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"Direct Action",
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To the Editors

When is an Anarchist not an Anarchist ?

- [1) When his name is Sir Herbert Read. This we can all readily accept, because by common consent we judge a man by his actions, not merely by his words, though strange to say Read's writings on Education, Art, and Anarchism remain - and will remain - of great value to libertarians.
- [2) When he belongs - as Sir Herbert does not - to Freedom Press. This is definitely a matter of personal taste.
- [3) When he is a middle-class intellectual, like William Godwin.

[But this doesn't seem to be getting us anywhere, so perhaps it would be more profitable to enquire when an Anarchist is an Anarchist? This is very much easier to answer than the questions, for example, 'What is a Socialist?' or 'What is a Communist?' - which necessarily involve lengthy explanations of one's own particular interpretation of such 'isms', or even 'What is a Syndicalist?' - which necessitates first a definition of aims and then a description of methods.

[Well, what is an Anarchist, then? An Anarchist is a person - any person - who really believes in liberty and equality, who has thought out the logical conclusions of those beliefs and still believes, unlike those who merely find them convenient terms for something else.

[I sympathise with the sentiment behind the editorial in the March issue of "Direct Action". Mere words should not keep us apart. What matters is the spirit behind them. But all the same names, like other words, are damned convenient. Just think how awkward it would be if our friends kept changing their names, or the baker gave us a jam tart whenever we asked for a loaf of bread.

[The name Anarchist is more precise than any of the other names mentioned in the editorial, and for those who really want liberty and equality I can see no insuperable obstacle to accepting it. Incidentally, all the other people, but for the libertarian, might be authoritarians for all I know, and even he might not believe in equality. I like to know who, or what, I am dealing with.

Yours sincerely,

Donovan Pedelty
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