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## **Official failure to resist direct action militants**

Mr Michael Dobbs (letters 13 September 1995) is right to protest at unlawful direct action by single-issue militants. In recent years many people have drawn attention to the social dangers of such action. Yet the authorities remain supine. It is a quarter of a century since I myself brought a successful private prosecution against the organiser of a campaign of this kind. I was induced to do it by the failure of the prosecuting authorities to act against him as they should have done.

The lesson, as Mr Dobbs says and I myself unavailingly urged all those years ago, is this. The democratically correct action, when activities one disagrees with are permitted by law, is to seek a change in the law. It is not to engage in unlawful physical obstruction of the disliked activities.

There is also a lesson for authorities such as the Chief Constable of Sussex, who recently thought it right, in the face of threats of unlawful obstruction by animal rightists, for his officers to allow the passage of lorries transporting livestock only on two days a week. Authorities charged with upholding the law must carry out their duty every day of the week.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 20 September 1995.