

'Aldermaston . . . Symbol of our Unity of Purpose, but London is the Centre of Political Power'

WHICH ROAD FROM ALDERMASTON?

LAST year's march to Aldermaston was a simple, moving, demonstration to the people of this country and the world that some of us viewed human survival as more worthwhile than national pride. For by advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament for Britain they were in effect declaring that they were prepared to see this country excluded from the Executive of the Big Powers, and relegated to the ranks of the third-rate powers without a voice in the political "destinies" of the world. As a gesture, as an example for others to follow, the march was imaginative and positive.

Yesterday the marchers were again on the road. This year however they started in Aldermaston; their destination, London. For, in the words of the organisers

Aldermaston, the source of the weapons to oppose, has become a symbol of our unity of purpose, but London is the centre of political power which controls Aldermaston. This year, then, we march from Aldermaston to London.*

If Aldermaston has become the symbol of "our unity of purpose" what will London, "the centre of political power" become? The symbol of disunity?

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If the March is not to become simply an annual airing for our consciences, a routine "must" for progressives, which will be as deadly and ineffectual as are the official Labour May Day parades, then it is more important that this year's March should be the occasion for earnest discussion among the marchers themselves than a demonstration to fire the imagination and win the support of the bystanders who will be met *en route*.

Since last Easter, the "unity" of the Campaign has been disturbed by

*Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Bulletin. January, 1959.

Fact or Fiction?

CLAIMING THE MOON

WASHINGTON, MARCH 6

The State Department's chief counsel, Mr. Loftus Becker, gravely informed a congressional committee today that neither Russia nor anyone else could claim the moon merely by planting a flag on it. Members were not convinced, however, and urged the conclusion of an international convention to govern "territorial claims" in outer space.

What was the position, they asked if private companies wished to launch satellites? The best advice Mr. Becker could give them was: Hire a lawyer.

The committee was in some geometrical difficulty about what would happen if national boundaries were extended into space. Senator Keating (Republican, New York) argued that, because of the curved face of the earth, extended boundaries, in the form of an "inverted cone", would overlap, with the result that more than one nation would be occupying the same air space.

Another member felt, on the contrary, that, if boundaries were projected upwards like columns, gaps would be left between them. But, asked Senator Keating, would not the rotation of the earth cause the columns to get mixed up?

A Republican colleague gave him "the full weight of my scientific ignorance", and the committee was about to vote on "gaps or overlaps" when someone thought of approaching the National Geographic Society for a ruling.

The Times 7/3/59

a small, active body of people calling themselves "The Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War" whose first public action directed to the missile base at North Pickenham last December was given front-page prominence in the National Press and caused the respectable and responsible Executive Committee of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament such acute embarrassment that they found it necessary to issue a statement disassociating themselves from the rebels. It is worthwhile reprinting the statement for at the same time it summarises the Campaign's own position.

Supporters of nuclear disarmament have been widely criticised in the Press for abandoning the methods of persuasion and undertaking civil disobedience at the week-end demonstration at North Pickenham. I would, therefore, like to make the position of the Campaign clear.

We aim to change public opinion and the policies of the political parties through the usual democratic channels. We work in friendly co-operation with a number of other organisations, including the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear War which was responsible for the demonstration at North Pickenham.

It is an entirely independent organisation with which we have co-operated on many projects, including the Aldermaston March and Vigil.

The National Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is not in favour of civil disobedience or sabotage so long as reasonable opportunities continue to exist for bringing democratic pressure on Parliament. It recognises that those taking part in the North Pickenham project did so in full knowledge of the risk involved of violence or legal action. We also realise that many who support our aims have been encouraged to take part in such activities through the failure of a great deal of the National Press to report either fairly or adequately our legitimate activities.†

Spurred on by the success of their first venture, the Direct Action Committee (which is composed of Pacifists, and whose vice-chairman, Hugh Brock, is editor of *Peace News*) has now launched a Voter's Veto campaign which aims at persuading people to vote only for candidates who declare that they will support the campaign for nuclear disarmament in the House of Commons irrespective of Party Whips and party policy. Where no candidate in a constituency is prepared to give this undertaking voters will abstain from voting altogether. North Pickenham was a youthful escapade which a disclaimer and the passing of time would help everybody to forget. But the Voters' Veto was really putting the cat among the political pigeons. On the brink of a general election these irresponsibles were launching a campaign which, if successful, would operate against the Labour vote and thereby assist the Tories into a third term of office!

†C. for N.D. Bulletin. December 1958.

Not only did the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament issue a 4-page supplement to its February Bulletin reprinting the Direct Actionists' letter to the *New Statesman* and Benn Levy's reply which they stated "has the general support of the Executive Committee of the Campaign" but a number of "pacifist" and sympathetic M.P.s have expressed themselves, some of them more in anger than sorrow, in the columns of the *New Statesman* and *Peace News* on the dangers of the cam-

aign for a voters' veto.

It is significant that the circular letter addressed to all M.P.s and prospective candidates of the three main parties asking them whether they supported the unilateral nuclear disarmament campaign by Britain and if so whether they would be prepared to vote against nuclear weapons in the House of Commons, "defying if necessary the Party line", has brought only 86 replies. Of these only 34 (31 Labour and 3 Liberal) M.P.s and candidates said they supported the policy of unilateral disarmament but only 6 Labour and 1 Liberal candidates said they would be willing, if necessary, to defy the party whip. Not one of the nine Labour M.P.s who replied in the affirmative to the first question would do likewise when it came to defying the party whip. And these nine include household names among pacifists such as Frank Allaun, Fenner Brockway, Emrys Hughes, Victor Yates and Reginald Sorenson!

In their canvassing of electors in the S.W. Norfolk by-election (the

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THE FALL-OUT IS FASTER

WHAT is known about the effects of nuclear explosions is bad enough. One of the frightening aspects, however, about the testing of nuclear weapons is that they are carried out precisely in order to find out what happens when the abominable things are exploded.

The scientists don't know. So they have to contaminate the atmosphere in order to find out about contamination of the atmosphere. It's rather like taking poison in order to find out what happens to you when you take poison.

And when they do find out, they don't tell anybody because the assumption is that the 'enemy' does not — or might not — know, and therefore their knowledge is top secret. We are not allowed to know what 'our' scientists are doing to us in case the scientists on the other side find out what they are doing to their own people. As if any of them care.

Little by little they are accumulating their grim knowledge. When they are sure the other side know it already and they feel it can be reassuring to the public they release it; when they feel the reverse, they hang on to it.

Desire to Boast

For the politicians, whose interest in scientific achievement is to be able to boast about it and use it to 'negotiate from strength', it is very galling at times to have to keep their mouths shut. Such a situation has just been relieved in America, where information has just been allowed to be released about a great achievement by American scientists.

Six months ago, in last September, the Americans carried out what they called 'Project Argus'. This was the explosion of a nuclear weapon at a height of 300 miles, and it has been

regarded as a historic project. Just what it adds up to in terms of anything worthwhile remains to be seen, but anyway those American politicians who knew about it were very frustrated at not being able to tell the world—or at least tell the Russians.

Now that the news has been released, however, it has been rather spoiled by being accompanied by more information regarding the rate of fall-out from nuclear explosions.

Information Suppressed

And this newest information has turned out to be disturbing for the inhabitants of North America. Disturbing not only for its content but also for the fact that it was originally suppressed by the U.S. Defence Department and Atomic Energy Commission.

Last week the Congressional Atomic Energy Committee (which is a joint committee of the House of Representatives and the Senate) declared that the American public was 'entitled' to certain information and forthwith released it, blaming

the Defence Department and the Atomic Energy Commission for suppressing it.

There seems to have been something odd going on in this whole business, for the information was originally given to the Congressional Committee by the two government bodies who then proceeded to suppress it! Yet when the Committee sought permission to release the information, it was granted!

It is all very odd, and can be explained only by the disturbing nature of the revelations for the people of America, for what they are now being told is that they are receiving on their heads a heavier concentration of radio-active fall-out than any other people anywhere in the world, and that Strontium 90 is falling-out much faster than was originally thought.

Maintaining Strontium 90

This information was given to the Congressional Atomic Energy Commission by Major-General Herbert Loper, a special adviser on atomic energy to the Secretary of Defence,

and by Dr. Willard Libby and Mr. A. R. Luedecke, both of the Atomic Energy Commission.

It consists mainly of the following points:

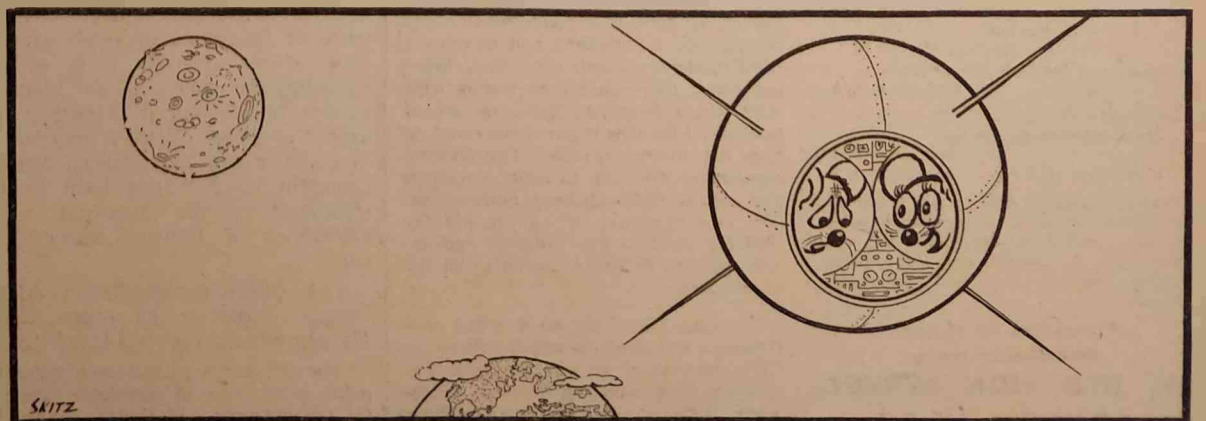
1. *Strontium 90, supposedly the deadliest radio-active by-product of nuclear explosions, stays up in the stratosphere not for seven years (as the A.E.C. has consistently maintained) but probably only for two, for four at most.*

2. *When it falls out, its concentration is heavier on the surface of the northern area of the United States than on any other part of the world.*

3. *Half the debris above the earth's atmosphere falls out in two years, another quarter in the next two years, and the rest in not more than another two years.*

4. *The existing density of Strontium 90 in the atmosphere can be maintained by discharging "about six megatons of fission products per year." In other words the amount of radio-activity would not increase, no matter how many nuclear tests were made if they did not in all release more than six megatons of fissionable products.*

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'Relax, Buster, it could be worse. They could have given us cancer!'

Which Road from Aldermaston?

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Results of which will be known only after we go to press) they seem to have had more success, with 165 supporting voters' veto and a further 104 who support Nuclear Disarmament "considering withholding their votes" out of 1,186 people so far canvassed. But for voters' veto to be more than a symbol, the Direct Action Committee would need thousands of canvassers operating throughout the country simultaneously. And we believe that long before that situation was reached voters' veto would have become redundant!



WHILST it is not difficult for us to feel much sympathy for, closer to, the workers in the Direct Action Committee than for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, we must recognise—with regret that basically both organisations are not only aims in common but on the same means for achievement. However much the Campaign for N.D. disowns the civil disobedience and decries the voters' veto campaign of the Direct Action, both organisations look to Parliament to legislate for unilateral nuclear disarmament. The Campaign for N.D. talk of "changing . . . policies of the political parties through the usual democratic channels" while the D.A. Committee in its opening paragraph of its most recent statement on the "Political implications of a Voters' Veto" declares

The campaign against nuclear weapons is a rebellion against a national policy based on preparation for genocide . . . the H-bomb is the supremely important moral issue of today. But this is a political as well as a moral issue. Eventually it is a British Government acting in the name of the British people that will renounce the Bomb. The rebellion has got to be taken directly into politics. (Our italics).

Where the two organisations disagree is on the tactics to be adopted at this Stage. The National Campaign for N.D. on the one hand

is not in favour of civil disobedience or sabotage so long as reasonable opportunities continue to exist for bringing democratic pressure to bear on Parliament . . . (our italics).

The Direct Action Committee, on the other hand, declare:

Not only have we been disenfranchised to a large extent, but so also have our representatives in Parliament. Vital decisions are made in closed meetings . . . In this situation the people must take action, and assert their right to have a voice in matters most vitally affecting them. Where the constitution ceases to give them this right, the people are only exercising their democratic prerogative in taking non-violent action to exert pressure on the Government. (Our italics).



WE think it not difficult to chart the course of the National Campaign for N.D. So long as the money comes in it will proceed in a vicious circle of hope in Labour, and once Labour is in power (and Mr. Bevan eloquently pleads for the H-bomb as the most potent weapon for world peace in his armoury), the Campaign will be split from top to bottom and die from neglect!

Much more difficult to prophesy

is the future of the D.A. Committee, for its course is uncertain. North Pickenham was a carefully prepared and admirably executed demonstration which not only drew attention to the building of a missile base, but, more important, showed how precariously balanced is Authority with all its forces of law and order, and its armed forces. A mere handful of determined people refusing to play the game according to the rules could upset them all from the Home Secretary to the magistrates, from Chief-Constables to ordinary coppers! Imagine the effect of a hundred North Pickenhams every week, requiring fewer people than will be marching from Aldermaston this week-end!

Whatever may have been the motives of the organisers of the N. Pickenham demonstration, its impact was a moral, a-political one. It made people aware of the power that is in each of us if we choose to use it. And because the demonstrators were ordinary human beings, some with families (and all that is implied in the way of "responsibilities") who were prepared to spend a public holiday in prison, their action could not but give strength to others through their example. This to our minds is the seed of rebellion not just against nuclear weapons, but against authority, of which Parliament is the living symbol.

For this reason it is difficult to find a connecting link between N. Pickenham and Voters' Veto. One can only suggest that the success at the Missile Base went to our friends' heads! For the first action depended on the determination of those who took part, whereas the second requires a huge political machine and a millionaire's Press if it is even to dent the Establishment. The first is within the compass of any determined human being; the second smells a bit of political vanity and ambition. And if Voters' Veto is in fact a political campaign then it is doomed to failure (surely, the response to the D.A. Committee's circular letter to M.P.s and candidates should convince them of that?) . . . and the Direct Action Committee with it.



WE imagine that only a few of those of us taking part in the Aldermaston March have any illusions as to the influence such a demonstration will have on British "Defence" policy. On the other hand, we are not suggesting that since it has no effect on the government it is a waste of energy. There are times when the importance of an action is for oneself. For some the very fact of having broken away from the routine pattern of life to take part in this March; for others the effort of will needed to join in a demonstration for the first time in their lives, are all positive steps in the direction of "rebellion" against the Establishment. But for the rest of us, as we suggested at the outset, this March though in the opposite direction is along the same road as last year: A.4 for the motorist, the reformist road for the majority of progressives! Last year it got us nowhere, and unless our thinking follows other roads it will get us nowhere this year!



THE prospect of abolishing nuclear weapons in a foreseeable future is remote indeed, even assuming that one persuaded the Government of this country to disarm unilaterally. The threat of fall-out from tests, or annihilation as a result of nuclear war between Russia and the United States remain. Even assuming that all countries agreed to nuclear disarmament, that is no guarantee, for as Bertrand Russell pointed out in the House of Lords debate on the subject last month

I have said over and over, again, although I do not seem to be noticed when I say it, that it is not enough to ban nuclear weapons. If you ban nuclear weapons completely, and even destroy all the existing stocks, they will be manufactured again if war breaks out. The thing you have to do is to ban war. . . .

The Aims of Anarchism

ANARCHISM (from the Greek an-, and archia, contrary to authority), is the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government—harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being . . .

—"Encyclopedia Britannica", 11th Edition.



THE desirability of a society without authority has found expression throughout human history, from Lao-Tse in ancient China and Zeno of Kitium in classical Greece, to its first systematic formulation in William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* in 1793, and its elaboration in different directions during the nineteenth century by Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin. Today small and scattered groups of anarchists exist throughout the world, from Siberia to South America. Their numerical strength is impossible to ascertain, for the anarchists are not a party, membership cards and voting papers do not appeal to them. Since they are seeking not power but personal autonomy, they are not concerned with counting heads, or crosses on ballot papers, but in awakening men and women to personal and social independence and responsibility.

Looking at history, the anarchists see two recurring tendencies: the tradition of authority, hierarchy, the state, and that of liberty, free association, society. The distinction between the state and society, between the political principle and the

social principle is crucial to anarchist thought. In Tom Paine's graphic antithesis:

"Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections; the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher. Society in every state is a blessing; but government even in its best state is a necessary evil . . . Government, like dress, is the badge of our lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise."

The anarchists go further than this, seeing government as an unnecessary evil, and to the objection that anarchy, however desirable, would only be possible if all men were angels, they reply with William Morris's phrase that no man is good enough to be another man's master. It is precisely because all men are fallible, that none should be trusted with the government of others, and that none should surrender their power over themselves to others.

Different Trends

Three main trends can be seen in classical anarchism: that of *anarchist-communism* associated with Bakunin and Kropotkin, which beside the usual criticism of the state, its punitive and property systems, postulates the *commune*, the local association for the organisation of social amenities and services as the basis of a free society through territorial and regional federations; *anarcho-syndicalism* which reached its greatest constructive success in revolutionary Spain in 1936, which sees the struggle for workers' control of the means of production as the key to the transformation of society; the *individualist anarchism* which puts its emphasis on the autonomy of self-realisation of the person. In this trend several schools of thought can be discerned, that of pure individualism represented by thinkers like Thoreau and the German philosopher of "conscious egoism" Max Stirner; another developing from the American Josiah Warren whose ideas, blended with the *mutualism* of Proudhon and the individualism of Herbert Spencer, formed the basis of the thinking of Benjamin Tucker, while there is also the trend of ethical or religious anarchism represented by Tolstoy.

What unites these differing trends is their repudiation of the state and of the political struggle for the control of the state machine. Most would accept Marx's definition of the state as "the executive committee of the ruling class" but all would repudiate the Marxist metaphysics of the conquest of state power as the precondition of its "withering away". (And

I. War and Peace

One of the characteristics of governments is their maintenance of what Martin Buber calls the "latent external crisis", the fear of an external enemy, by which they maintain their ascendancy over their own subjects. This has in our day become the major activity of governments and their biggest field of expenditure and effort, reaching the stage in which they propose to decimate each others populations at the touch of a button. War is the trade of governments, and obviously the anarchists support, in common with the pacifists, all anti-war activities, but they can hardly be expected to see anything but illusions in the calls for a "summit conference" or the signing of petitions. The petitions go to the wrong address; they should be addressed not to governments but to people.

We have to build up a disobedient and unreliable public, widening and deepening the impulses which find expression in campaigns like that for nuclear disarmament. War is not the result of the H-bomb, the H-bomb is the logical outcome of war, which in turn is only possible because governments are able to harness their obedient peoples to it. But there are deeper causes; not merely the clash of ideologies, the division of the world

the history of the Soviet Union confirms Bakunin's prophetic analysis of the future of Marxism in his disputes with Marx's faction in the First International in the eighteen-seventies). In other respects the teachings of the classical anarchists differ. Proudhon, for instance, first attacked the notion of private property with his famous dictum "Property is theft", but later took the view that "property is freedom", though it is obvious that in the first instance he was talking of the private ownership of social assets, and in the second, of a man's possession of his house or small-holding. The important thing, however, in the consensus of anarchist teachings, is not the notion of *ownership* but that of *access* to the means of production. Similarly, on the question of exchange: some anarchist thinkers have repudiated the idea of money, others have regarded money as the most convenient mechanism of exchange but have repudiated the notion of interest, others have evolved systems of 'labour tickets', while others have boldly proclaimed, like Kropotkin, that there is enough of everything for everybody, and have supported the principle of "to each according to his needs, from each according to his abilities."

Changing Emphasis

Different stages in the social evolution of various countries during the last hundred years have reflected themselves in the changing emphasis in anarchist ideas. Free associations of independent producers, mass movements among industrial workers designed to culminate in the syndicalist theory of the social general strike, independent co-operative communities, campaigns of civil disobedience and war resistance, the formulation of social utopias, have all been responses to current social and political conditions, as were the desperate struggles of the anarchists in actual revolutionary situations in Russia and the Ukraine, Germany, Mexico and Spain.

Today it is not possible to speak, with the confident revolutionary optimism of our nineteenth century predecessors, of the imminent elimination of capitalism and the state, and of the ending of the triple tyranny of warrior, jailor and priest over mankind. The experiences of our own day have given us a healthy suspicion of rhetoric and of universal panaceas. We have seen too many and we know too much.

What are we to say, here in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century? We are a tiny minority of disaffected citizens in the centre of a diminishing empire, whose economic structure is still geared to its obsolete role as 'workshop of the world', a junior partner of one of the two contending power-blocs, whose war machines are geared to the mechanics of mutual destruction, while internally two equally balanced parties squabble over whether or not the steel industry should be in the hands of private capitalism or of state capitalism. What is the role of the anarchists in such a society? Can we draw up, not a programme, but simply a list, of those fields where anarchist activity will be useful and where, according to personal prediction or opportunity, we can promote our ideas?

2. The Person and the Family

The mass of mankind, Thoreau observed tartly, lead lives of quiet desperation. Is this why we tolerate war—as an exciting break in meaningless routine? And yet who but ourselves has decreed the situation in which work is drained of meaning and purpose except as a source of income or status, marriage and the family a trap, leisure a desperate attempt to stave off boredom? Look around you

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