Reform*, June 17, 1850, no. 952, evening issue, 1–2, emphasis in original.

The *Abendpost* demanded a radical tax cut and the elimination of the military. The state should be responsible only for the police and the courts, it argued. A “voluntary tax” could provide the necessary funds for such state activity. The term *voluntary tax* sounds like an oxymoron because taxes are by definition involuntary, so it is unclear whether the *Abendpost* was taking a minarchist or an anarchist position in the article. Prince-Smith might have been its author because he never endorsed anarchism or Stirnerite thought and favored a minimal state, explaining programmatically in 1866: “But free trade assigns no other task to the state than: the production of security” (Prince-Smith 1866, 441). Moreover, the article advanced Prince-Smith’s classic argument that pauperism is mainly the result of the tax burden created by the military (Wolff 1880, 234–35). The passage also illustrates that the *Abendpost* presented a consequentialist argument for free markets, emphasizing the positive economic outcomes of laissez-faire. Although Prince-Smith was influenced by Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarianism (Wolff 1880, 215), the *Abendpost* did not explicitly commit to any ethical system. Stirner’s egoism goes in the utilitarian direction as well: “We have only one relation to each other, that of *usableness*, of utility, of use,” he wrote (1913, 394, emphasis in original). Thus, the *Abendpost* defended a very orthodox form of laissez-faire.

Individualist Anarchism

The *Abendpost* went beyond Prince-Smith, however, and rejected the institution of the state altogether, even the minimal state. Its journalist Otto Wolff explained that almost every collaborator—except for Prince-Smith—enthusiastically followed “the doctrine” of the newspaper (Wolff 1880, 314), most likely meaning its anarchism. The paper openly advocated anarchism for the first time on February 23:

Democracy that does not acknowledge the, translated into Republican language, legal ground of representation must look for a cure in itself. It must consume itself. It must consequently chase the Republican system and must organize, as a counterweight, the provinces, municipalities, and associations. It will more and more, according to the principle “self do, self have,” attempt to reduce to zero the governmental and police system. *For we are not here for the state, not here to be the slaves of any legal ground that overcame us.* State and society, they are our means to arrive at the purpose of being free humans. And we should be slaves of our tools? . . . Let us emancipate ourselves from the old Aristotelian error that a human being is born into the state, and must always haul the lead ball of state order by supreme order, so we will arrive at the true understanding of society, at the necessity of *free human association*. (A. M. 1850, 415, emphasis and ellipses in original)³⁹

39. A great part of the quote can be found in *Deutsche Reform*, February 23, 1850, no. 768, evening issue, 1.

The *Deutsche Reform* commented that “the rule of the street, panarchy, is the goal of these leaders of the party of the people.”⁴⁰ This comment motivated the *Abendpost* to respond with the article “Anarchy or Panarchy?” in which it distanced itself from panarchy: “The panarchy of Athens fell because of its slaves, its colonies, its Socrates. The Old World went down because it strived for panarchy and not—for liberty” (A. M. 1850, 416). Anarchy should be implemented so that the individual cannot be the slave of a majority or of another person. The majority is a “many-headed government” (A. M. 1850, 416) that violates individual rights, even with the best intentions. The Americans did well in separating certain basic rights from the realm of government, the paper claimed. First steps toward a stateless society should be a reform of the common right to vote, restriction of majority power, and emancipation of town and individuals (A. M. 1850, 416). It remains unclear what the *Abendpost* meant exactly by these proposals. Does emancipation of towns and individuals mean transfer of power to local institutions, as expressed by the principle of subsidiarity, or secession? What is sure is that the paper had a process of decentralization in mind, wherein power is transferred to the local level. On February 28, the *Deutsche Reform* was eager to pronounce: “Today the democratic *Abendpost* openly confesses to anarchy.”⁴¹ After its “outing,” the *Abendpost* often advocated anarchism.⁴² On April 3, it explained:

If liberation from the state is not possible, there is no way forward. We want the free [das Freie] without defining what should take its place because the result of creative freedom cannot be predetermined;—our whole demand intends that one should give birth to new manifestations of life differently than according to the scheme of the established, without letting them evolve less according to determined laws, even if they are not dictated by us. If state activity is reduced to a minimum, the state does not have to generate order, or direct the masses, but only has to control individuals who want to disrupt the order so that a power is sufficient, which does not impede either public welfare or people’s freedom.—How the state institutions would have to look, which would be necessary for the supervision of such a harmless power, experience would teach us. Maybe the press would be sufficient, without people having to bother about a chosen representation. . . . The end may still appear to be in a dream world, but it must serve as a guiding star.⁴³

40. *Deutsche Reform*, February 22, 1850, no. 766, evening issue, 1.

41. *Deutsche Reform*, February 28, 1850, no. 776, evening issue, 1.

42. The *Abendpost* wrote, for instance, “*The German democratic movement has to be individualistic*. It has to guard against erecting a government, a state, or any power at all that could be transferred to a constituted authority. It must realize *that the sovereign task of people is to prevent ruling*” (qtd. in *Deutsche Reform*, March 27, 1850, no. 822, evening issue, 1, emphasis in original).

43. *Abendpost*, April 3, 1850, no. 76, 1–2. The *Deutsche Reform* extensively quoted the article, April 3, 1850, no. 830, evening issue, 1.

The *Abendpost* did not elaborate how security is provided in anarchy, writing that “we want the free without defining what should take its place because the result of creative freedom cannot be predetermined.”⁴⁴ Thus, it is clear that the *Abendpost* was anarchist, but did it also endorse private-property rights and thus individualist anarchism? Unfortunately, the remaining issues of the *Abendpost* and the Berlin newspapers of 1850 do not contain texts that profoundly elaborate its anarchist views. In addition, the German free traders did not want to talk in public about the *Abendpost* when they later became respected journalists or members of Parliament. Faucher obscured this episode of his life. He wrote that the *Abendpost* “spoke the proud and fierce language of those times, . . . to turn the people away from revolution and to concentrate their attention on work and enterprise” (1870, 164). But some of Faucher’s companions published memoirs. One of them was Heinrich Beta, a founding member of the Berlin free trade association (Wolff 1880, 268). In 1863, the journalist revealed in a newspaper article on Faucher:

We withstand the temptation to explain this critical economic radicalism [of the *Abendpost*] at this point. Suffice is to say that it did not demand anything more than complete freedom of supply and demand, for production and utilization of all needs and consumption goods, for example in relation to the state itself and its means of coercion for self-preservation, so that only he pays for the “state” who needs it, according to performance and counterperformance, and only he contributes to the military budget who owes something for performed soldier services in accordance with the market price. One ought to be able to buy state, soldiers etc., for instance from companies that already provide us with gas, water and coal, etc. This appears, so suddenly put into the coercive state, more odd than dangerous, but it is neither one thing nor the other, as we see the principle working in certain practical ways in England in a very calm, beneficial, and great manner. The *Abendpost* will remain as a special organ of economic radicalism and thus a hardly anticipated let alone attempted scientific creation, an immortal obscurity, even though solely as a curiosity of the press, although I for my part still hope that it [economic radicalism] will save humanity from all “coercive states” one day. (Beta 1863, 268)

Beta clearly described an individualist anarchist standpoint—he wrote about “economic radicalism”—and revealed that he still favored this view. Security should be provided by competing firms that offer, for example, “soldier services.” Otto Wolff, a leading member of the German free-trade movement, seemed to express the same idea in a letter to his brother in June 1851 (which is included in Braun 1893, 135–39). Wolff wrote that he was a member of a Berlin group “that does not care about practical politics at all insofar as it considers the state as the cause of all misery, as the great obstacle to cultural progress. I cannot denote this, our party, with a shorter name than ‘radical free

44. *Abendpost*, April 3, 1850, no. 76, 1.

traders.’ We represent the interests of free society against the coercive state . . . (Braun 1893, 136–37).

Wolff assured his brother that he and the rest of the group were not “idealistic utopians.” He explained: “[W]e study the real needs of human beings and the development of history and we come to the conclusion that all cultural progress is directed against any coercion in our times.” Then he described the judiciary as unnecessary: “You may probably consider us nevertheless as foolish, . . . since a long study of the history of civilization and economics is necessary to free oneself of all prejudices of the necessity of the judiciary, etc.” (Braun 1893, 137). Wolff remained unclear whether he opposed the necessity of a judiciary as such or the necessity of the state providing courts and jurisdiction. Given Beta’s testimony, Wolff probably meant to say the latter. Another proof of Faucher’s anarchism is contained in the autobiography by Johann Caspar Bluntschli, a Swiss lawyer. He had sent his friend Otto Schulthess to observe the activities of the Frankfurt Parliament in 1848. Schulthess then had an accidental encounter with Faucher and wrote in a letter to Bluntschli: “He [Faucher] and his friends speculate for the absolute dissolution of all established. He repeatedly said: ‘I do not want monarchy, not a republic, not aristocracy, not democracy; I want *acracry*, no state, no church, no laws, no tyrannizing of minorities by majorities, no taxes. All should happen *voluntarily*, all by *free association*, how Cobden explained it to us in Stettin’” (given in Bluntschli 1884, 96, emphasis in original). As can be seen in Schulthess’s description, Faucher was already using the *Abendpost*’s standard phrase *free association* in 1848.

Some contemporaries related the appearance of anarchist thought in Germany to Max Stirner. One example is Max Wirth, who had known Faucher since 1848. The free trader Wirth classified Stirner as an anarchist in a newspaper article about the history of anarchism. He wrote of “the German scholar Max Stirner, [who] . . . abominated the state as such.” Wirth went on that “a disciple of Max Stirner, the economist Dr. Julius Faucher, . . . had the audacity to hoist the colors of anarchy in the 1850 Berlin newspaper ‘Die Abendpost.’”⁴⁵ The *Westdeutsche Zeitung* (West German newspaper) repeatedly identified Stirner as the provider of ideas in the *Abendpost* that defended, according to the communist newspaper, “a tragicomical melange of Max Stirner’s natural state philosophy, Prince-Smith’s free trade, and Proudhon’s and Girardin’s socialism.”⁴⁶ Similarly, Friedrich Engels wrote in an unfinished manuscript about German anarchism in October 1850: “Insofar as the friends of anarchy do not depend on the Frenchmen Proudhon and Girardin, insofar as their views are of Germanic origin, they all share one common source: *Stirner*” (Marx and Engels 1960, 418, emphasis in original).⁴⁷ Accordingly, Stirner’s

45. *Neue Freie Presse*, July 26, 1894, no. 10748, morning issue, 2.

46. *Westdeutsche Zeitung*, May 8, 1850, no. 109, 1. I thank Olaf Briese for pointing my attention to this quote.

47. Engels—like other Marxists (Raico 1999, 64)—seemed to see a connection between Stirner, anarchism, and economic liberalism, writing in 1845, “Free competition does not want any restriction, any state supervision; the entire state is a burden to it, it would be most realized in a complete stateless condition, where everybody can exploit anyone, like for instance in Stirner’s ‘union’” (Marx and Engels 1962, 488).

biographer and individual anarchist John Henry Mackay praised the *Abendpost* as “one of the best-edited, most radical, and most interesting newspapers that ever existed” (1898, 80). Therefore, it is likely that Faucher synthesized his Stirnerite views with economic laissez-faire, given his Stirnerite statements from 1845 on (Faucher 1845, 4), his involvement with the Free and his anarchist remarks from 1848 on (Bluntschli 1884, 96).

The *Abendpost*'s Place in the History of Individualist Anarchist Thought

The *Abendpost*'s philosophy was in line with a long tradition of liberal antistate ideas.⁴⁸ It can be traced back at least to some writings by the English Levellers of the seventeenth century—for example, *An Arrow against All Tyrants* (1646) by Richard Overton. In the eighteenth century, in *Vindication of Natural Society* (1756) Edmund Burke (1729–97) gave the responsibility for pauperism, suffering, and war to the state and rejected all forms of political organization. David Hart considers Burke's work as the “first individualist, liberal anarchist tract ever written” (2007, 377–78). A follower of Burke, William Godwin (1756–1836), similarly argued for the abolition of the state, for individualism, and for property rights. Both men did not explain, however, how security might be provided by the market without a state. Burke limited himself to a severe critique of government, and Godwin proposed juries that would urge a delinquent to forsake his evildoings and, if necessary, submit him to criticism and ostracism of his peers. Godwin had a very optimistic view of human nature and believed humanity would become “reasonable and virtuous” in the absence of a state (1793, 577). Other early forerunners are the American Josiah Warren (1798–1874), the Englishman Thomas Hodgskin (1787–1869), and the Frenchmen Charles Comte (1782–1837) and Charles Dynoyer (1786–1862). The latter two, like Prince-Smith, published articles in the *Journal des Economistes*. A further step in the development of individualist anarchism was made by Adam Smith (1723–90) and Jean-Baptiste Say (1767–1832). Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations* that justice was cheap in England because a variety of courts competed for clients by offering the lowest price and the fastest service ([1776] 1904, 212).⁴⁹ Following Smith, Say reasoned that a state monopoly on justice limits consumers' range of choice and brings about monopoly prices. Consumers should be free to choose the court and judge that most suits them. The price of a court should consist of a levy fixed by the province, a premium for the respective judge, and a fee proportional to the values under litigation (Say 1843, 440; see also Hart 2007, 382).⁵⁰

The breakthrough came with *De la production de la sécurité* (1849) by Gustave de Molinari (1819–1912), which combined Say and Smith's economic analyses with Burke and Godwin's political anarchism (Hart 2007, 383). Authors before Molinari had either

48. See Hart 2007 for a history of individualist anarchist thought.

49. See Smith [1776] 1904, vol. 2, book 5, chap. 1, part 2.

50. See Say 1843, part 7, chap. 12.

not explained how the market might provide physical enforcement of law or assumed that a police force was unnecessary once the state was abolished (Hart 2007, 386). Molinari proposed a system of competing producers of security that would insure their clients against property invasions and offered a law code to which clients and criminals had to submit themselves if they committed a crime (Molinari 2009, 53–61). Two years later, in his book *Social Statics* (1851), Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) recommended that the state be replaced with a “mutual-safety confederation” (206). It would run on business principles, and everyone could join voluntarily and pay its “taxes” or leave it. Spencer spoke of a “mutual assurance” and a “joint-stock protection-society confine[d] . . . to guaranteeing the rights of its members” (1851, 268, 276). Contrary to Molinari, he did not suggest several protection firms that competed against each other, but one company. Auberon Herbert (1838–1906), who was a disciple of Spencer, took the argument further and advocated a system of private insurances, similar to Molinari’s proposal. There is no evidence, however, that Spencer or Herbert knew of Molinari’s work (Hart 2007, 389). Later, thinkers such as Benjamin Tucker (1854–1939) and Lysander Spooner (1808–87) followed the lead of these antistate liberals.

The *Abendpost* was in the early middle part of this tradition. As Beta’s testimony indicates, the newspaper likely shared Molinari’s vision of several competing producers of security. Its distinctive element was the synthesis of individualist anarchism with Stirnerite egoism. André Lichtschlag (2003) views Stirner and the *Abendpost* as forerunners of David Friedman’s utilitarian variant of anarchocapitalism. According to Lichtschlag, Stirner’s union can be interpreted as a firm, his concept of intercourse as the market, and the egoist as a *homo oeconomicus* who maximizes his personal utility.⁵¹ Murray Rothbard, who defended a rights-based anarchocapitalism, rejected Stirner in his article “Myth and Truth about Libertarianism” (1980, 9).

Conclusion

The *Abendpost* was and remains, in the words of Heinrich Beta, “an immortal obscurity” (1863, 268). It synthesized laissez-faire, anarchist, and Stirnerite ideas and presented a new political philosophy—a consequentialist Stirnerite version of individualist anarchism. It was also an early focal point of the German free-trade movement, which gained considerable political influence in the 1860s and 1870s. Faucher, Michaelis, and Prince-Smith were members of Parliament in Prussia, the North German Confederation, or the German Empire, and Michaelis even worked at the Office of the Federal Chancellor under Bismarck. Volker Hentschel writes about the free traders’ participation in the legislation between 1867 and 1875, “It created the legal and institutional grounds on which our economic order is still based today. . . . [I]t cannot be denied that the free traders exerted a sustainable influence on German economic history. It appears that this

51. Friedman states that he has neither read *The Ego and Its Own* nor published anything on Stirner (email to the author, January 1, 2018).

fact was seldom seen so far” (1975, 283).⁵² The events around the *Abendpost* might also explain why Faucher and Michaelis sided with Bismarck in the Prussian constitutional conflict in the mid-1860s. Ralph Raico suggests that the German free traders developed a disgust for political struggle because of their early anarchism (1999, 74). However, the economic radicalism of Faucher and his friends soon sank into oblivion, and they remained the only Stirnerite and individualist anarchist voices in Germany for decades.⁵³

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52. Wilhelm Roscher, the leader of the older historical school, arrived at a similar conclusion in his history of German economic thought, writing that “these men indisputably rendered an outstanding contribution to the *practice* of Germany” (1874, 1016, emphasis in original).

53. That is, until John Henry Mackay (1864–1933), Kurt Zube (1905–1991), and Hans-Hermann Hoppe (1949–) (see Mackay 1898; Hoppe 1987). See Raico 1999, 64–66, for the very few references to the *Abendpost* in the subsequent literature.

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