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# The Anarchist Basis of Pacifism

RONALD SAMPSON

Published by the  
STUART MORRIS MEMORIAL FUND  
Peace Pledge Union



STUART MORRIS 1890 - 1967

This is one of a series of pamphlets to be published twice a year as a permanent Memorial to Stuart Morris, General Secretary of the Peace Pledge Union from 1939 to 1964.

Stuart Morris was born in London on 13th August, 1890. His mother was Scottish which accounts for his Christian name; his father died when he was only nine, but he had already been sent to Cranleigh School at the age of seven where he continued until he went to Corpus Christi, Cambridge, where he took his MA in Theology and History, and was eventually ordained into the Anglican Church.

He was Chaplain to the Fleet Air Arm in the First World War from which position he was asked to resign on account of his preaching pacifist sermons in the Church of St. Bartholomew, Birmingham, where he was the Vicar. It was in this Church, becoming convinced of the necessity for renouncing war, that he first preached pacifism and came into contact with the Rev. Canon Dick Sheppard, the founder of the Peace Pledge Union.

He was a Canon of Birmingham Cathedral and was secretary for a time to Bishop Barnes. There is no doubt that if he had not decided to renounce his Orders in 1939, he would have become a Bishop. He retained a constant interest in the Anglican Church, keeping himself up-to-date with changes and always a fount of information for the more ignorant.

He became Chairman of the Peace Pledge Union when Dick Sheppard died in 1937 and was appointed General Secretary in 1939, which position he held until 1964 when he retired.

He was twice married and had two daughters and a son by his first marriage.

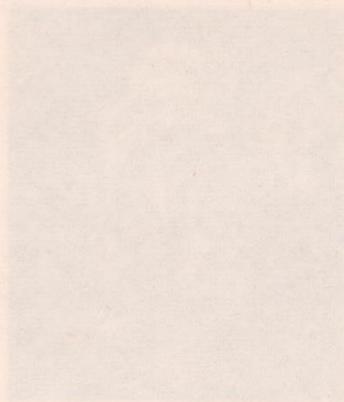
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# The Anarchist Basis of Pacifism

RONALD SAMPSON

The conventional view of anarchy is very simple. Anarchy means absence of government; government is necessary to maintain law and order; without law and order life is hell for everybody. Therefore, government is necessary and anarchy is bad. All decent people can understand this proposition and so it is not surprising that people who actually advocate anarchy are few and far between. The fact that some people are mentally incapable of substantiating the conventional view of anarchy does not make it any the less correct.

The connection between anarchism and pacifism is very close, and I propose to commence with pacifism. What is a pacifist? The dictionary defines a pacifist as an anti-militarist, who seeks the abolition of war. This definition is less than satisfactory in that it does not make explicit the vital distinction between those who would support a "just war" and those who repudiate all war. My usage of the term "pacifist" includes only those who are not intentionally violent, who can guarantee what they might do under any conceivable circumstances; but the pacifist aspires to die rather than to kill, if the choice is forced upon him. If an exception is made, the whole point of pacifism disappears. People who go to war have little difficulty in persuading themselves that they are pacifists at heart, who have been forced to abandon their pacifism by the malignancy of their foes.

The common objection to pacifism is that it is unreasonable to ask an innocent man to surrender his life to a guilty man. The pacifist's position is seen as an extreme one; but the strength of the position derives from the fact that it rests on a profound conviction of the wickedness of taking human life. If a man does not shrink with revulsion and horror from the shedding of human blood, he is most unlikely to refrain from violence when his own life is threatened. A "pacifist" who refuses to join the army, but who would support capital punishment or the assassination of a Hitler, has simply not thought the matter through. If in tranquility you think that some malefactors ought to be put to death, you are little likely to give the malefactor who immediately threatens your own life, the benefit of the doubt.

Pacifism entails a definite attitude to death, and is accordingly based on metaphysical or religious considerations. If human beings are not vegetarians, but the logic of their position is that they are not vegetarians, but the logic of their position is that they are not vegetarians. Some pacifists support euthanasia on the grounds that it is a necessary part of a position which is precisely the opposite of the position which the principle of the sanctity of human life represents.

Published by the  
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The conventional view of anarchy is very simple. Anarchy means absence of government; government is necessary to maintain law and order; without law and order life is hell for everybody. Therefore, government is good and anarchy is bad. All decent people can understand propositions so simple and self-evident; therefore, people who actually advocate anarchy must be either wicked or mentally unbalanced. The fact that among the minority who advocate anarchy some undoubtedly are mentally unbalanced, appears further to substantiate the conventional view.

The conventional, seemingly plausible view is nevertheless incorrect. The connection between anarchism and pacifism is very close, and I propose to commence with pacifism. What is a pacifist? The dictionary defines a pacifist as an anti-militarist, who seeks the abolition of war. This definition is less than satisfactory in that it does not make explicit the vital distinction between those who would support a "just war" and those who repudiate all war. My usage of the term "pacifist" includes only those who live by the principle that they will not intentionally take human life, cost what it may. (Few people, if any, can guarantee what they might do under any conceivable circumstances; but the pacifist *aspires* to die rather than to kill, if the choice is forced upon him.) If an exception is made, the whole point of pacifism disappears. People who go to war have little difficulty in persuading themselves that they are pacifists at heart, who have been forced to abandon their pacifism by the malignancy of their foes.

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Pacifism necessarily entails a definite attitude to death, and is accordingly inseparable from metaphysical or religious considerations. If human life is sacrosanct, why are animals legitimate targets for slaughter? Many genuine pacifists are not vegetarians, but the *logic* of their position is precariously based. Some pacifists support euthenasia on strictly compassionate grounds; the weakness of such a position is precisely that it threatens the vital protection which the principle of the sanctity of human life represents.

If this essay had been addressed primarily to anarchists, I would have set out to show that the above metaphysical position is logically inherent in anarchism; I want here to show that the anarchist's concern with the problem of power is logically inherent in the pacifist's insistence on the sanctity of human life. Here it is perhaps advisable to enter a general *caveat*. As soon as anyone is rash enough to attempt a definition of "anarchism" or "pacifism" or any other "ism" for that matter, disclaimers can immediately be anticipated from fellow "believers" who see in a particular definition a misconstruction or travesty of their own beliefs. I need scarcely say that I claim to speak only for myself.

Pacifists, then, are people who refuse under any circumstances to be a party to the shedding of human blood. A characteristic slogan summarises the pacifist conviction: "Wars will cease when men refuse to fight" — and only when men refuse to fight. Pacifists accordingly declare in advance their solemn intention not to fight, and invite you, non-pacifists, to join them. The logic is impeccable. But the wars go on just the same; moreover, they get worse.

So the pacifist must ask why this rational remedy is not producing the desired results. "Come and join us", the pacifist says, but he appeals in vain. They don't and they won't. Why? Is it not odd? Virtually nobody wants war; why then do people prefer so stubbornly to reject the pacifist's self-evident panacea? The pacifist wrings his hands in incomprehending frustration, anguish and sometimes despair. How is it to be explained?

Wars do not happen out of the blue - ever! It is not possible, simply because they require too much advance preparation. They are always preceded by a state of armed preparation. Why? One of the most urgent tasks is to illuminate public opinion at least sufficiently to make it impossible for Ministries of Armaments any longer to masquerade under the cloak of "Defence".

The reservoir of armed violence (as large and destructive as every government can possibly afford), permanently on tap, is necessary because without it a government would be at a disadvantage *vis à vis* other governments, whose armoured reservoirs it does not (as yet) control. Disadvantaged in what respect? In the matter of control over wealth, people, natural resources, that is to say, power. Governments themselves pretend that they innocently seek no more than an equilibrium; but the falsity of this claim is evidenced by the fact that equilibrium could be maintained at the level of one soldier each, and this kind of equilibrium never exists. Moreover, the allegedly sought after equilibrium has always erupted in war and must always do so, because the reality is an internecine struggle for power, that is to say, domination.

This very brief analysis is itself sufficient to demonstrate the falsity of the conventional view, carefully fostered by the governments, of the nature of anarchy, with which this essay opened. This view presupposes that originally men were running around in an anarchic state of nature, in a "war of all against all", where life was "nasty, solitary, poor, brutish and short", desperately enduring the intolerable consequences of the total absence of law and order, until some splendid, disinterested, public spirited people stepped forward, nobly sacrificing their own private interests in order to take up the burden of office. By shouldering the responsibilities of decision-taking and enforcement in this way, they brought into being that great Leviathan of government, to which alone is owed the blessing of secure and ordered life and the minimal conditions of social welfare.

This is pure mythology, in whatever version it is presented to long-suffering generations of students, whether in its pure Hobbist form or in any of its Lockean, Rousseauesque, Burkean, Benthamite variants. The theories are false because all the variants of the theory of political legitimacy agree in tacitly ignoring the single crucial fact that government results not from the welfare necessities of men inherent in their God-given or biological situation; but results from the all consuming, devouring determination of some individuals to obtain, consolidate, and if possible expand their power over their fellows.

Nothing can ever legitimise this state of affairs for two simple reasons, firstly: the terrible consequences that ensue from this theory for mankind as a whole in the shape of ceaselessly recurring war; and secondly: because men are in fact in all essentials equal, and it is a violation of God's will that some men should be subjected to the power and dominion of other men, when all men are alike His \* creatures, subject in common not to other men like themselves but to God alone.

The truth of this simple thesis is so manifest, so self-evident when subjected to close scrutiny, and so absolutely fatal to the claims of rulers in all their respective spheres, that the mere espousal of it is itself sufficient to expose the hypocrisy of all the claims to liberal free speech, free debate, free publication, on which our culture and institutions allegedly rest.

Anyone is at liberty to test this for himself by stating this view as unequivocally and clearly as he can; and he will at once find every avenue of communication with the larger publics which make up our mass "democracies", completely sealed off from him. This is accomplished

\* The masculine possessive pronoun suggests characteristic and crude male anthropomorphism. I confess I do not know a solution for this, since unfortunately the English language has no possessive personal pronoun transcending the sexual category.

without any official Ministry of Censorship, without any formal curtailment of civil rights, without positing any supposed "conspiracy" theories of power. It occurs spontaneously by virtue of the fact that the theory is aimed subversively and directly at the most ubiquitous of all trade unions, the trade union of power.

Every office holder, every power executive, every aspirant to promotion up the hierarchical ladder, every dominant or would-be dominant personality in whatever walk of life, without even consciously registering the thought, recognizes the fundamental threat to the whole meaning of his life. He recognizes it instinctively; he freezes instantly, shuts his ears tight against the baleful message and intuitively falls back on the only effective weapon left to him in such an emergency, the weapon of the boycott, of the aura of silence. He ignores.

But the trouble is that ignoring does not silence the dreadful heresy; it goes on echoing in the silence, until the silence itself begins to reverberate eerily and with growing insistence in the offices and chancelleries of the statesmen, the press, the universities, the Inns of Court, the board rooms, and the churches. For once the cat is out of the bag; once the two-year-old has dared to cry out loud that the Emperor has no clothes after all, the damage has been done. It is only a matter of time before even the gullible and down-trodden will no longer be taken in by the pomp and pageantry, the investitures and colour trooping, the mitre and crown and tinsel, the whole enormous racket whereby the weak are subjugated by the powerful and the poor robbed by the rich.

It might be thought to be self-evident that if all men were good, confusions might still arise, discussion as to the wisdom of priorities and the content of mutual arrangements would still need to be conducted, but of government, that is to say, of coercion, there would be no need. Therefore, it would seem equally clear that whatever other people may choose to do, anarchists, at any rate, should conduct themselves in such a way that no government would be necessary. "And if all the world were composed of real Christians," wrote Martin Luther, "that is, true believers, no prince, king, lord, sword, or law would be needed." What could be clearer? But, of course, Luther does not proceed to draw the obvious conclusion that therefore "prince, king, lord, sword or law" must be a product of evil, and morally indefensible, wrong. He draws the opposite conclusion, viz. that because most men are not good, government is necessary and must be obeyed.

"But you ask further whether the beadles, hangmen, jurists, advocates, and their ilk, can also be Christians and in a state of salvation. The answer is. 'If the State and its sword are a divine service, as was proved above, that which the State needs in order to wield the sword, must also be a divine service. There must be those who arrest, accuse, slay and destroy the wicked and protect, acquit, defend and save the good.' "

There are good men and bad men; but instead of rebuking the bad men, the good are told that they are in a minority and that they must therefore abdicate their own standards and adopt those of the majority. And this is what virtually everyone did and does — then and now. They accept as true a piece of casuistry and fraudulent reasoning that would be evident to a child. If government arises out of badness, then how much more necessary is it that the good should stand firm, and take no part, cost what it may, or else clearly the world will be bereft of even the standard and example of the good.

If government is legitimised so that all men have to concede the moral legitimacy of such violence, as every government must command as its minimum sanction, without which it could not govern, then the crucial awareness of the evil nature of the will to power is glossed over and lost sight of. Government itself is considered a response to man's inescapable needs — the welfare service of security provision to protect man from foreign invasion and crime. Government then appears under the benevolent guise of public service; and so clever is the sleight of hand that people fail entirely to notice the real villain, the will to power, itself a principal source of aggression and crime. Moreover, this analysis corresponds to the actual history of man. The State originated not in a social contract or request for a vital public service, but from the struggle for power between contending chieftains, robber barons, and their respective factions and retainers.

The sceptic may concede even this much, but he remains unshaken in his conviction that men simply cannot live without government. Of course, if he means that some men are so passionately intent on governing others\* that no power on earth will induce them to forgo the pleasure they derive from it, and that large numbers of others are so lost to a sense of their individual responsibility and dignity that they willingly acquiesce in their subjugation, the contention is indisputable. But this is not at all what is meant when people are told so insistently that government is necessary and unavoidable. What is meant is that they have to have leaders for their own good, or "anarchy" would ensue.

\* My own favourite example drawn from our contemporary "democratic" processes is the interview quoted by Austin Ranney in his *Pathways to Parliament* (1965), p. 72 n. with the chairman of a west-central London Conservative constituency association concerning methods of selecting parliamentary candidates: "I know my committee and I'm frank to say I use it. I know, for example, that old Colonel X never has a good word to say for anyone, whereas Lady Y can't bear to say anything harsh about anyone. So when the name before us is someone I want to see kept off the short list, I call on Colonel X to make the first comment; and when it's someone I want to see on the list, I call on Lady Y first!"

What is significant is the unashamed candour, not to say gusto, with which the chairman relates the time-worn methods of his highly respected profession.

This conviction goes quite as deep on the political Left as on the political Right. Because common to members of the Left and of the Right is the itch for leadership, the yen to get the power for themselves, the struggle for which in their respective parties, viz. power organizations, constitutes the entire meaning of their lives.

Indeed the worship of power is still so deeply ingrained in almost everyone, so automatic, so unconscious, that the mere suggestion to the victims of organized power that they should not seek redress of grievance by "power" means, since "power" itself is the disease, inevitably arouses the indignant suspicion that they are being invited to abandon the struggle, to sell the pass, to appease or capitulate to the oppressor.

But this is not at all the case. This logic is not, after all, followed in other instances. What would be thought of the argument that because most men are credulous or weak or hypocritical or untruthful, therefore everyone should become credulous, weak, hypocritical or untruthful; that to do otherwise would be utopian or would be tantamount to selling the pass? As soon however, as it is the will to power that is at issue, logic is abandoned; and it is urged that men must imitate the very vice in their oppressor which has made him what he is. At this point, the old argument is likely to be offered:—"But you are assuming that all power is bad; we want the power only to protect ourselves from evil, that is, for good reasons."

Power by definition means the ability to force someone to do that which he would not do of his own free will, and it is precisely this that is not justifiable. It is from this element of force, of coercion, that all the resentment and counter-irritants and desire for vengeance, in short, evil, are triggered off. It is previous power — a legacy of countless acts of power — that has made the present oppressor or aggressor what he is; and more power can only add to the evil ingredients of the existing situation. The only reply to power and its evil consequences is not counter-power, which is simply more power, but anti-power, which is the opposite of power, namely, courageous, unyielding powerlessness, or love.

Bereft of all power, without an organization, without a trade union, without a political party, without a police force, without an army, what is the individual to do, alone and "powerless" amidst a gigantic ocean of evil? It is easy to prescribe and very difficult to do; nevertheless it is possible; and it is, moreover, the only means of liberation that is effective and that will advance inch by inch along the road to real freedom.

The individual has to stand up to and draw the fangs of those who oppress him, or dominate him, or treat him as less than equal, at the only time and place possible, that is, when and where it occurs. It is far from easy, and many times men falter and fail, but they have to go on

trying. Domination takes the form always of a relationship between man and man. It has to be confronted and neutralized on the spot in the particular relationship that is involved. The objection is made again and again, however, that the mere individual is impotent. What, it is asked rhetorically, can only one person do? The implication seems to be that around the next corner there will be somebody who isn't only one person. Yet, when evil is afoot, people do not wring their hands, lamenting their impotence as "only one person"; they get on with the bad work and do it most efficaciously.

The truth is that "only one person" who is tied to an organization which exercises a degree of control over his beliefs and responses, is indeed largely crippled for good purposes. He is the power man's dream. Through a hierarchy of control it is possible to reduce men to paralysed automata. Military conscription, for instance, has hitherto represented the ultimate length to which arbitrary power could go in the total subjugation of free men. Modern technology is beginning to open new vistas. The power to reduce mankind to quantitative digits, computerised data to be fed into machines controlled by the new technocrats, undoubtedly threatens new possibilities for human robotisation.

On the other hand, one person, who is not controllable by "authority", who answers not to externally imposed discipline, but to the discipline of his own conscience, is in himself a very potent threat to those who dominate others, as all those in "authority" are very quick to recognize. It is not simply that ideas spread quickly, good ideas as well as bad ones. The effect of personal example is highly infectious; and it is impossible to exaggerate the long term effects of the courageous example of the lone dissenter, asking for no power, resorting to no power, asking nothing for himself, but asking everything for justice. His price is indeed far above rubies.

So when it is asserted that government is necessary, this is true only as a descriptive statement of existing human relations based on an existing psychology. This psychology, however, is not inherent in the psycho-biological constitution of man, but is the fruit of an inability to achieve complete liberation from the dependence of infancy. To become free, to achieve equality is far from easy; on the contrary, we must be prepared to meet deep resistances within the emotional life of each one of us; but it is nevertheless possible of attainment.

The fact that many men and women go to the grave without having thrown off the leading strings of parental domination, obeying to the end the unspoken commands to which they were subjected in childhood without even being aware that they are doing so, does not mean that such unconscious servitude is the fate of all men. To wake up may be difficult, but it is by no means impossible. Moreover, each measure of success not only automatically changes a person's relation with at least

one other person, it infects others by the example given and witnessed.

Everyone necessarily lives at the centre of a large, inter-connected network of relations; change in the quality of a relationship at any one point will gradually produce repercussions in many different directions. Most fundamental relations are domestic, within the family; but social relations, and employment relations emanate from the family ties and react upon each other.

I am myself extremely dubious whether it is possible for a person who has not gone a considerable part of the way in reorienting his domestic relations — father-daughter, mother-son, husband-wife — on the basis of equality, to attempt to reorient his social or employment relations according to the same principle. Occupying, as he almost inevitably must in our culture, a position in a hierarchical chain of command, he may find the courage to resist the “authority” exercised over him; but, unless he has achieved freedom from parental psychic domination, his successful resistance against the domination of a “superior” is bound to be accompanied by a growth in his own appetite for successful ego assertion or power.

In order to achieve freedom from external domination and obedience to the autonomous internal restraints of conscience, viz. good “anarchy”, it is necessary not only to stand up to power, it is necessary also for man to have overcome his own appetite for power, to be sure that he is not himself fulfilling the role *vis à vis* others less powerful than himself that he resents in those more powerful than himself.

True strength lies in a fearless powerlessness, that is not assertive but is equally not pliant to another's will to domination. Indeed, without the crucial element of self-renunciation, resistance to domination will not implausibly appear as yet another example of two parties contending for mastery. My struggle may at this moment be just, but as soon as I am on top, shall I not myself inevitably behave in the manner of others who are on top?

Given this conscious awareness, this degree of self-renunciation, this will to “anarchy” and equality, an individual is in a unique position to bring about positive social change of a wholly beneficial nature. Towards those below him in the hierarchy he will at all times strive to behave with gentleness and humility, to abstain absolutely from taking advantage of his status to impose his will on others who have been falsely taught to believe that it is their normal duty to obey their “superiors”. Towards those above him, he will be courteous but firm, that is to say, making the “superior” feel at all times that his will to power, so far from being his natural right, is resented for the improper and immature impulse that it in fact is.

Every situation is unique, and in the matter of human relations it is impossible to lay down rules regarding conduct in situations whose

development can never be foreseen in detail. But ways can often be found of good humouredly countering the boss's will to power. This “power” element in human relations is of crucial importance; everyone is at all times aware of it; but it is so pervasive, so universally accepted as proper and unquestionable, even when it is felt to be onerous, that people are aware of it without being aware that they are aware of it. That is to say, the rules of power deference and command govern every nuance and tone of their manner without consciousness of it.

The fact, however, that they are really aware at the unconscious level is quickly manifest if someone acts out of part and ignores or contravenes the status expectations. It is only necessary for the “boss” to go out of the room, and the slight tension generated by the “power” presence immediately vanishes, and people relax. It occasionally happens that a person with little or no will to power accepts with genuine reluctance an hierarchical position of “authority”, His mere acceptance of the position immediately and inevitably affects significantly, even if only slightly, the nature of the relationship he previously enjoyed with people who were then colleagues, but are now subordinates.

This situation is a comparatively rare exception; normally the winner in the competition for power is he who wills it more single-mindedly, passionately and consistently than any of his rivals. The rationale for this mode of conducting affairs, accepted as a matter of course by all office holders and all aspirants to office, is that “someone has got to make the decisions.”

Because this is untrue, to every office holder and decision-maker there inevitably attaches, however faintly, a slight air of unreality, of pomposity, of presumption, which cries out to be deflated, but which all too rarely receives the requisite therapy. In fact, when a collective decision is to be arrived at, the efficiency of the procedure is enormously heightened by the mere withdrawal of the “power” figure, “Government”, so far from being necessary, is the greatest single hindrance to the collective development of every individual's capacity for judgment, confidence and articulation.

But to expect the “power” figures themselves to understand this, is quite hopeless. All that they can perceive is the contrast between the smooth arrival at a decision resulting from their tactful and masterly handling of the committee or board or assembly and the ragged, undisciplined, slow, cumbrous, confused procedure that results when their own masterly will is withdrawn. They fail to understand that what is crucial is the development of every individual's capacity to contribute his own vision, his own notion of where the shoe pinches. The more intimidated, the more inhibited, the more inarticulate he is, the more important is it that patience should be exercised to liberate a brother whose subjugation is the means whereby the ego of the powerful has its will.

If in the short run a price has to be paid in terms of mere administrative efficiency, it is a price that must be paid. I use the word "mere" not because I despise administrative efficiency but because it must be always kept subordinate to human relations themselves, and when this is observed, it ultimately redounds to the value of administrative efficiency itself. Short-run administrative efficiency is dearly purchased indeed when it is productive of authoritarianism, resentments, arbitrary power, strikes, revolts and so on. Genuinely democratic decision-making, however untidy, however objectively erroneous it may on occasion be, never generates the social disunity and bitterness that is generated by the will to power.

Of course, the "boss", subjected to this novel and wholly unexpected treatment, cannot be expected to relish it. Although it will ultimately be good for him, in fact just what he needs, a vote of thanks for this diagnosis and therapeutic recommendation can hardly be expected. The "boss" is going to react most assuredly; he is very probably going to be difficult. He may indeed prove dangerous. He has teeth, and knows how to use them. After all, this is striking directly at what he has falsely been taught to consider the essence of his self-respect, viz. his power over others, that which has constituted the entire meaning of his life hitherto. Obviously, he is not going to yield without a struggle. That is why courage is essential and why it is imperative it should at all times be shown that while challenging his power, those who challenge, do not themselves in any way hanker after it. Quite the contrary!

It is also necessary never to provoke by rudeness or bravado. All "bosses", viz. all power lovers, are ultimately weak, and crave to be liked, even by those whom they oppress. They are vulnerable to withdrawal of respect, even the respect of the subservient. So, when the "boss" shows signs of learning the painful lesson on even the smallest front respecting the autonomy and self-respect of others "beneath" him, it is important to show appreciative understanding. But the initiative must come from the physically weaker partner in the enterprise. What he has to learn to do is not to obey "bosses", still less kill or exile them, as has frequently been attempted in old style revolutions, but peaceably to re-educate them to equality, anarchy and justice. Men have to apprentice themselves to the art of tactful, courteous insubordination.

It might be thought that such a programme as is here suggested might prove popular and likely to evoke a swift response. What after all is more calculated to appeal to the repressed rebel in most of us, suffering the yoke of "authority"? What more natural than to appeal to the employee to rise against the employer, the worker against the boss, the ruled against the ruler the proletariat against the capitalist? In practice, nothing is more difficult. The reason is only partly to be sought in the fear of the oppressed — the knowledge that those who rule possess powerful sanctions.

Even in a modern closely knit and tightly administered society such as our own, it is after all by no means impossible to defeat the rulers if they attempt to proceed beyond the limits of what is considered tolerable, as Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Castle discovered when they sought to deprive the industrial worker of the last remnants of his free status as a worker, namely of his right to withhold his labour.

The reason is that the ruled fear equality which they have been deeply conditioned to regard as "anarchy", in the conventional sense. They fear it as much as the rulers themselves. The reason for this is partly, as I suggested above, psycho-analytic. Men are from earliest infancy reared in the leading strings of parental dominance, and the task of adolescence to throw off the ties of subjection to maternal and paternal rule is only very rarely carried through with relative success. Indeed, it is impossible to accomplish this adolescent task of liberation satisfactorily without analysis in depth, unless the parents have themselves enjoyed a mutual relationship based on complete psychic and emotional equality. Such conditions are almost never to be found in existing cultures.

Because children are inadequately loved in their childhood in homes rent by tensions generated by sexual conflict, they grow up finding the meaning of their lives in the will to dominate others. People fear equality because they see in it a condition which threatens to remove that which is the aim of their life striving, namely, a sense of importance deriving from privilege and dominance which will compensate for emotional impoverishment. That is the fundamental reason why the most downtrodden will react with horror to the suggestion of "anarchy". Whatever, they ask, would we do without government?

The other, equally logical, question is never asked. What would happen if suddenly all the ruled refused to be ruled anymore? The rulers would presumably all have nervous break-downs. But the question itself is absurd, as everyone readily understands, although they do not so readily appreciate that the question: "what would happen if we had no government?" is equally absurd. These questions are absurd because existing institutions reflect deep-set patterns of human relations. It is this existing pattern that must be undermined and modified; and this can only come about gradually. People who talk of "revolution" in the sense of a swift cataclysmic change fail to grasp the problem.

On the other hand, it is certainly true that when people in a position of traditional power fail to grasp that the attitudes of those "beneath" them are no longer acquiescent, sooner or later a tense confrontation outside the bounds of the law made by the rulers is bound to occur. When such situations arise, it is vital that the "under" ones display the utmost self-discipline, restraint and non-violence. Those whose power is being undermined are after all undergoing a near traumatic experience,

and full allowance must be made for their possible violent reaction. The teeth have to be drawn, but when this is accompanied by violence, those who attempt to draw them have to some extent failed, and certainly will have to pay the consequent price. But these gradual changes can only be set in motion by reflective, sensitive and brave individuals setting about the difficult task of changing the nature of their own human relations in the family, at work and in their general social ties.

What has to be faced without any disposition to self-deception is that the belief in inequality, notwithstanding pious protestations to the contrary, goes very deep indeed in present-day Britain. Those who enjoy privilege see in equality a threat to their way of life and its meaning. Under conditions of equality, who, they will sometimes ask plaintively under pressure or in an unguarded moment, will do the dirty work, who will fetch and carry? The mere thought that they should be expected to do their own fair share is enough to elicit expressions of incredulity as much as of horror.

Secondly, there is concealed another question: if they are not to devote their life energies to securing their positions of privilege, status and eminence, to what will they devote their energies? The unprivileged, on the other hand, who might be expected *a priori* to welcome equality as a relief from subordination and exploitation, for the most part in fact reject the belief in equality; partly out of incredulity towards anything which does not actually as yet exist, and is therefore to be placed in the suspect category of "ideal"; partly out of fear of displeasing those whom they have been taught to consider as their betters, and partly out of genuine feelings of deeply rooted inferiority.

The mere discussion of the question of equality is deeply distasteful to them, since it arouses their own unconscious feelings, going back to their childhood and school-days, of inadequacy, rejection and failure. It is far easier, psychologically speaking, to engage in complaints about the cost of living (which in all conscience is formidable enough), or the behaviour of one's neighbour, or to seek a quick profit and dream about the "possibility" of winning the "pools" or the Bingo stakes or the Derby, than to face the intolerably painful truth of personal inferiority, inadequacy and anxiety.

Our existing culture is based not on values arising out of respect for, and consideration for, the well-being of the individual worker but out of the worship of wealth and increased productivity. Where the two values conflict, as they do at virtually every point, it is consideration for the real welfare of the individual that is sacrificed. Indeed, merely to raise the value that is being neglected in society is to brand oneself as an eccentric. Imagine asking an employer in the motor-car industry, for example, if he is concerned as to whether his workers on the factory

floor are "whole" men, making full use of the many sided talents, mental and manual, with which every normal person is potentially endowed.

Yet what could be more stunting or productive of monotony and boredom throughout a man's working life than extreme specialisation of function, even when the specialised task requires considerable training and skill, let alone the majority of jobs which are unskilled or semi-skilled? What man in his senses, if given the option, would freely choose a monotonous working life devoted to the same endlessly repetitive task, in order to be the owner of more material goods in his leisure? A sense of fulfilment and creativity in labour is clearly indispensable in any sane "philosophy" of life.

Nor are frustration and boredom under the present system by any means confined to the lower echelons. If there is sometimes evidence of demoniac energy at the top, the evidence of chronic boredom and conspicuous consumption is also clear for all to see — the drinking, the smoking, the philandering, the transcontinental jet flights or cruises, the country club, the worry about obesity, or heart attack, the threat of retirement, the infinitude of forms taken by the futilities of consumption motivated by considerations of status, the hankering after precedence expressed in Baronies or Garters of this or that, after the alphabetic baubles ranging from C.B.E.s to X.Y.Z.s

It also needs to be said that the key to the existing divisions in society is the educational system. If the great bastions of industrial power are largely hereditary fiefs disposed of by purely feudal means, the large armies of the lower echelons of privileged, without whom the system would grind to an immediate halt, are a meritocracy. They are, that is to say, recruited by means of streaming, the 11+, 'O' level, 'A' level, 18+, classified Degree, Grand National Steeplechase in which most of the horses (or rather, colts and fillies) fall at the first fence because they were sired and reared by the most heavily handicapped members of the previous generation.

It is not an educational system so much as a series of tests designed to select the numbers appropriate to enter the respective levels of employment determined by the requirements of the national productivity tables. Even under the existing handicaps of large classes and varyingly qualified teachers, approximately twice as many candidates qualify for university education and seek it as there are places available — leaving out of account the unknown number of those who are deterred from applying by the knowledge that their competitive chances of acceptance are poor.

As a result of this 18+ competition the latter end of a child's school days is poisoned and distorted by a greater sense of anxiety and insecurity than even his early years were. In such a climate genuine education of necessity is largely sacrificed to the inexorable demands

of the competition for university entrance. Thus scores of thousands are denied all access to the higher education for which they are equipped and which they keenly desire, because there are not privileged jobs enough to go round.

Within the framework of extreme specialisation of labour dictated by the national religion of wealth-getting, there is no escape possible from the anguish and unbalanced concentration of the educational maelstrom. But as soon as people liberate themselves from those warped values, escape is both possible and obvious. Instead of devoting the highest educational skills to the forced hot-house growth of the most agile and energetic minds on the principle that to him that hath shall be given, much greater attention could be concentrated on overcoming the educational handicaps of those who have been most severely crippled by the excessive social burdens which their parents have been forced to carry. In this way, gradually more and more people will be encouraged to demand what should be their basic right — access to the highest culture that has come down to us and which is freely available to their more fortunate brothers and sisters.

This culture will then automatically cease to be a culture of privilege; it will become a culture of equality, and as a matter of simple logic, will include instruction not only in matters of scholarship and intellectual application but also in matters of manual dexterity and skill. In short, we shall discover that genuine higher education consists of learning a skill to be productive as well, that the man who is solely an intellectual or solely a manual worker is not fully a man, and that we all need to develop both sides of our nature in order to lead a full, creative and balanced life.

Whether he appreciates the fact or not, the individual who is relieved from all responsibility for attending to his own wants, suffers in his humanity and understanding of life quite as much as his brother who is condemned to a deprivation of mental culture in order to specialise in the task of producing the material wealth needed by all alike.

The categorisation of a man as an intellectual or as a manual worker is as bad for the individual as the division of men into rulers and ruled, employers and employees, is ruinous for society. Indeed, the latter is simply the institutional pattern resulting from the creation of truncated individuals. It is a system which is unnatural, humanly wasteful, frustrating, unjust, and so sterile and competitive that it leads ultimately to war.

To all of which the sceptic replies simply: "Well, but you can't go back", and this is said with an air of complete finality. Progress and Productivity seem to be the corner-stones of the religion of the man on the Clapham Omnibus. His argument runs something like this:

"You are asking me to consent of my own free will to a way of life in which you acknowledge that I shall be materially worse off. You are asking me voluntarily to forgo a machine that can move me faster than sound, and revert to a quadruped. You are asking me to forgo a computer and do my own sums, to forgo the benefits of large-scale economy and revert to cottage industry. How absurd! And in any case, impossible!"

George Orwell who was clear-eyed enough to see something of the dehumanisation implicit in the worship of material progress, wealth and power, and was genuinely dismayed at the prospect for mankind already becoming apparent, was unable to free himself from the thrall of productivity worship. He wrote in *The Road to Wigan Pier*: "In order that one may enjoy primitive methods of travel, it is necessary that no other method should be available. No human being ever wants to do anything in a more cumbrous way than is necessary. Hence the absurdity of that picture of Utopians saving their souls with fretwork. In a world where everything could be done by machinery, everything would be done by machinery."

While I understand that this is how most people feel about the matter, I fail to perceive the rationality of the argument. Everything surely depends on what a man really wants, what his *real* values are. If I genuinely enjoy and prefer horse travel to motorcars or aeroplanes, if I genuinely enjoy making something for my own use, even if it is inferior to the mass produced product, what is there irrational, sham, dilettante, unreal about my expressing and acting out my preferences?

The fact is that most people are deeply conditioned to prefer more for more's sake, speed for speed's sake, etc. These seem to represent their *real* values, from which they are admittedly unlikely to be weaned by mere rational argument. The fact remains that a man's basic needs are very simple; that wealth is not among those basic needs and is not only unnecessary but harmful to him. What is a fundamental need, besides harmonious relations with his fellow creatures, is the need to do for himself the simple strenuous work necessary for his own survival. This in itself provides him with his other fundamental need, variety of work.

Speaking out of his own experience as a draughtsman and craft-worker, Eric Gill put it this way in his *Autobiography*: "I would rather be a workman myself and start my rebellion from that end. I would be a workman and demand a workman's rights, the rights to design what he made; and a workman's duties, the duty to make what he designed."

Men are of course at liberty to reject these elemental truths — but not indefinitely. The other way of life — and fundamentally there is only one other way of life — leads logically to war on an ever growing

scale of magnitude and destruction. The belief that this can be converted into a peaceful competition for planetary conquest is a characteristic politicians' attempt to deceive with mythology. The moon race itself, quite independently of its horrifying cost, is an intrinsic part of the contest for military power and strategic advantage, the implications of which do not require to be spelt out to sane men, let alone pacifists.

To sum up, a pacifist is one who is able to recognize the gravity of the moral and spiritual implications of being prepared himself to take the life of a fellow human being, whatever the reasons, however seemingly justifiable. The answer to those who reject such a policy on the pragmatic ground that this involves sacrificing the lives of the morally more mature to those less mature, is that this is a law of the universe which cannot be altered. If "X" will in no circumstances resort to killing, whereas "Y" suffers from no such inhibition, "X's" body, his life, must, in the nature of things, always be at the mercy of "Y".

This is why pacifism rests on a true religious understanding of the nature of man's relation to the universe. Reverence for life does not mean killing in order to influence a subsequent series of events, which is never within the capacity of any individual to control in any event. Reverence for life means revering life; that is to say, not destroying it. The purpose of life is not to save good men from perishing at the hands of bad men — for one thing, no one can ever be entirely sure how good or how bad a man is. The purpose of life is to exemplify goodness at the expense of badness, and thus to strengthen the force of goodness in the world.

The next step in the argument is to grasp that violence itself is the outcome of the will to power in man. Chairman Mao is undoubtedly right when he observes that "political power flows out of the barrel of a gun", but he forgot to add the even more important converse of the proposition, namely that the barrel of a gun flows from the will to power. It is this will to power itself which is the source of most of the evils which threaten to overwhelm us.

To abstain, therefore, from the quest for power is logically entailed by an understanding of the evil of violence. To renounce power means abandoning all idea of getting power, of seeking to overthrow the rulers, of bringing about a revolution, of devising blue-prints for new institutions. In their stead, anarchists seek to eradicate the evil potentialities in themselves and by so doing to change the nature of their relations with other men. When enough people succeed in doing this, the social institutions which reflect existing human beliefs and relations, will of necessity begin to change.

Man is a spiritual animal in a material universe; and he is governed

ultimately by the life of the spirit. External power changes reflect the violence of nature and the baser part of man. Genuine humanly beneficial change can only come about through spiritual change. To this end, it is necessary to substitute for the external coercive restraints of the State the internal restraints of the responsible, individual conscience. As James Anthony Froude wrote: " 'Every relief from outward restraint', says one who was not given to superstition, 'if it be not attended with increased power of self-command, is simply fatal' "

Finally, anarchists seek fellowship, not class war, nor any other war; but they will not yield to class domination either. Nor will they acquiesce any longer in the fraudulent shibboleths of parliamentary democracy, which are fig leaves to conceal the realities of class rule based on violence. Between parliament representing the great arsenals of wealth, be it of employers, financiers or of labour, and socialists, there can be no compromise. Between parliament, resting on arsenals of violence of unimaginable magnitude, and pacifists, still less can there be compromise. In that sense, pacifists seek, it is true, total revolution — one that cannot be negotiated — but one that can only take place within the individual human soul.

The pacifist perceives correctly that the barriers against violence in men are so precarious that nothing less than an absolute veto against the resort to violence and killing will serve as an adequate protection. The anarchist perceives correctly that violence is engendered by the culminating effects of complex struggles for power and predominance between large numbers of individuals and groups.

The weakness of pacifism is that it is hypothetical only, until war actually breaks out, when it has to grapple with inordinately powerful xenophobic and chauvinistic emotions, if not hysteria. The weakness of anarchism lies in the contradiction between its hostility to power on the one hand and its own deeply politically orientated tradition on the other.

The strength of both lies in the sharp cutting edge of their concrete particularism in the present actuality, and their impatience of high sounding rhetoric which conceals the deceit of the powerful. To those who talk of disarmament, the pacifist says: "The credentials of sincerity we look for are of the simplest: throw away your gun! Your continuing to carry it is itself sufficient proof of your insincerity." To those who talk of equality and justice, the anarchist says: "We will believe you as soon as you demonstrate your love of justice and equality by ceasing to strive to obtain power over others in order to govern them. For the power to rule and dispose of wealth is the original source of inequality and injustice."

In order to abolish war, it is certainly necessary to refuse to take

part in it, but it is also necessary to live in a way that is conducive to peace and not to war. The way of life that leads to war is one that is based on competition in wealth-getting in order to secure primacy of power and prestige over others. Anything that enables the individual to affirm his humanity, his equality, his fulfilment in earning the affections of others, is true progress and promotes the peace of mankind. Anything that sacrifices these things for the mechanisation of life, for increased speed, wealth, power, is retrogressive and culminates logically in destruction and suffering. Men have to learn to stop competing with one another. It is difficult, but it is by no means impossible.

Freedom from competition and its replacement by mutual affection can only begin in the home; and such homes can only be built by women and men who love one another, which means respecting each other's individuality on a reciprocal basis for life. Nothing less will serve the needs of children, who, after all did not ask to be born, and who are entitled to this security. The alternative is the production of more automated and mechanized warriors to man a rocket-propelled civilization even more maniacal than our own — if that is possible.

The choice has never before been so starkly defined for humanity. It is for us — for all of us without distinction of person — to choose. The outcome will depend entirely on the efforts which every one of us makes. We must have peace. We shall have peace. But a truly gargantuan struggle lies before us.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

The best study of the nature of political power known to me is:

Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism, the doctrine of *raison d'état* and its place in modern history* (translated from the German by Douglas Scott), 1957.

Students of anarchism will find ample sources listed in:

George Woodcock, *Anarchism*, (Penguin Books), 1962.

I personally would wish to suggest:

Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within you*, 1893, (World's Classics, translated by Aylmer Maude), Oxford, 1936.

Leo Tolstoy, *What then must we do?*, 1886, (World's Classics, translated by Aylmer Maude), Oxford, 1935.

Peter Brock, *The Political and Social Doctrines of the Unity of Czech Brethren in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries*, Mouton & Co., The Hague, 1957.

Gordon Zahn, *Solitary Witness : The Life and Death of Franz Jagerstatter*, Chapman, 1963.

The New Testament.