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Individual Action - 1953, March 10, Tuesday

John Goldstein

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INDIVIDUAL ACTION

Vol. I, No. 8

New York, N. Y. March 10, 1953

Price Five Cents

OMINOUS CLOUDS HANG OVER OUR HEADS

John's Corner

Store owners in the Flatbush area of Brooklyn have capitulated to the wishes and perversities of the "holy" Roman Catholic Church. They have announced, to the sorrow of thinking people, that they will allow a Church committee to censor their stock of books.

Since I am aware of the Index, I expect that most worthwhile books will be banned by the Flatbush bookstores. And hence if an intellectual desires to purchase the works of Zola, Hugo, Darwin and other literary geniuses, he will be compelled to do outside of Flatbush.

This particular censorship is the result of a campaign perpetrated by the "Decent Literature Committee" of the Christian Roman Catholic Church. But it is our fault that the Church can possibly exercise such thought-control inasmuch as we have acquiesced to their rantings. Free thinkers, as a matter of fact, could frustrate the Church's action by visiting said bookstores for the purpose of acquiring the forbidden literary works. Something must be done, immediately, to halt the Catholic Hierarchy's encroachment on our human rights.

* * *

Other religious sects also employ fakers and politicians. For example, the Minister of Community Church of New York, Mr. Donald Harrington, claims to be a pacifist. Well, I have my doubts — and they have been substantiated. Recently I heard the "reverend" give a lecture on Pacifism and World Government — he is a super-statist. In the lecture he made an astonishing statement to the effect that if UN troops engaged in action that he thought would bring Peace to the World, he would support them. Mr. Harrington, all military powers claim that when they indulge in war, they are fighting for peace, security and Freedom. Besides, Doctor, UN troops, like national ones,

would slaughter women and children in addition to mutilating property. I had thought — and most pacifists would corroborate this statement — that pacifism is at variance with violence of any sort. Reverend, how does one resolve such an apparent contradiction?

Moreover, Mr. Harrington, throughout his speech, insulted those of us who espouse Anarchism. He said — attempting to impugn our sincerity — that we have no right to fool around with Anarchism when the World is faced with destruction. Reverend, you and your kind have been participating in politics and the results have been rather appalling. Politicians have not established — and will not establish — peace. Perhaps anarchists may never create a better world but the majority of them do not betray their principles, nor do they support one State as opposed to another through the method of rationalization. If more human beings become anarchists, the world would be much safer and saner. It would be innane to state otherwise.

* * *

A member of that progressive organization called the NAM asserted that anyone has the opportunity to become a Henry Ford. But suppose that you do not want to exploit your fellow man, as Henry Ford did, in order to achieve success? Probably, you will end up either on the Bowery or in jail in view of the fact that present day society is totally bereft of honesty and intelligence.

Thoughts

A strike by the crews of Finnish icebreakers, tugboats and smaller craft has paralyzed many Finnish ports. The men are demanding a 25% wage increase that would be tax free. Workers, in other countries, as well as in Finland, should demand the elimination of the withholding tax.

War Tension Increases

The Western powers are rapidly preparing for World War Three. Six European Nations are about to sign a pact which will unify their armies under a single command. The Schuman plan, a plan that facilitates war production among the European powers, has been in operation for two weeks. War, and not peace, is the subject of conversation between Western politicians.

Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia, three nations whose Governments are almost as despotic, if not as despotic, as the Stalinist regime, are also war-minded. Recently, they have signed a treaty, a treaty which stipulates that the three nations shall synchronize their military efforts, among other things. It is expected that the three totalitarian regimes will aid each other in case of a revolt by the much exploited workers and peasants.

Only a few people, however, anticipated such harmony exhibited by the six European Atlantic Pact Nations. Particularly surprising was France's conciliatory attitude on questions it once would not even discuss. It appears that the French have agreed to allow the Germans, their former bitter enemies, to participate on an equal basis in the European army. And the French have agreed not to recall their forces from the European army if they need them in Indo-China or North Africa to protect their imperialist investments inasmuch as the other "free nations" will supply soldiers as well as other materials with which to suppress the downtrodden colonial masses.

Meanwhile the European capitalists are pooling their resources under the Schuman plan. In view that these tycoons are well aware of the fact that their position is quite variable, they are unifying their efforts to maintain the status-quo. The French and Germans, for example, are charging similar freight rates to customers regardless of nationality. The chief purpose of the scheme, nevertheless, is to make raw materials accessible to those who are producing war goods, a humanitarian venture indeed.

While European Statesmen were engaging in war talks, Eisenhower and Van Fleet held a conversation about the unpop-

ular and stupid Korean holocaust. Since both military men have discerned that the American people are — and have been — weary of the "police action", they probably discussed the possibility of using Asiatic forces to do the dirty work for the American capitalists. Incidentally, Eisenhower, during the late campaign, propagated the notion that Asians should fight Asians.

We common people of the world can frustrate the war effort of our Governments. We should refuse to work in war factories, we should strike against factories producing either war goods or materials that are utilized in the production of destructive instruments and we should not aid the war-mongers in any way whatever. Governments are generating — and have generated war. It is up to us to create a world in which war will be non-existent.

Hope?

The President of the American Jewish Congress stated that the UN is the only hope for the Jews ensnared by Soviet Anti-Semitism. We could suggest better methods of combatting Stalinist tyranny, however; For example, a social revolution behind the Iron Curtain would be a contribution to the alleviation of race-hatred.

—o—

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COMMENT ON HENNACY

Ammon Hennacy's article entitled "Individual Non-action" raises a number of points which require comment, especially from an anarchist source.

But before we analyze Ammon's contentions, we wish to state as unequivocally as possible that he has done more for anarchism than any single individual residing in these United States. He has lived — and is living — a principled life. He has not compromised with the system at all and has displayed tremendous personal courage when the occasion demanded it. No living American anarchist has a record which compares favorably with Ammon Hennacy's.

We believe, however, that his remarks about English Language anarchist publications and individuals are gross exaggerations and will tend to create dissension within the relatively small anarchist movement instead of unity. In our frequent perusal of English libertarian journals, both contemporaries and predecessors, we have found some articles with which we disagree vehemently and have discovered others that we could indorse wholeheartedly. But seldom have we seen an anarchist thesis advocating cooperation with governmental authority. We shall not castigate other anarchist papers so long as we feel that they are following the dictates of their consciences. But if they support war or if they countenance unreasonable compromise with the status quo, we shall excoriate them.

Nor do we think that an individual must serve in prison to prove that he is a good anarchist as Ammon intimates, and has intimated in the past. Actually, all we can or should expect from our comrades is that they perform certain tasks for the movement and live as anarchistically as possible. A speaker should deliver lectures on anarchist subjects, a writer should be willing to contribute articles to anarchist publications, all of us should occasionally distribute propaganda and it is necessary for us to participate with the masses in their struggles against the ruling powers, provided that the recalcitrants are not permeated with statist philosophy. We have no right to demand more than this from other anarchists.

Neither do we condemn the comrades who believe that by going to jail they are expressing their indignation with the system. In fact, we admire their courage and integrity. But they have no right to belittle other anarchists who chose another course of action.

Needless to say, we consider those who use the appellation anarchist while working in war factories, or while employing labor, or while contributing to the Red Cross, or while making plans for world war three, hypocrites of the first water — and we, like Ammon, have the utmost contempt for them.

Perhaps the most disturbing part of Ammon's article is his endorsement of the Catholic Church, an institution that he once called the most evil one in existence. In the latin countries, where the church was able to procure complete control over the people, anarchists and other free thinkers were persecuted and tortured with impunity. And this same Church — a Church which burned great literary works — fostered a colossal inquisition and supported the ruling powers in other ways as well. It is beyond our comprehension how a person can reconcile the philosophy of anarchism with the authoritarian Catholic Church — and we have a perfect right to say so regardless of our personal record.

As far as the Pope's condemnation of materialism is concerned, we take it with a grain of salt. It is a salient and undeniable fact that "His Holiness" and his underlings are living — and have lived in the past — amid great splendor. No individual has as much material wealth at his disposal as the Pope does. If, however, the Pope renounced worldly pleasures for himself and lived in poverty, we would take his pronouncements on materialism more seriously.

It is high time that we Anarchists, including Hennacy, concentrate our efforts on undermining the powers that be. For until the State is abolished, we will be afflicted with war and poverty despite the noble efforts of a few anarchists of Ammon Hennacy's calibre.

—John Goldstein and Felix Ortiz

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr. Editor:

John Goldstein's views on free love bring to mind Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* — "which ought to be required reading for free lovers, it seems to me. The people in *Brave New World* are wonderfully free, and yet they don't show much promise of becoming good anarchists. If Huxley is correct, sex is like power sealed in a tube. If you tap it early and at frequent intervals — in "*Brave New World*" the very infants are stimulated to fullest expression of their sex impulses, and the little boy who refuses sex play behind the bushes with little girls, one or more, at a time or in sequence — is regarded balefully by society as the worst sort of deviate — but, as I was saying, according to Huxley, if you tap it early and often, you generate an animal satiety, which gives you individuals wonderfully adapted to the totalitarian scheme of statism. Everybody in the brave new world is happy and nobody is frustrated. In such a situation, things run so smoothly that an anarchist would be unthinkable. "Everybody belongs to everybody else" is their motto, and the only thing that is smutty or obscene is the old-fashioned notion of viviparous reproduction.

I don't know what solution Mr. Goldstein might offer for that embarrassing and thwarting interference with the pure joy of love known as parenthood, but the people in the brave new world have

found a solution. I doubt if Mr. Goldstein has even gotten that far as to consider such a thing, for to him what happens to the individual seems to be about the end of it. But Huxley has more to say on that too. Anthropological research appears to support the idea that, if, instead of tapping it early and often, you keep the power of sex under tension until after the brain has had a chance to develop, then you get your perfect anarchist, your discontented, progressive man. The supreme values of civilization, such truth and beauty as we have are attributable to this. I will agree with Mr. G. that many of the so-called fruits of civilization are not worth having, indeed like the atom bomb are threatening to destroy us. So it looks like at first glance our only choice is that between insanity and lunacy . . .

The dilemma seems to boil down to this: how can you have free sex expression plus anarchists?

MRS. GORDON HARVEY

Dear editor,

Sometimes I see written on Subway walls, posters, or platforms in crayon or chalk, MANKIND MUST RENOUNCE WAR. WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? Apparently someone has started a campaign. I like the idea of the same slogan being publicized rather than spreading efforts thin over many slogans, leaflets and activities.

A READER

John Goldstein Answers:

I wish to compliment Mrs. Harvey for being such a discerning individual for she has ascertained the fact that I favor sex among children, although I did not previously make an assertion to that fact. Psychologists, who are not anarchists, through incessant experimentation have discovered that children reach sexual puberty around the age of 13. And since society forces the children to repress their sexual urges, they use this energy in committing mischievous deeds.

No anarchist, Mrs. Harvey, has ever inferred that children who did not desire to copulate should be abused. On the contrary, anarchists believe that children should be taught to respect the freedom of others. But we have every reason to think that few would desire to abstain from sex once that they were taught that the act is beautiful rather than dirty. An anarchist society would encourage the child to express himself sexually and in other manners as well.

As far as we are concerned, the joys of parenthood are ex-

aggerated. First of all, most rich parents send their offspring to boarding schools or hire nurses to take care of them. Secondly, those parents who "like" to bring up children are usually sadists. They enjoy beating and scolding their kids. And some of them come home to their children in a state of intoxication and frighten the youngsters no end. Yes, most parents should be deprived of these "joys of parenthood."

And we do not believe — and never have believed — that a submissive person is, or can be, a good anarchist. Most children who capitulate to their parents, invariably submit to State authority, while those who revolt early become anarchists or rebels of other sorts. The ruling powers, as well as some libertarian psychologists, have corroborated the fact that a child brought up with a minimum amount of discipline is more difficult to control than other children.

To sum up, we would like to state that an anarchist society would — and must — encourage the youngsters to satisfy their creative craving both sexually and through the medium of art.

Anarchist Propaganda

Anarchists, like most thinking people, concern themselves quite a lot with expounding their ideas to others. This is usually known as working propaganda. Often the columns of our journals and the meetings of our groups have discussed the best method to forward our ideas on the social question nostrums which have been advocated. Very rarely has a clear basis laid down from which we can disseminate our views. Let me hasten to state that it would not assist our propaganda in any way if the basis took the form of an elaborate and rigid system of "techniques" formulated without any regard to circumstances under which the propagandist must work. Certainly not. What I suggest is that the best basis from which to propagate the ideas and ideal of anarchy is a clear and simple understanding of who we are and where we stand in relation to the various movements and attitudes of the authoritarians. To my mind this basis can be expressed as follows:

Our purpose is to expound the ideas of anarchism in a manner as clear and as forthright as possible. No dilution or toning down for fear of losing a "public" — intellectual or otherwise — should take place. Anarchism cannot be doctored and sloganized in order to attract the "masses". We do not want a mass; we want thinking individuals. Equally, we do not wish to attract those who consider anarchism to be too simple and naive without the aid of jaw-breaking "sociological" and "psychological" jargon. The philosophy of anarchism does not depend upon the ever-changing fads of the "scientific" for its basis and truth. It makes it appeal to conscious individuals, free-souled rebels, who aspire to work and love without the paralyzing frustration and tyranny of authority.

We do not desire to merge ourselves into what is commonly called the "labor movement" and thus become nothing. Neither are we willing to lose ourselves in the barren world of bourgeois intellectualism. Though most of us are workers or peasants, we do not regard the working class as being the repository of all virtue. We espouse the cause of no class domination, only the abolition of all classes. Since we regard the workers and peasants of the world as the classes that suffer most from authority, it is to them that our sympathies and most of our propaganda is directed. Anarchism, however, is the philosophy of the classless.

Felix says . . .

Strange as this may seem to some, whenever we attack religion the cry of "intolerance" is raised. The religionists should be the last to raise the issue of intolerance since that is the one quality for which they have been noted thruout history. But even non-religious persons have intimated that we should never castigate religion; that we should be "tolerant".

Let us see how intolerant we are.

The religionists are constantly playing Free-Thinkers. This they do, not only in their churches, but daily over the radio, in newspapers, movies and television. They have at their disposal all the mass-propaganda media thru which to hammer away at Free-Thinkers and are thus able to reach the whole population. We do not expect them to do otherwise and we do not believe that they should be compelled to cease their propaganda (If that were at all possible!)

We wish to point out, however, that a Free-Thinkers' group in New York has been trying for many years to obtain a few minutes radio time to answer these attacks. It is not surprising that their requests have always been denied. The masters must promise the slaves pie in the sky. Yes, you lucky citizen, if you are a Free-Thinker you have freedom of speech **provided** that you can't reach too many listeners!

Our paper is small and we don't have much space. Nevertheless, we have printed articles and letters in favor of religion. No religious publications would tolerate our views to appear on its pages.

This is how intolerant we are!

It can only succeed as a voluntary movement of autonomous individuals and by transcending all class concepts. Workers and bosses, rulers and ruled, all stand to gain from the realization of anarchy. Any individual, from whatever class who says "I will not rule and also ruled I will not be" is our comrade.

We stand for anarchy. Our task is to struggle for a social revolution which will abolish property and government, exploitation and domination, and establish a society of equity and liberty. To that end our propaganda and our lives are dedicated.

—S. E. Parker

The Two Against God

John Goldstein and David Dellinger made a United front against God. Dave the older is little bit softer toward God. John is younger, is in full fury against God. The voice of God is calling to them, like to the young Samuel, they are not sure of it. INDIVIDUAL ACTION, is not the first Anarchist magazine, to turn from protest against God to be in His service.

What is God?

God is truth. The absolute truth. The truth that refuses to accept white or black lies.

God is Love. Love that does

not let go. Love that never fails. Love that gave strength to inmates in Concentration Camps. Love that give miracle births.

God is intelligence. It is the source of knowledge, of the know how.

God is the soul. It is our longings. It is our dreams. It is our desire to live the greater life. Life of no tears Life of no hunger.

For John and for David the call of God is coming, to be in His service. What is his service? Meekness, devotion and love.

— David Berkingoff

Suicide

Ex-Senator Bob LaFollette, the darling of some "radicals" shot himself due to ill health. The so-called Progressive Statesman was an isolationist until the attack on Pearl Harbor. Then he became a vigorous support of Roosevelt's policies. In addition, he has a bad record as a Red-baiter. Some pacifists, however,

are still seeking the aid of politicians like Mr. LaFollette, who will preach isolationism until the government declares war. When this occurs the former anti-war "statesmen" begin waving the flag vehemently as the most noxious patriots. It would be suicide for the anti-war movement to indentify itself with politicians of any sort.

—o—

ON BEING HARSH

Felix Ortiz

Some people have called us "harsh". Speaking for myself I submit the following as an answer.

My language is actually a bit restrained when you consider that the bitterness felt is often greater than the bitterness expressed. I'm sick n' tired of being pushed around by bosses and by all the stooges and parasites that infest society.

In the shop my life is made miserable by the boss and his stooge the foreman. Also by the stupid and cowardly scissorbills and finkish fellow-workers. Also by the labor faker whose main interests are the collection of dues and political action and who doesn't give a tinker's damn for the welfare of the individual worker.

Outside the shop my life is made bitter by the vicious landlord. The shopkeepers. The cops in their patrol cars. (Note to our worthless critics: There's more bad grammar coming up).

I pick up a newspaper or magazine — intellectual prostitutes! I don't dare put on the radio — how much can a man take!

There are other things. For instance, the humiliating compromises I have to make when I get a girl and live with her for a while. (On this point I must concede that others are worse off; they are enslaved for life.)

I'm not crying on your collective shoulders. I'm just letting you know why we are harsh. We have declared war on many honored institutions. And in this war my co-editor and I believe we should fight hard.

Altho most of our readers are pacifists we offer no comfort to those who want us to become mild, gentle, dull and wishy-washy.

To prove that we can be even harsher we publish the following poem which was originally stolen by F.O. and which is to be taken with a grain of salt.

On bosses and on stooges, on our enemies, and all,
Misfortune attend and disaster befall!
May life be to them a succession of hurts;
May fleas by the bushel inhabit their shirts;
May aches and diseases encamp in their bones,
Their lungs full of tubercles, bladders of stones;
May microbes, bacilli, their tissues infest,
And tapeworms securely their bowels digest;
May corn-cobs be snared without hope in their hair,
And frequent impalement their pleasure impair.
Disturbed be their dreams by the awful discourse
Of audible sofas sepulchrally hoarse,
By chairs acrobatic and wavering floors —
The mattress that kicks and the pillow that snores!

IN DEFENSE OF CHARLIE

By the time this appears in print, more eloquent voices than my own probably will have been raised in defense of Charlie Chaplin, the great comedian who had the courage to denounce the thought-control tactics of the American Legion rather than knuckle under as did Jose Ferrer when the same group of professional patriots threatened to picket his "Moulin Rouge".

The Legion's action in banning the exhibition of Chaplin's "Limelight" in Hollywood is about as logical as if the Ethiopian daughters of I Will Arise should get together to suppress Da Vinci's "Last Supper" because it was painted by an Italian.

If our top columnists and editorial writers fail to jump to the firing lines and blast the Legion for narrow-mindedness and cynical unfairness, it may be suspected that fear is holding back the boys with the big audiences and big incomes.

Certainly those conservative writers who have waxed indignant over the use by labor unions of the secondary boycott should be on Chaplin's side this time. For even the American Legion does not claim there is anything wrong with the picture "Limelight" and is attacking it only because they don't like the man who made it.

Some time ago there was a clever skit put on by a garment workers theatrical group which perfectly illustrates my point.

The plot was the typical triangle situation, an erring wife, a romantic suitor and a husband who returns home unexpectedly and inopportunely.

The wife attempts to conceal the lover in a room offstage. But the husband detects his presence, brandishes a revolver and strides out the same exit.

There is a reverberating pistol shot in the wings and the husband returns.

"Oh, why did you have to shoot him?" the wife tearfully inquires.

The husband waves aloft the coat of the intruder and pointing to the breast pocket replies: "No union label."

This skit is funny because the motivation for the shot is ridiculous.

The motive of the American Legion in forcing Los Angeles theatre chains to forgo the showing of Chaplin's "Limelight" is equally ridiculous. But it is not funny. Actually it is rather tragic.

The audience watching the

bedroom skit knew the husband shot his rival for reasons other than those stated. The reasons of the Legion in gunning for Chaplin are equally transparent. Some people are unfortunately allergic to genius and see in it a threat to their own mediocrity.

In London the other day (January 21st to be precise) Chaplin read a prepared statement to the press. He said:

"Hollywood has succumbed to thought control and the illegal methods of high pressure groups which means the end of the American motion picture industry and its world influence."

If the American Legion or any other pressure group is to be the final arbitrator of what we see on the motion picture screen, then Charlie is correct.

But I choose to believe that because the attack hurt him personally, his reaction is unduly pessimistic.

The Legion may frighten a few exhibitors for a few weeks but it is improbable that the threat of a phony picket line will scare off all of them for all time.

Most Liberals will gladly walk through such a picket line at least one to see "Limelight". And if they find it as good as the movie critics of Time Magazine and the Saturday Review claim it to be, and the acting of Claire Bloom as inspired as reports say, They may even consider picketing the pickets.

The Legion officials are riding a little too high and hell-for-leather down here and I doubt very much that they are actually speaking for the bulk of their members.

So many of us have participated in so many wars during the past few decades that veterans' organizations no longer consist exclusively of bigots and jingoists. They cut a broad swath across the population and include all kinds of varieties of human beings, although their spokesmen are not always of the most representative type.

As for Charlie Chaplin, regardless of his politics, his birthplace, his marriages, and the presence or absence of a union label on his underwear, the man is a great artist.

We are only depriving ourselves when we ban his creations and sentence him to exile.

America needs Charlie Chaplin more than he needs us and the history of cinematography will eventually prove how wrong-headed is the present action of the American Legion.

—Ridgely Cummings

I Am Afraid . . .

"I am afraid of getting robbed"
He said, and bought a gun.
His boy came home one day quite late.
Mistake? He killed his son.

"I am afraid dictators will
Deprive me of free choice."
But soon he wore a uniform;
He did not have a voice.

He did not let his conscience speak,
Afraid they'd call him "Pink";
He shouldered soon a deadly gun—
Preferred this to the clink.

He was sent off to foreign lands
To battle for his "Flag".
Some other gun blew out his life—
He ran that final snag.

You cannot overcome what's bad
By doing something worse;
There is but **one** way that will stay
The evil-doing curse:

Speak up and do not be afraid
While evil still is small,
Be ready for your sacrifice
If evil once gets tall.

Replace distrust with child-like
faith,

The ones who err — forgive!
See in each man infinite worth;
Have love — worth while to
live!

Sincerely
—E.F.

Postponed

Unity conferences between the AFL and CIO have been postponed because of Labor Faker Allan Haywood's death. The unity conference if successful will unify the piecards and further hamper the ordinary worker. But if the workers become conscience of their interests, they could upset the apple-cart.

INDIVIDUAL ACTION
Apt. 2F, 15 Sheridan Square
New York 14, N. Y.

Conscientious Objector

He is not craven who will fight alone
Misunderstood and scorned by scores of men.
Tortured, imprisoned, still his creed is firm.
His is a bravery beyond their ken.
The standard of his spirit is held high;
The only banner he will recognize;
The only flag for which this man will die.
It represents a state they can't comprise.

He fights the slavery that is fed to fools.
Coated with sugar bearing glory's name.
He does not heed entreaties, threats and rules.
He spurns alike their honor and their shame.
His fealty is toward the future peace
When war is banished from the human race.

— Hyacinthe Hill

Kern's Case

The Kern trial has been postponed twice already. They are trying to wear out his witnesses and moral supporters, so they can try him when he has no one there. His lawyer says the way to prevent that is for even more to show up next time than the last time. The next time is Wed., March 18 at Court of Special Sessions whose address is 100 Centre St. on the fourth floor. The trial will begin at 10 A.M. Kern advises his friends to sit at the right hand corner near the front.

—F.E.

Sec. 34.66 P.L.&R.