

## No Colour Bar on Our Buses!

IN spite of the inconvenience caused to thousands of Londoners by the bus strike last month, the strikers were not entirely without sympathy from the public.

Of all workers in major industries, passenger transport workers have most contact with the customers. Dockers are strange, wild, rough fellows always causing trouble behind the high walls and forbidding warehouses of a waterfront cut off from the daily lives of most city dwellers. But bus workers you meet every day; you get to know their faces and they yours. You know that the work they do during rush hours is hard and irritating because you are caught up in it yourself—you are part of their work.

You know therefore that busmen are not wild men, and that when they come out on strike there must be a good reason for it. Even the inconvenience it caused was not enough to make Londoners altogether antagonistic to the busworkers' struggle.

It needs, however, all our understanding of their troubles to remain sympathetic with the drivers and conductors of Stockwell Garage, in South London, when they raise a colour bar against two trainee conductors who have the un-English misfortune to have brown skins.

There are 500 workers at Stockwell, and they complain that the union was not consulted before the two men were taken on. But this is not really a suitable time to raise the issue of union consultation on labour recruitment. Why wait until two coloured workers are involved? Why was it not made one of the demands during the recent strike?

It is not the first time that busworkers have discriminated against a particular kind of worker. A few years back a strike actually developed against the employment of clippies—women conductors. And the arguments then were that the answer to the problem of recruiting labour for the buses was not to bring in women—even at the same wages as men—for the work was not really suitable for them (!), but to raise wages and conditions sufficiently to attract men to the industry.

That is certainly a sound enough argument. Clearly the wastage of trained employees of London Transport (over 25,000 drivers and conductors left their jobs between 1948 and 1952) will not be halted until either the job is good enough to hold them, or there are no other jobs to go to.

But then the answer to that is two-fold. Firstly passenger transport workers must step up their struggle for better conditions themselves. The recent strike virtually failed because it was only a little above 50 per cent. effective. Only 43 garages out of 84 in Central London were out, and no support came from the Underground workers—because they are in different unions!

And secondly, if they feel that the influx of labour under present conditions weakens their struggle for improvements, then bus workers should put a ban on all new recruits irrespective of their colour or sex. Let it be one way or another.

But do not let us have this stupid and prejudiced objection to workers because their skins happen to be brown instead of the pinkish-yellowish-greenish-mauvish mixture that passes for 'white'.

Mind you, the busmen do seem to be somewhat sheepish about it. The argument is that "it might lead to friction with the public". Well, let the public decide for itself, huh? They've managed all right in Birmingham, after the same fuss there earlier this year. And if a few psychopaths make trouble—it's up to the public to deal with them.

## Shedding his Ink for his People

PREMIER NASSER of Egypt, who came to power in the way of most dictators, is reputed not to have enjoyed the same popularity as his predecessor General Neguib. Last week, an incident which has all the marks of a well staged stunt, gave Nasser a tremendous boost in the eyes of the Egyptian people. While speaking one night in Alexandria's Manshiya Square to a quarter of a million people, from a few yards away eight shots were fired at him—and missed. To add to the drama a dark stain was seen to appear on the breast of his uniform. Refusing to leave the platform he orated into the microphone: "Oh free men, let everybody stay in his place; my blood is for you. My life is for you." The gunman seized upon by the excited crowd, was rescued by the police and thrown into jail where he confessed he had been chosen by the Moslem Brotherhood, opposed to Nasser, to carry out the killing. Meanwhile it was disclosed that Nasser had never been touched by a bullet, but the dark stain on his uniform was due to a fountain pen leak!

Following the incident the massive headquarters of the Moslem Brotherhood in Cairo was burned to the ground by the mob, and the Supreme Guide was arrested. Thus the last legal opposition to Nasser's rule was put out of the way.

It is reported from Egypt that "as Nasser's train passed through the delta cities, returning to Cairo, huge crowds spontaneously came out to cheer him. At the Cairo railway station, 100,000 people surged against police lines crying

"God bless Gamal". Besieged by admirers reaching out to embrace him, the Premier needed two hours to make what was ordinarily a ten-minute drive to his office. Eight wild shots had served him well."

The Catholic Church has taught us the value of martyrdom to an organisation but it is easier to sustain the glorification of a dead saint than that of a live dictator. General Nasser would do well to remember that the mob is fickle especially when frustrated and frightened by the actions of a corrupt Government. When the excitement is over and conditions show no sign of improvement, old hates may well re-emerge and Premier Nasser will make a more deserving scapegoat than many.

## Man's Inhumanity to Man LEG CHAINS FOR KENYA PRISONERS

THE conditions under which prisoners are detained in Kenya was revealed by a *Reuter* message from Nairobi reporting an attempted prison break-out by twenty-five long term Mau Mau prisoners. They broke down a door and got into the main compound of Nairobi prison.

"They were recaptured after a sentry had fired shots to raise the alarm. They had sawn through leg chains with a smuggled hacksaw blade." (Our italics).

We had thought that leg chains had long ago been abolished by the "civilized nations".

## Public Apathy & Power Politics

ONE of the principal problems with which the American political leaders had to contend in the recent elections was public apathy. The cause, writes the *News Chronicle* is the same as for this country. "Britain is moving closer to the American party system, with few real differences dividing the two parties". Indeed "it would need a microscope, a pair of dividers, and the keenest political acumen to distinguish between the parties on any basic question of principle".

But the public have also lost interest because "politics have become a mere struggle for power between two rival groups of politicians, instead of a battle of conflicting principles". And the voice of liberalism goes on to warn that "Cynicism is dangerous to democracy. So is a belief that one party is just as bad as another".

The trouble, according to the *News Chronicle* is that we have no radicals, and so the voter has no choice. We have no major party representing the heirs of the great Liberal reform tradition, or of the idealism of the Labour Party in the days when Socialists believed in Socialism.

The *New Statesman and Nation* (6/11/54) in its leading article on *The Crisis of Working-class Leadership* laments the fact that leaders of the Trade Union movement, such as Mr. Deakin, and the Labour Party Executive instead of paying attention to the opposition within their ranks and recognising that the "strength of any minority movement provides a rough measure of their own failings" shows a readiness "to label every rank-and-file initiative as disruptive, and to use the big stick against its unofficial leaders as soon as they open their mouths". This criticism is qualified by the *N.S.&N.*, however, when it writes:

"We accept, of course, the fact that any great trade union and any political

party must have rules of discipline and, in the last resort, when persuasion has failed, must be prepared to enforce them against disruptive elements."

*Tribune*, the Bevanites organ, states in last week's issue that "a great row has blown up" in the 200,000 strong Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers as a result of the last minute decision of the leaders at the recent Labour Party conference at Scarborough, to reverse the Union's position of opposition to German rearmament to support of the National Executive resolution in favour. So far nearly 100 branches have sent in their protests to the Union's Manchester headquarters. *Tribune* quotes from the Union's organ the *Woodworker's Journal* the following official explanation for the volte face:

"The principle which has pervaded our society's history and constitution is the belief in the wisdom of a flexible, representative authority as against an inflexible mandated authority."

THE member of Parliament is supposed to represent his constituents (those who voted for him as well as those who voted for his opponent), yet most of his time is spent in Westminster or globe-trotting at someone else's expense. The Government is supposed to serve the nation but instead pursues policies which serve the interests of powerful economic and political organisations. The Trade Union leader is supposed to serve the interests of the members of his Union (who pay him every week to do this) and yet is always in conflict with them. The policeman is supposed to be a public servant, employed by the ratepayer, yet in his daily dealings with the public he attempts to behave with the arrogance of an employer. The Transport Commission is employed by the travelling public which it treats like a flock of sheep without a say in that service which they

nevertheless are expected to finance! And so on through the ranks of officialdom, ending with the Civil Servants, the most grossly misnamed section of the nation's bureaucracy.

Is it surprising that the public is apathetic when the time comes to vote for these "public servants" who invariably assume the rôle of masters as soon as they are elected? The solution is not to be found in the *News Chronicle's* plea for "a major party" representing the old liberal tradition or the idealism of the Labour Party in the days when Socialists believed in Socialism (even if we overlook the inaccurate connection between "idealism" and the "Labour Party" and between the "Labour Party" and "socialists who believed in socialism"!). The solution will be found when the people recognise that no government, whatever its complexion, will represent or consult them. "Majority government" is a meaningless sop for simple minds. The job of Government—of the Executive, is to govern . . . the majority as well as the minority.

The Trade Unions are perhaps a clearer example of the poison of leadership, for here we have organisations which sprang up for the specific purpose of using the potential might of the producers in the nation in order to assert the "dignity of labour" (which the Government—of, by and for the people, obviously did not, and in passing one should add that in spite of a Labour government with representatives of the Trade Unions, the need for Unions remained!) They were financed by the workers themselves and it is surely not an impertinence on the workers' part to assume that their wishes and their decisions should be carried out by the representatives of their organisations, whether in the opinion of these representatives, they are right or wrong. But in the course of the years, and with the growth of these organisations into huge

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WHATEVER one may think of Baron von Neurath cannot justify the sadistic treatment of this man by the Four Power authorities. He is now 81 years old, is half blind and suffering from heart trouble, and last week was released from Spandau jail where he has been a prisoner for the past eight years.

Describing his meeting with his daughter, the Press Agencies describe how "He talked to his daughter constantly now that he was freed from the prison rule of silence."

Eight years solitary confinement coupled with blindness and old age is a terrible punishment to impose even on your worst enemy.

centralised political and economic machines, a new parasitic profession has emerged—the Trade Union organiser—whose approach to the Unions is as autocratic and remote as that of a business executive to the workers in his factory.

The workers have paid a heavy price for trusting in "the wisdom of a flexible representative authority" (the euphemistic way of saying: handing power to the Executive and the professional organiser). But have they learned the lesson?

One of the significant aspects of the recent Dock strike was that it appeared to be the expression of the rank and file members, who resisted all the pressures exerted by the Press and by the professional leaders, from Deakin downwards, to break it. Apart from the immediate issues involved in that strike, one cannot help feeling that the dockers who engaged in it have emerged with a feeling of greater strength in themselves and a corresponding contempt for the men of Transport House. This feeling is the first step towards the achievement of a true "dignity of labour", and, in its wider context, towards a true appreciation of the dignity of Man.

## Tribunal on Rail Wages

IT is nearly a year now since the National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers threatened to call a national railway strike in support of their wage claim for a 15 per cent. increase.

The Transport Commission tossed them a six per cent. boost, which the unions gratefully grabbed and thankfully called off the strike—on the understanding that the entire wages structure throughout the industry would be overhauled. Now, after a further twelve months and another inadequate offer from the Commission, a Railway Staff National Tribunal is lending its august ear to the railmen's pleas and the Commission's arguments as to how well off they are.

The latter are being put by Mr. W. P. Allen, Chief of Establishments and Staff, who showed that footplate men supplement their basic wages by an average 30s.—£2 a week of about 48 hours, and cleaners have an average excess of 14s. on a week of 45 hours. A lot of publicity has been given to one instance he quoted of a driver earning £22 15s. in a week of 64 hours.

As J. S. Campbell, N.U.R. General Secretary, pointed out, this fine sum could be earned only by the driver of a crack passenger express putting in an extra half-week's number of hours in a week.

Travellers might well ask themselves what kind of strain is being put upon footplate crews if they work, with any consistency, these terribly long hours. Driving a crack express demands constant alertness and concentration and the physical and nervous strain must be considerable. Does that make for safety?

The railways are second only to the coal mines in the table of dangerous occupations. Conditions generally are antiquated and filthy and, as J. S. Campbell said, railway workers are treated more like animals than human beings. In our opinion, the degree of responsibility and conditions of service—with shift work and lodging turns—makes the present union claims (A.S.L.E.F. £10 5s. for top drivers' rate, N.U.R. £9 15s., as against the present £8. 18. 6.) by no means unreasonable.

They seem, however, to be too much for the Transport Commission.

# The Argument of Human Nature

ALTHOUGH two human acts can never be said to be identical in the same sense that physical and chemical happenings in the laboratory are taken to be, certain constants of human behaviour have been indicated, admittedly less constant than similar ones in other animal species, yet differing from them sufficiently to become the object of special attention. Behaviourists list these constants as a limited number of reflexes, and then proceed to study how these can be conditioned and modified, but most psychologists and philosophers, as well as the man in the street, are incorrigibly convinced that there is something within man that is responsible for human behaviour. If a certain degree of constancy is observable in the latter then the cause of it must be capable of preserving identity in time. "Human nature" is but the most convenient name for this cause of behaviour, and corresponds to a general concept inclusive of all psychological concepts without exception. Because of this generality, and because differences of behaviour among human beings often appear more striking than their similarities the notion of human nature has been rejected by some as of no use whatever. Arguments are not lacking in favour or against a human nature accounting both for similarities and differences, but the crucial question in our time, granted that human beings are continually changing, is whether they can or cannot change in any direction and to any extent.

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WITH Western, capitalist human nature in mind, a case has been put forward portending the necessary failure of a particular policy or the total collapse of totalitarian régimes. Appalled by the tortures and indignities inflicted upon thousands and millions of human beings, in a time when not only the death of God had been proclaimed, but also, to use Kluge's words, the earth-essence had deserted the planet, people who could still cherish and conceive a life without tortures and indignities spoke of some deep limit to human resilience beyond which lay incalculable forces for rebellion and salvation. On the other hand, to reject the anarchist challenge, other people have spoken of limits in human nature against which idealistic calls, enthusiasms and demands would hopelessly knock and quickly founder. So it seems that the argument of human nature is not expressive so much of a surmise of permanent potentialities in man as of a conviction of his badness or a faith in his goodness. It is also a noticeable fact, especially in the rearing of children, that an individual tends to live up to the judgment passed upon him by the people round him, that he will turn out bad if considered no good, while

if credit is given him he will show himself capable of goodness. Give a dog a bad name and hang him is a saying indicative of this fact of common experience, and at the same time of a practice pretty general with ruling classes and groups. They brutalize the people under them and then say that they must be treated the way they treat them because they are brutes. When human badness is invoked, either with scanty or plenty of evidence, in order to smother intentions and hamper actions aimed at some social equity and emancipation we can be practically sure that the people invoking it have some vested interest in human badness, and do not want men to be better. When human goodness instead is evoked we cannot be equally sure of purity of motives and ethical earnestness behind.

Insofar as anarchism purports to be directly constructive it cannot dispense with a statement of belief in human goodness or ethical perfectibility. The tackling of evil at its roots is accordingly a primary concern for anarchist theory and programmatic. The important discoveries achieved by psychology in the last fifty years have not yet, however, been sifted and assimilated, let alone put to use. Even if they were, psychology alone can hardly be expected to effect appreciable changes on a social and political scale. As anarchism aims at social and political transformations it must be prepared to deal with evil by means other than those suggested by psychotherapy, however susceptible of organized application they may be.

Social and political evil, though stemming from psychological motives, is as powerful as it is precisely because of the structures and conditions that give it its social and political aspect. A change

in these conditions and structures, whatever the means by which it is effected, could accordingly reduce its power to a very considerable extent. The stumbling-block for anarchists is, as it is well known, the difficulty of effecting social changes against coercive organizations without they themselves resorting to any coercive measure. But it is not impossible to find means that would be coercive only insofar as they will be used to check actual attempts from other quarters at solving conflicts through coercion. Without such means even the most perfect of anarchist societies will remain at the mercy of the first group of gangsters capable of concerted action.

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UNDER an anarchist dispensation, especially in its initial phase, two great incentives and conditions of social and political evil should be reduced to their minimum proportions. Effective measures to ensure that they are so reduced would not take long in dispelling the most determinedly grim views about human nature. Supposing they would not markedly alter it, they would certainly affect behaviour, and all that an anarchist society, the same as any other, can demand from an individual is simply that he behaves himself, whether or not he is inwardly tormented by antisocial urges.

I can impunity and opportunity. When harsh sentences passed upon criminals are attacked in their self-justification as a deterrent to crime one rightly insists that criminals not deterred by punishment are often people who are prompted by motives much stronger and circumstances more cogent than fear of punishment could ever be, by people who actually desire punishment as a psycho-

logical or existential relief, or by people who simply lack the necessary intelligence and imagination clearly and steadily to visualize the consequences of their actions. But one also forgets that evil not contemplated by law, incorporated in the law or circumstantial to its application, as well as all evil perpetrated and commanded by those above and beyond the law, is there because of the absence of a power stronger than theirs, of a responsibility to anything but their bitter fancy, in short because of an impunity assured by their monopoly of the available means of punishment. Now an ideal society is one in which no punishment is administered. It is also one in which no punishable, that is no evil, action is committed. For the purpose at hand an evil action can be simply and aptly defined as one of arbitrarily administering punishment to an innocent person. The purity section in the anarchist movement may ironize at the idea of an anarchist society in which punishment is still administered but there will never be anything approaching an anarchist society while punishers of innocent persons remain unpunished. To dispel any misunderstanding I define a punisher of innocent persons as any man who without commensurate provocation does injury to another through abuse of physical force or any kind of power.

Impunity is opportunity to do evil which in other circumstances or done by other people, would be met with punishment, but there is also opportunity to do evil for which no punishment is contemplated owing to an outlook peculiar to a given society which sets certain activities beyond the reach of moral judgment. In a capitalist society, for example, the buying and selling of stocks and shares is perfectly legal and indulged in without any moral compunction in spite of the fact that, beside being a most objectionable form of exploitation, it can suddenly bring unemployment, misery and starvation to a great number of people. If, with a different outlook, stocks and shares were not negotiable, an opportunity to exploit workers and to rob the savings of people with little or no knowledge of market movements would

simply not be there. I am not even sure that the convertibility of stocks and shares is an indispensable feature of capitalism, and that it is more of an asset than a liability to economic development. It is certainly unethical, based as it is on the assumption that it is perfectly in order for fools to be swindled by the shrewd. The argument of human nature applied to this particular case would conclude that the shrewd would find other ways of swindling fools if stocks and shares would be no longer negotiable or if there were not stocks and shares at all. My contention is that they may or may not according to the availability or not of similar opportunities.

The same thing may happen to shrewdness that happened to physical courage and strength. People endowed with the latter, provided they were not totally imbecile, were for many centuries and in many lands leaders of society and arbiters of disputes. A changed environment and more complex social needs have now reduced such people to the rôle of manual workers or, exceptionally, champion boxers. They no longer plunder, rape and kill as they did in ages when they practically monopolised the opportunity of doing so. Now, as the psychologist would say, probably with his tongue in his cheek, their evil propensities have been sublimated. Each society has its particular overriding interests and needs, and what is called human nature, beside developing them in the first instance, adapts itself to their requirements. The ability to overpower an opponent in physical combat was once a primary need for social survival as it was a social task to develop this ability. The ability to make money is the greatest asset in a capitalist society because the paramount capitalist aim is the making of money. There are signs already pointing to ethical living as a need and interest striving for supremacy in a still largely unethical society, and some anarchists at least are looking forward to the time when to conform to this interest and need human nature will turn out to be pervasively ethical.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI.

## FREEDOM FROM WANT

Here lies the body of Farmer Pete  
Who died from growing too much wheat.

Here lies the body of Acharya,  
Who died 'cos Pete's wheat wasn't here.

THESE two epitaphs sum up a growing realisation in some quarters that the poverty and wasteful aspects of under-development on one hand, and too much food production without a money market on the other, resulting in food destruction, is a problem that can no longer be relegated to the bottom of the list while industrial development is pursued relentlessly.

On Wednesday night on the Home Service Ritchie Calder,\* whose humanism belies the popular concept of unfeeling scientists, in a brief half hour under the title of *The Third Freedom* (taken from Roosevelt's speech on freedom from want) put the case for action against such a state of things. He approached the problem of under-development from two standpoints, the practical, no doubt with the 'realists' in mind, and the moral. The programme was partially dramatised taking the form of voices (familiar to public speakers) interjecting with the usual objections when the inhabitants of under developed countries are treated as human beings like ourselves—example: "they don't want to progress they are not like us, and anyway such a step would be a threat to our own economic security".

Ritchie Calder dealt with the economic objections by pointing out that markets are not destroyed by improving conditions but are in fact created. He gave the example of an Arab he saw in the desert going to work on a bicycle because improved conditions in this part of the world enabled him to buy products from industrial countries in need of markets. There were other examples like this, but to our mind the importance of the broadcast—the first in a series of seven to which readers are urged to listen—was the undoubted emphasis placed on the idea that it is the job of everyone to assist those in need. This can be done through existing world organisations as well as individual countries, and by the serious attempt to assail prejudices and doubts. An appeal was made to self interest through practical arguments, but, far more important was the appeal to the generous human impulses buried under the layers of competitive conditioning.

The policy of food destruction in some parts of the world while the people of other parts die of starvation rarely reaches the headlines of our newspapers, and

when it does appear, tucked away in some obscure corner. Editors, so vigilant in the safeguarding of public morals, fail to draw the obvious conclusions; thus many people are not even aware that such conditions exist. The millions of people who listen to the Home Service will include many who have given little thought to the needs of people in 'backward' countries. For this reason, as we have so often pointed out, such enterprises have our support because we can never hope to reach such numbers through the meagre means we have at our disposal at the moment.

The conclusions of these weekly broadcasts may not be given an anarchist name but isn't it a part of the anarchist philosophy to help people in need? If Ritchie Calder and the other speakers in this series can help to achieve a change in people's attitude with the simple words "people are only stupid because they have never been taught", whether he knows it or not he is making our job so much easier. R.M.

## THE LIBERTARIAN

THE LIBERTARIAN, Special Omnibus Edition, 6d.

"THE LIBERTARIAN", bulletin of the North East London Anarchist Group, celebrates its second birthday with this publication, which contains a selection of articles from the earlier issues of the paper. The North East London Group itself has been going for considerably longer than two years, dating back as far as 1946, and providing a centre for meetings and discussions on all kinds of philosophical and sociological topics relative to anarchism. Anarchist groups tend to spring up and disappear again, to reappear somewhere else, so this continuity is no small achievement, particularly in view of the general apathy with which we are surrounded.

This publication has articles on a wide variety of subjects from Stirner to Civil Defence, from Syndicalism to Henry Miller. It will be of considerable interest to all who are concerned in the activities of the small group, as a meeting place for the exchange of ideas, and the centre for the spread of propaganda. It will, we hope, introduce new readers to "The Libertarian".

There are a large number of different ways in which anarchist ideas may be spread. Some of them are indicated in this selection. But there can be no doubt of the value of the small group, and it is to be regretted that there are not many more of them.

\*The first from the grave of a Mid-West American of the 'Thirties; the second, an Indian's response to the first.

\*Science Editor, *News Chronicle*.

"SMOG".

## Theatre

### THE PARTY SPIRIT

ALTHOUGH Aristophanes was conservative in his opinions his devastating mockeries halted neither before Gods nor official persons and he lustily shook his cap and bells at the most sacred things. His biting wit knew no bounds, and he lashed men with the boldest unrestraint and without a trace of prudery; he has become a touchstone by which all that is keenest in wit, bitterest in ridicule and that is highest in poetry is tested. He knew in common with America's famous humorist that "laughter is man's greatest and most neglected weapon". Although the new farce by Peter Jones and John Jowett *The Party Spirit* (at the Piccadilly Theatre, London) is not as devastating as it might have been, it carries on this style of theatrical art in mocking at solemn and sacred things. It satirizes the futility of Parliament, and the hollowness of its pretensions and dignity. Robertson Hare as William Grout, M.P., is the only member of the Free Whig Party in the House of Parliament, until Leonard Bilker arrives to double the party strength. Unfortunately, he has only been able to get elected with the aid of Mr. Plummer, a racketeer constituent who wants the purchase-tax taken off plastic fish-slices, and forged ballot-papers. The first act is in the Strangers' Bar, and we learn that even the Prime Minister has been known to consult Mabel, the barmaid, for advice in the writing of his speeches. A fool has this great advantage when he enters Parliament or society: he finds himself among his equals. When he recalls that on several occasions recently, Members of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, have been known to read out the wrong speeches, and have only been aware of this on being informed of their mistake afterwards, many of the farcical incidents in this play seem even more witty and quite plausible. For example, Leonard Bilker removes Government Chief Whip's speech and reads it out as his maiden effort, and is applauded; and then the Chief Whip is much embarrassed at the laughter which greets his reading of the same speech. And yet people believe that they are dependent for all the benefits they enjoy on these egoistic, puerile and incompetent muddlers and hypocrites, politicians and rulers. In a monarchy or dictatorship the powers of the despot were physically limited, for even if he wished to he could only undertake or understand more than a small part of public affairs, so that his capacity for meddling is comparatively small. But this is not so with the pestilence of

representative government: representatives have no such powers of unlimited gratification, so that each has more time and opportunity for meddling, and a country ruled by such representatives is ruled by a worse despot, one with unlimited time, unlimited vanity, unlimited assurance, and whose ambition and power-hunger is stimulated to the most vicious activity. A general election is a strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. Although some parts of *The Party Spirit* are rather routine farce, it certainly illustrates the truth of a remark of Clemenceau's, "The popular vote is a toy of which one soon tires; but one must not say this aloud, for the people must have a religion. Sad it is... Sad but true." In one scene William Grout has drunk a sleeping potion intended for another M.P., and is lying on a couch, but whenever he hears the word "Division" he rises in a somnambulist manner and walks to the door. In the chicaneries and bribes offered by both sides for the votes of the Free Whigs, the Government needing their support to survive, we see the absurdity of basing ordering and discovering truth and justice by the counting up of heads. The majority-rule is founded on the presumption that anything is right if you can only get a sufficient number of people on your side to say so; and when we realise that the ability not to walk through a division-lobby is ultimately all the intelligence being an M.P. entails, it is obvious that morons or automatons are well adapted to such a career. There are several excellent witticisms in this play at the expense of authority and the dignity of Parliament, and, apart from its political satire, it is a delightful and ingenious farce, and, what is unusual for a farce, one can see it without feeling bored or fatigued by the end of it.

Everything that government undertakes is inspired by the spirit of domination, and intended always to defend, enlarge, and perpetuate the privileges of property and of those classes of which government is the representative and defender. The so-called great among statesmen and political figures have said nothing wise and intelligent; they have usually been men of ordinary mediocre current ideas, of banalities adapted to the average man. The majority of these "great" figures, these realists, politically-minded men, are distinguished by the same criminality, hypocrisy, craftiness and insolence as Stalin, Napoleon, Churchill and Bismarck. D.M.M.

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## THE CONDUCTOR-LESS ORCHESTRA

ONE by one the "objections" to anarchism are being answered in practice more effectively than we can hope to by the written word. Generally these "objections" are details which seem to be advanced more for the sake of distracting attention from the central issue—on which the "objectors" have few arguments with which to oppose the anarchist case—than for better understanding how an anarchist society would function. The eagerness with which they demand two motor-cars, a yacht, and several palatial homes as the price for accepting to live in an anarchist society, makes one a little suspicious of their good faith in view of the fact that in the society which they now uphold they are satisfied with public transport, a rowing-boat on the Serpentine and a couple of rooms in someone else's house!

But a more serious "objection" is the one which cannot see how organised activity can be carried through efficiently without someone being in charge, and giving orders. One of the reasons such an "objection" looms so large in the minds of the "objectors" is that we are conditioned to take for granted that even the smallest group must have a leader for without him there would only be chaos and as many opinions as there are members in the group. This in turn springs from the idea that we would all have conflicting interests if they were not curbed by a central authority which provides us with a common objective, common standards and allocates to us our respective tasks. And one can imagine that if such curbs are considered necessary in the case of running a factory or a farm, in which more or less routine activities are involved, how much greater would the need for a leader be in a group engaged in activities of a more artistic, and less tangible character!

Thus the "objection" to anarchism which runs: "What would happen in an anarchist society if the orchestra refused to have a conductor?" The "objection" is in the first place based on a mistaken understanding of the function of the conductor, as we shall attempt to show later. But even so, the myth that there would be chaos in the orchestra if there were no conductor has been exploded once for all.

WE are not referring to the High Court case of some months ago when a well-known dance band leader sued his former employers for wrongful dismissal. It may be recalled that he spent most of his time chatting and drinking with his employer's patrons and very little leading his band. The results did not appear detrimental to the quality of the playing! No, the example we have in mind comes from the other side of the Atlantic where the former N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, disbanded when its eminent conductor Toscanini retired, has, under its new name of the Symphony of the Air, given its first public concert at the Carnegie Hall without a conductor... and without chaos! The critic of the *New York Times* describes this unique experience in these terms:

"Many of our most famous American orchestras, directed by distinguished leaders, have failed to give such an exciting and impressive performance, which a packed and wildly enthusiastic house applauded to the echo."

How did these musicians achieve such perfection without a conductor?

# GOVERNMENT BY ASSASSINATION

**THE ASSASSINS**, by F. A. Ridley. (Published by F. A. Ridley, 65 Grays Inn Buildings, Rosebery Avenue, London, E.C.1.) 8/6d.

F. A. RIDLEY has written quite a number of books on neglected byways of history, and this is an intensely interesting addition to the list. The Sect of the Assassins had great, if sinister, fame in its own day, and has added a word to the vocabulary of subsequent ages. However, very little is known about them at the present time.

Their history is as follows. Hardly had Islam become an established religion than it split in two, and this split remains to the present day. The dynasty of Ali, husband of Fatima the daughter of Mahomet, and the Prophet's only child to leave issue, was overthrown, and the Khalifate passed to the half-pagan Ummayyads. The Khalif was The Commander of the Faithful, the spiritual and temporal head of the Moslem Church.

The claims of the descendants of Ali and Fatima however found numerous supporters, who broke away from the orthodox faith, and formed the Shia, or faction. From then on there was a permanent struggle between the Shiites and the orthodox (Sunni) Moslems. In time the Shiites again split, into the "sect of the twelve", who acknowledged twelve divinely ordained descendants of Ali and the "sect of seven" who acknowledged only that number. Thanks to the organising genius of Abdullah-ben-May-

mum (died 874 A.D.) the latter sect gradually came to the fore under the name of the Ismailites, from the last of the seven descendants acknowledged by them, Ismail.

Eventually this sect succeeded in setting up its own dynasty in Egypt and North Africa, which for the Ismailites became a sort of Russia, which sent its agents all over the Moslem world. This was the Fatimid dynasty, and under it Egypt became a great power. It also became the foremost civilisation in the world, with the possible exception of China, far and away in advance of Europe, which was still in a state of near barbarism. The Moslems of this period regarded the Europeans ("The Franks" as they called them) as a race of inferior childish mentality, and they had at least as much justification as the Europeans had later on to despise the natives of Africa and the Americas. Tolerance and humanity were far more advanced in Egypt at that time than in Europe, which was still under the rule of the Catholic medicine men.

However, the Fatimid Khalifs could not forever be the rulers of a State, and at the same time the organisers of an international propagandist organisation, and the latter decayed, just at the very time when it was most needed. The world of Islam was threatened from without, simultaneously by Turks and Crusaders. The former overran Western Asia, and established themselves in Baghdad (1059), while the latter captured Jerusalem (1099).

Moslem civilisation had reached its highest point, and was now declining, as Rome had done before, and as ours seems to be doing now. The poignant lines of Omar Khayyam expresses this feeling perfectly.

*"One Moment in Annihilation's Waste  
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—*

*The stars are setting and the Caravan  
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—Oh,  
make haste!"*

Into the vacuum created by the collapse of the old propagandist organisation came Hasan-ben-Sabah. He realised the need for some new movement, that could operate independently of the Egyptian government, but his resources were small. He and his followers were not sufficiently numerous to stand up to the orthodox Moslems, and the Turks who were now "more Moslem than the Moslems". In those days an heretical

sect had to defend itself on the field of battle, or perish.

Faced with this situation Hasan obtained possession of several mountain fortresses, notably Alamut ("The Eagle's Nest") near the Caspian, which he made his headquarters. Such was the beginning of the Sect of the Assassins, though the name only came later on. It was not a great time before the sect severed official connection with the Fatimids of Egypt, and continued its way alone, surrounded by enemies. In such a position it resorted to violent means to defend itself against the world, which was not averse to using violence against it. After all it was a sect of heretics, and Islam, under the bigoted Turks, was undergoing a revival of fanaticism. The Assassins were therefore to a large extent the defenders of the old more enlightened and liberal order of things, and within the mountain citadels the élite of the order, for it was by now more of an order, like the Templar Knights who were in fact influenced by it, than a sect, continued researches and speculations, while the rest of the world dived deeper and deeper into superstition. This élite amassed a large library, and made and collected scientific instruments. They also possessed an observatory.

Yet the almost impregnable fortresses were not enough to protect them. Hence they formed an organisation of fanatical and superstitious zealots, who by assassination, and still more so by threats of assassination, succeeded in protecting the order from the hostile powers around it. Thus, by a curious paradox, superstition was put to the defence of enlightenment, and ignorance protected knowledge, boundless obedience freedom. It is a good anarchist principle that by enslaving others one cannot oneself be free. The leaders of the Assassins no doubt enjoyed greater intellectual freedom than they could have had in the outer world, but they were after all the prisoners of their own castles, and the degeneration of the sect seems to point to the evil effects of this confinement.

The fida's of course were never admitted to the inner secrets, and the intellectual developments, of the movement. "Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die". In fact extraordinarily elaborate devices were used to deceive them, and make them believe that they would go straight to Heaven if they died in the course of their duty. These fida's, with their daggers and poison, did their

"The program was of the works that Toscanini had rehearsed and directed with these players. His musicianship and exacting taste in regard to the smallest detail was everywhere in evidence. And yet this was not the mere resurrection of the conceptions of a peerless musician and leader. Imbued with a high tradition, the men had worked out each of the performances for themselves and achieved an intimate understanding of every passage, individually, collectively and in a most eloquent spirit.

This was evident in the very first measures, but it was astonishing how remarkably the vast ensemble had achieved a unanimity which was almost that of a quartet or chamber organization. There were beautiful balances, the clear and proportionate articulation of inner voices and every instrument a center of glowing tone, and agent of expression. Those most favorable to the purposes of this orchestra had not anticipated such brilliant results." (Our italics).

THE lesson which the Symphony of the Air provides is not that conductors have been superseded but that a 100 or more highly temperamental musicians can agree among themselves on the interpretation and execution of complicated musical scores, and produce results of the highest order.

A conductor of the calibre of a Toscanini is not a glorified foreman or manager. He is as much a creative artist in his particular sphere as the composer is in his, and as are the musicians who produce music from their otherwise inarticulate instruments. There is no reason why they should not participate in all the activities connected with music-making. Beethoven and Mozart did; so do Stravinsky and Benjamin Britten.

Music-making in present-day society is an expensive entertainment and is run by impresarios on business lines, with one eye on production costs and the other on the box-office. This approach determines the choice of programmes and the time spent in rehearsals. And undoubtedly the use of a conductor can reduce the time needed for rehearsal to a minimum. But what the American experiment overwhelmingly shows is that the best results are not necessarily achieved by these methods.

In the society of to-morrow in which money no longer rules and in which time is not money, there will be more conductor-less orchestras and a higher standard of performance. But those very orchestras will be the first to welcome and enjoy the opportunity to play under the baton of the great interpreters of our musical heritage.

## Parliamentary Politics-East & West

1. THE Italian parliament, often the scene of brawls between opposing politicians imprudently reminding each other of their past misdeeds and allegiances, was in an uproar again recently when a Christian Democrat, Guiseppe Togni, accused the communists of having ex-fascists from Mussolini's militia and ex-spies from the OVRA in their ranks. This bit of truth was too much for the communists who, with the aid of the Nenni socialists started a brawl and succeeded in damaging six right-wingers who had to be treated at the first-aid station. There is something to be said for a training in the fascist and communist rank and file; when a fight breaks out in the Italian Parliament brawling technique is more important than words.

According to a report from Italy there is quite an extensive campaign afoot to expose the rôle played by some of the present communists when Mussolini was in power and during the war. The spearhead of this appears to be Edgardo Sogno, a resistance hero who, when the Germans were still holding on in Northern Italy, "smuggled so many refugees out and so many agents in that he became known as Italy's Scarlet Pimpernel". He now owns an anti-communist monthly called *Pace e Libertà* edited by the ex-editor of the communist daily *L'Unità*, some of the disclosures make very unsavoury reading, not least among them is a bit of history on Togliatti's rise to power. According to the report "In 1929 Moscow ordered Palmiro Togliatti, who was then outside the country, to step up agitation in Italy. Togliatti knew nothing much could be done under the careful watch of the Fascist police. But he seized the occasion to order four of his rivals in the Italian party to go in and get to work. Three refused, knowing that the mission was hopeless, and were expelled from the party. The fourth, a woman, obeyed and was caught by the OVRA. These manoeuvres not only kept Togliatti in good standing with Moscow but made him—by a process of elimination—the No. 1 Italian Communist."

Let it be noted, that Togliatti, usually

quick to sue when attacks of this nature are made has, so far, remained silent.

2. IN totalitarian countries voting is even a greater farce than in "democratic" ones, and in East Germany last a fortnight ago when the Government staged its polling day the methods made to arouse the people to their duties hardly suggests an enthusiastic electorate. A report from there says that people "were awakened by fanfares from Communist Youth bands, marched to the polls behind red banners, and handed ballots for the single official ticket, the Communist National Front. They could not vote no. There were no other candidates, no places for write-ins, nothing to mark. They could only drop ballots into boxes held before them. The result: a turnout of 99.3% of eligible voters, and 99.3% approval for every one of the 400 candidates. (Though the East German Parliament has unanimously approved everything put before it, new candidates had to be elected to replace nine Deputies who have been arrested, 44 fired for political unreliability, and 15 who have fled to the West.)

A striking contrast was made with the elections which took place the same week in Austria where elections are "free and secret". In the Russian sector of Vienna, the Communists got 8.6% of the vote and in the Soviet occupied province of Lower Austria they got 5%.

## A LEFT HOOK

In 1865 the Marquis of Queensberry drafted his twelve immortal rules and turned "barbarous pugilism" into a gentlemanly sport. The Marquis outlawed such unsporting features as wrestling, hugging and shoes with springs. Last week the Indiana State Athletic Commission added a new refinement to boxing (and wrestling, too). Henceforth, announced the commission, no boxer or wrestler may perform in the state without first swearing that he is not now and never has been a Communist.

Time, 1/11/1954.

work so well, that no attack on the Assassins ever prospered. No sultan, however big his army, was safe from the dagger of the conspirator.

The word "Assassin" comes from the expression "Hashishim", and refers to the fact that the men sent out to murder or to blackmail the various rulers and great ones of the earth, who were enemies of the order, were drugged with hashish, which, used in small quantities, gave the zealots mystical visions of the paradise that would be theirs if they carried out their missions successfully. For ultimately these fanatical dagger-men knew that they would have to die. Their attentats were not hole and corner affairs, but were conducted in broad daylight, and the murderer usually perished at the hands of the bodyguard of the man he had slain, or was torn to pieces by the mob.

Under such circumstances the Assassins soon became the terror of the Middle East, both for Moslems and Christians, and the various rulers, statesmen, philosophers, and religious teachers preferred to leave them alone. One theologian, who had been wont to preach against them, one day found a purse of gold and a dagger beside his bed. He took the hint. When asked why he no longer attacked them in his lectures and sermons he replied that "arguments weighty and trenchant" had persuaded him that it would be wrong to continue.

But the Assassins seem to have degenerated, and their end was pitiable. Following the Turks out of the great unexplored depths of Asia, came the even more ferocious Mongol hordes of Genghiz Khan. They swept over Moslem Asia like a torrent, obliterating civilisations in their path. This part of the world has never recovered completely from what the Mongols did to it, and large areas are still desolate, that were flourishing and fertile before they came. Since Europe was spared this scourge, she was enabled to forge ahead again, and take the lead over Asia in the development of civilisation.

In 1256 the Mongols under Hulagu Khan, the grandson of Genghiz, appeared

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# A Study of George Orwell

GEORGE ORWELL, by Laurence Brander. (Longmans, 12s. 6d.)

SINCE George Orwell's death five years ago, many valedictory and critical essays have been written about him. Mr. Tom Hopkinson has satisfactorily explained him away in a British Council pamphlet, Mr. V. S. Pritchett has described him as an anarchist, and Mr. Wyndham Lewis has made the quite extraordinary deduction that, "Had Orwell been of German nationality who can doubt that he would have been an SS man?"

Now we have a 200-page book about him in which Mr. Brander, after a biographical chapter and an assessment of Orwell's literary and personal qualities, discusses in turn his political essays, his literary essays, and his books one by one.

Mr. Brander's best chapter is the one called *Prose and Politics* where he traces the central ideas of the five essays on the connection between language and politics which Orwell wrote between 1944 and 1948 in a variety of little magazines, most of which have ceased to appear—*Horizon*, *Gangrel*, *Polemic*, *Politics & Letters*, and *Partisan Review*, and are now gathered together in the two posthumous collections of his articles. A lot of literary men attack the degradation or inflation of language but usually whimsically or aesthetically. Orwell took it very seriously and connected the decline of language with the decay of freedom. Because of this connection a special responsibility rests with writers who use language professionally, but writers especially have been corrupted by totalitarian myths:

"In England the immediate enemies of truthfulness, and hence the freedom of thought, are the Press Lords, the film magnates and the bureaucrats, but . . . on a long view the weakening of the desire for liberty among the intellectuals themselves is the most serious symptom of all."

"The conscious enemies of liberty are those to whom liberty ought to mean most. The big public do not care about the matter one way or the other. They are not in favour of prosecuting the heretic, and they will not exert themselves to defend him. They are at once too sane and too stupid to acquire the totalitarian outlook. The direct, conscious attack on intellectual decency comes from the intellectuals themselves."

Orwell's rules for writing, as a means of communicating ideas, were to use 'the fewest and shortest words that will cover one's meaning' and to cut out 'all stale or mixed images, all prefabricated phrases, needless repetitions and humbug and vagueness generally'.

By prefabricated phrases, he meant those ready-made groups of words like bits of Meccano, 'tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated henhouse'.

"Modern writing at its worst does not consist in picking out words for the sake of their meaning and inventing images in order to make the meaning clearer. It consists in gumming together long

## Australian Dockers Strike for Right to Recruit Labour

SINCE 1947 the Australian Waterside Workers' Federation has had the right to recruit dock labour. This right is now being taken away from it by a bill introduced into the House of Representatives by Mr. Harold Holt, the Minister of Labour.

This has been answered by a nationwide strike of dockers, which started as a 24-hour token stoppage, but extended into an indefinite strike by 25,000 workers.

The stoppage, as the dock strike in this country, has been denounced as 'Communist inspired'. Certainly there is a Communist leadership of the Waterside Workers, but the right to recruit labour was granted in 1947 by the Labour Government, and even Dr. Evatt, Leader of the Opposition in the House, has had difficulty in getting a hearing.

This is regarded as the hardest industrial struggle the present Federal Government has had to face, and it is already regarding the strike as a challenge to the authority of Parliament. We hope to see the dockers supported by workers in other industries. The right to recruit labour themselves is one all unions should defend.

strips of words which have already been set in order by someone else, and making the results presentable by sheer humbug."

This is a criticism which should be heeded by writers for this paper, and so should the description, which Mr. Brander quotes, of the pontifical inflated style—a mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outlines and covering up all the details.

Mr. Brander's account of Orwell's books is adequate and intelligent. There must be a limit to the amount of critical analysis which quite simple and unpretentious books can stand, and in discussing Orwell's early novels, instead of concentrating on their literary defects, Mr. Brander brings out the light they show on the development of their author's ideas. He describes the novels after *Burmese Days* as London novels and he says:

"As soon as this common setting is realized, it is noticeable how much these four novels have in common. In the first place, though none of them is quite the old-fashioned 'novel with a purpose', each has a topic which Orwell wishes to examine. *A Clergyman's Daughter* is about the Church. *Keep the Aspidochelone* is about Money. *Coming Up for Air* is about the red rash of building between the wars; and 1984, set in a London of future disaster almost beyond being, is about Propaganda in a husk of London's secular greatness. Labelled in this way, each novel becomes a Morality, and that is what they are. The preacher was using the contemporary form, as the Church had used the drama long ago. In the second place, as in the Moralities, the characters are not developed and the story is without dramatic tension. Third we notice Orwell's views about London repeated through them all. He detested London; but, as in all his detestations and as in nature, the things he detests have aspects which he admires. Fourth, in all the London novels he took the

view that life is hard and more miserable than pleasant for the generality of mankind and that there is nothing for them to hope for in the end. He was a preacher without a vision, but with a message that comes from his Eastern experience; that, since life is hard for most and without hope for any, it behoves us all to do what we can for one another. We should be decent and just to those who are travelling at the same time as ourselves the dusty way between the womb and the grave; and we should support one another in achieving for us all what little liberty we may."

The best of Orwell's books, Mr. Brander thinks, and I agree with him, are *Homage to Catalonia* and *Animal Farm*. Orwell himself wrote of the first of these, "It is written with a certain detachment and regard for form", and of the second, that "it was the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole". The lesson of *Animal Farm* as a satire Mr. Brander sums up in two sentences from Orwell's essay on James Burnham: "In each great revolutionary struggle the masses are led on by vague dreams of human brotherhood, and then, when the new ruling class is well established in power, they are thrust back into servitude", and again, "History consists of a series of swindles, in which the masses are first lured into revolt by the promise of Utopia, and then, when they

## Government by Assassination

Continued from p. 3

before Alamut. Strictly speaking the place could have held out indefinitely. But the superstitious and cowardly grand master was not of the stuff of the founder of his order, Hasan-ben-Sabah, and he surrendered the fortress, against the wishes of the garrison, who however must have been too conditioned to obedience to depose him and continue the

struggle. Of course when all possibility of resistance was at an end the Mongol leader broke his promises, and the usual massacre commenced. One would have thought that all the world would have been able to foresee this. The splendid library, and all the scientific instruments, went up in flames, and though the Syrian branch of the order, established at Masayaf in the Lebanon, continued for a while longer, this was really the end of the power of the Assassins.

F. A. Ridley traces the influence of the Assassins on the Templars, a knightly order that had much in common with them, and which also ended in a pitiable fashion, and rather at second-hand on the Jesuits. He also draws interesting parallels with the Mormon terrorist organisation, "The Destroying Angels", and with Nechaeyev, who had the real spirit of the old Assassins, but without being buoyed up by the hope of a houri paradise.

The author's sympathies with the people whose history he writes are never for a moment in doubt. He maintains that it was only by means of conspiracy and terrorism that they could hope to survive at all. This question must be left to the reader to decide for himself. At all events we can understand their age very well, for it was much like our own. The world we live in is threatened by something worse than a Mongol invasion, and one by one the lights of freedom and enlightenment are going out before a new age of faith. We face a similar situation to that which faced the founder of the Assassins. The sun is rising on our "Dawn of Nothing".

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

## DIRECT ACTION

ANARCHISTS and Anarcho-Syndicalists are the only people with a coherent and all-embracing social attitude who to-day maintain that a revolutionary change in society can only come about through direct action.

This attitude can be approached and justified from several points of view, all equally valid from a libertarian position, and all stemming from the contention that responsibility is the first necessity for revolutionary action and that is precisely what cannot be given or instilled from above.

Direct action finds its most spectacular and social application in action by organised workers. When 43,000 port workers are on strike, that gives us an outstanding and inspiring example of direct action at the point of production—the very way in which anarcho-syndicalists maintain workers can use their strength most effectively.

But it is not only because the use of direct action offers workers the most effective means of achieving their objects, whatever they may be, that we support it.

### Makes for Responsibility

Anarchists deny the use of parliamentary methods because they mean a delegation of authority, and hence a degree of irresponsibility on the part of the electors, who give to the candidate the right to 'represent' them. Which means in practice the power to take decisions in their name without consulting them.

Direct action, however, by its very name, means that all those engaged in it take direct responsibility for what they are doing. It cannot be done for you by somebody else—direct action is something you have to do for yourself or not at all. When it is reverted to by workers it is invariably as a result of the breakdown of the indirect methods—the negotiation by representatives—and of the frustration felt by all those with no say in what concerns them. It indicates a realisation of the fact that having somebody else representing you is not nearly so effective as defending your interests yourself.

The underlying value of direct action, then, lies in that it encourages individual responsibility. It tends to develop self-respect and self-confidence. The worker who believes in it believes in himself, and that, in my opinion, is the very first step that has to be taken by any indivi-

dual in his acceptance of a revolutionary philosophy.

### Other Significant Uses

I have said that direct action finds its most sensational and social application through its use by organised workers, but that is not necessarily its most significant use. In our personal lives we all have opportunities of taking direct responsibility for what we do and how we live and since a healthy society can only spring from healthy individuals, it is the task of libertarian revolutionaries to encourage the taking of direct action by individuals in any way that is practicable.

Just as in our social life we refuse to delegate responsibility to a politician, so in our personal lives should be refuse to delegate responsibility to a priest or a registrar. If we desire to establish a sexual union, that is our affair and should be our responsibility to make it or break it according to our wishes. Interference, claiming the right to institutionalise it, is a gross impertinence that can only be tolerated by those irresponsible or fearful enough to need sanction or protection from precisely those sources which have instilled the fear and irresponsibility.

If we consider certain demands made upon us by the State to be an affront to our dignity or social conscience, then we can take direct action to combat them. We can refuse to be conscripted or to be used in destructive processes. If we are teachers we can express our sense of responsibility towards the children in our charge by doing all we can to minimise the insidious authoritarian conditioning which is one of the prime functions of State education. If we are scientists we can at least make sure that the work we undertake is for the good and not for the destruction of mankind.

Direct action, then, should be regarded by anarchists as not merely a means of revolution at some unspecified date in the future, but as a means of revolution now. For each one of us, the expression of our personal responsibility in an age which increasingly demands impersonal irresponsibility, represents our individual contribution to the libertarian revolution. And the social revolution will become feasible when enough responsible individuals have so weakened authority's grip that it can no longer count upon its only source of power—irresponsible and unthinking subjects bound by fear and prejudice to indirect inaction. P.S.

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