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Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Nothing is harder to bear than the egoism of ignorance and the arrogance of superstition."
—R. G. INGERSOLL

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Threepence

Reflections on Aldermaston ON THE ROAD... BUT HOW FAR?

THE four-day protest march from the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston, to London over Easter was as impressive a demonstration as last year's march in the opposite direction, and in sheer weight of numbers was even larger. On the first day 4,500 people left Aldermaston, and 5,000 arrived at Reading; on the second day, when the numbers were expected to be much smaller, 3,000 people reached the red-brick wilderness of Slough; on the miserably wet third day more than 3,000 people marched in pouring rain to Turnham Green, (last year's hard core in the rain was about six hundred); and on the final day the numbers continually rose until according to the police 15,000 people marched into Trafalgar Square, where another 5,000 were waiting for them.

Incidentally, despite the anarchists' scepticism about the illusory aims of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, I saw in those four days, more of the writers and readers of this newspaper than I have ever seen at an anarchist gathering! But the conclusions of last week's leading article in FREEDOM seem to me even more valid after hearing the opinions and attitudes and gauging the degree of political awareness of other marchers. Many were very young, attractive and self-possessed boys and girls with so touching a faith that they were changing history, that one yearned for it to be true.

Let us agree that it was at the most a testimony that people care, and at the very least a healthy way

of getting into the open air on the Easter holiday, meeting people and renewing old acquaintances, and that even on that soaking Sunday, singing in the rain it was lifted in some degree into what Stevenson called "the glory of going on".

One thing that was obvious was that people had come from a great variety of sectional motives. There was a deluge of literature from all the dissident socialist groups, and I fear that for the uncommitted, FREEDOM, which sold in fair numbers, represented just another splinter organ cashing in on the crowds. (I think that the anarchists were right to march as individuals, unlike those groups whose banners and obsessional chanting, bore purely political slogans.)

Comparisons with last year's march were not entirely favourable. There was less music (the one band that went all the way redeemed its deficiencies by working heroically hard, playing by the roadside until the three-mile column had passed and then rushing to the head again in a van), there was less spontaneity—understandably since the numbers were greater, there was, I am told, less response either hostile or friendly, from onlookers, and there was rather less publicity on the radio, television and in the papers. Last year's press gimmick was the alleged hardship to children, this year it was obvious that the children were having the adventure of their lives, and the press concentrated on that ridiculous woman Dr. Summerskill

who having announced her intention of addressing us at Aldermaston, ostentatiously withdrew because she said she had discovered that the organisers had advocated the Voters' Veto in the Norfolk by-election, though she must have known that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is opposed to the voters' veto, and that its advocates, the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War had no part in the organisation of this year's march, and marched as individuals, distributing leaflets about the current campaign in Stevenage against the manufacture of the Blue Streak missile there, and about the campaign at the missile base at Watton. Dr. Summerskill's genius for publicity caused the press

reports of the first days of the march to be merely an appendage to the story of her own antics. As if anybody wanted to hear her at Aldermaston!

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SOME very interesting organisational problems arise from the march. Many tributes have been paid to Mr. Howard the chief marshal of this year's as of last year's march, and the Berkshire police chief said that, "I have never in twenty-two years' experience in the police seen such a large body of people so well organised." It was, as an entirely legal and law-abiding undertaking, run in consultation with the police at every stage. Now, whatever advantages this may have—the

right to meet in Trafalgar Square and so on—it placed the whole affair completely at the mercy of the police. Last year, Mr. Howard was overheard expostulating with a police inspector, "Whose march is this anyway, yours or mine?" and he may very well have said the same when the column reached Slough on the second day. His voice oozed impotent resentment over the loud speaker outside the Co-op that night when he explained that "instructions from somewhere higher up" had denied us the right to march through the main streets of Slough that evening, and that this was the cause of the delay and confusion in distributing baggage and getting marchers under cover for the night.

It seemed indeed, as the column went round that lovely town in ever-decreasing circles, avoiding all the streets with people in them, that the march around Slough was longer than the journey from Reading, and,

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'What these cranks don't realise, Robin, is that it would upset the delicate balance of power between us and the Sheriff!'

Tibet: Another Hungary and the Usual Plot

THE imaginations of governments are very stilted, but the contempt they have for the intelligence of their peoples is boundless.

East and West alike, when they are engaged in their usual business of crushing popular aspirations, they uncover a devilish plot to justify cruelty and repression.

Britain, the week before last, was being asked to believe, without any evidence whatsoever, that Africans were plotting a massacre in Nyasaland. This week the plot is uncovered in Tibet, where the Chinese army is crushing a revolt which has been going on for years in the hills and country districts and which at last flared up in Lhasa, the capital.

As in Nyasaland, as in Cyprus, the revolt has been one of a people who resent what they regard as foreign rule. But in Tibet the issue has been somewhat complicated by the fact that the Dalai Lama, titular head of the State, is also the head of the Buddhist faith and thus of millions of Buddhists outside Tibet—in India, and in the border provinces of Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, Kashmir, and in China itself, Sinkiang, Sikang and Mongolia.

In all these places the fate of Tibetan independence has been watched with great sympathy, and the Chinese Government had to find some means of discrediting that struggle without casting any slurs upon the Dalai Lama himself, even though he was clearly identified with the Tibetan desire to resist change in the Communist direction.

So they discovered the usual reactionary plot. The ordinary people of Tibet, of course, had to be shown as loving the Chinese régime, but the disturbances were the result of a small reactionary clique, working with imperialist agents to undermine the people's state.

The Exchange of Letters

Exactly the same story as in Hungary. But so as not to be appearing to attack the Dalai Lama, the story now is that he has been kidnapped by the plotters who are holding him against his will. Not so securely, however, that he cannot carry on a regular daily correspondence with General Tan Kuan-san, the Communist military commander in Tibet!

The letters from the Lama and the replies from General Tan have been broadcast by Peking radio and as reprinted in the *Manchester Guardian* for 1/4/59 give the impression of having been written by the same hand.

Another parallel with Hungary is the impotence of sympathisers with Tibet to do anything to help. Nehru has been sneered at by the British press for his 'fence-sitting' attitude. They seem to forget the precisely similar utterances from Eden and Eisenhower during the Hungarian uprising.

It seems that the aspirations of peoples on the borders of the great nations have to be sacrificed for international order. Putting it simply: the big powers cannot be expected to come into conflict over the interests of small nations.

Old Faithful Keeps Trying C.P. Still Seeks Popular Front

YEAR after year the Communist Party keeps wooing the Labour Party for a united front against Toryism. There never was a more faithful suitor—nor one with a more hopeless cause.

For the old widow knows exactly what the young upstart is after. She knows a con-man when she sees one—after all, she's been conning the workers herself long enough, and being quite ruthless in dealing with rebels inside the home—as witness the recent proscribing of the Trotskyists' *Newsletter* and Socialist Labour League—she certainly has no intention of having any truck with the riff-raff next door.

It is however amazing how the Communists are prepared year after year to go on flogging this line. How they can imagine for one moment that the Labour Party would enter into any kind of agreement with them—even an electoral agreement where the two parties put up candidates—is beyond the comprehension of any but those blinded by Marxist-Leninist dialectics. Especially since that famous pre-war C.P. Conference when Harry Pollitt declared that it was his intention to take Labour by the hand the better to stab it in the back!

Such frankness of speech, of

course, has no place in the more mature (and chastened) C.P. of today, which is concerned to show its British-ness. The Union Jack has long been a feature of C.P. functions. At this year's conference John Gollan underlined the party's correct patriotism by declaring it 'British and proud of it'!

Most of the speeches appear to have had a 'whistling in the dark' air about them. The terrible soul-searching which followed Hungary has been stuffed back in a bottom drawer; there was none of that criticism of the executive which marred the last conference—there was just a sense of relief that the party had survived at all and an attempt to keep up spirits with big talk.

Are They Human?

One thing however seems to worry the Communists above all else. It is that they are thought to be 'inhuman' by the 'ordinary person'. Two conferences ago Harry Pollitt went so far as to urge the comrades to behave in a more 'human' manner, declaring that the terrifying aspect of the dedicated party fanatic tended to 'put off' the ordinary chap. (And no wonder). Harry even went so far as to urge comrades to fall

in love—a most un-Marxist and bourgeois directive. Almost an un-British one, too!

This year a change for the better must have already been discerned, for, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, Mr. William Lauchlan, head of the organisation department, 'jeered at bourgeois ideologists who said that the Communist Party was inhuman'. On second thoughts, though, perhaps things are not so different, for Lauchlan went on to

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DEATH KEEPS ITS ACCOUNTS

HIROSHIMA, Japan, March 14.

Mrs. Komitsu Ishida, 79, who died in the Atom Bomb Memorial Hospital today, was listed as the Hiroshima atom bomb's thirteenth victim this year. Mrs. Ishida, who was 2½ miles away from the blast centre in 1945, died of acute leukaemia.—B.U.P.

★ ★ ★

HIROSHIMA, MARCH 23.

Hayataro Mukai, aged 62, has died of a radiation ailment which doctors said was caused by the Hiroshima atomic bomb explosion in 1945. His death brought to fourteen the number of people said to have died from after-effects of the explosion this year.—British United Press.

Anarchism & Libertarian Communism

IN conjunction with C.W.'s recent appeal for a non-sectarian anarchism it seems appropriate to reconsider the question of anarchism and libertarian communism. The term 'libertarian communism', needless to say, has nothing to do with the régimes operated by the Communist Party, but refers to that ideal of a moneyless, stateless system of society advocated by such individuals as Peter Kropotkin and Alexander Berkman. It is this school of anarchist thought which has been the predominant influence in the anarchist movement of this country almost since its inception, and has shaped the economic conceptions of several generations of propagandists. The abolition of all standards of exchange, the common ownership of the means of production and distribution, the application of the principle of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'—it is by expressions such as these that our writers and speakers have sought to describe the economic basis of a free society. To all intents and purposes the anarchist ideal has been equated with the libertarian communist ideal. It was not surprising, therefore, that when one of our comrades appeared on a television programme for youth he was asked the question: Why use the word 'anarchism' when you really stand for pure communism? The answer is, of course, that we use this word because anarchy is not a synonym for communism. An anarchist can believe in libertarian (or 'pure') communism, but it is not in any way obligatory for him to do so.

We have only to think of the diverse views of the economy of freedom which have flourished amongst us to realise that no one interpretation of anarchism can be claimed as the only true interpretation. D. A. de Santillan, the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist, in his book, 'After The Revolution', wrote: "Anarchism, meaning Liberty, is compatible with the most diverse economic conditions, on the pre-

mise that these cannot imply, as under capitalist monopoly, the negation of liberty." In support of his statement he pointed out that not all anarchist thinkers have shared his own ideal of libertarian communism: "Proudhon advocated mutualism; Bakunin, collectivism; Kropotkin, communism. Malatesta has conceived the possibility of mixed agreements, especially during the first period. Tarrida del Marmol and [Ricardo] Mella advocated pure anarchism without any economic qualification, which supposes the freedom of experimenting [with], or establishing on trial, that which every period and locality judges most convenient." And to this last category of anarchists "without any economic qualification" may be added the names of Voltairine de Cleyre and Max Nettlau.

It is obvious that, if anarchism is to have any meaning at all, it must include a recognition of the right of each individual to freely choose his own economic relationships. Any attempt to establish an exclusivist system—be it communist, collectivist or mutualist—would be a denial of freedom of choice and would, in effect, impose on the individual the melancholy alternative of subjection or starvation. No matter how many arguments were offered by the architects of such a system to prove that it would end exploitation and inequality, it would still be a negation of personal liberty. The freedom of experiment is of the essence of anarchism and an anarchist society, should it ever be brought about, could only make a legitimate claim to this title if it allowed scope for a plurality of differing economic arrangements.

It may be objected that the adoption of such an attitude would leave the door wide open for the reintroduction of capitalism, or of some other type of exploitation. But it is important to remember that the principles of anarchism exclude any conception, or practice, of life based upon authority. Monopoly, the foundation of privilege and inequality, is the economic expression of authority and is by virtue of that fact alien to anarchism. Any encroachment on the sovereignty of the individual, as monopoly inevitably implies, is a violation of liberty and is anathema to the anarchist. By the very nature of our belief, therefore, we must oppose any kind of economic monopoly or domination and bring into the light of day the oppressions it involves.

To accept such a viewpoint, however, does mean that we must change the emphasis of our approach from urging the replacement of capitalism by libertarian communism (or collectivism, or mutualism) to urging the need for the sovereignty of the individual. If our anarchism is to be really non-sectarian, if

stupid mutual excommunications that marred the relations between some of our predecessors, then we must be more concerned with advocating the economic independence of each person than with a rigid laying down of blueprints designed to fix a hypothetical future according to our own particular preferences. This does not mean that we should be any less clear in our denunciations of the injustices of modern corporation or state capitalism, nor any less firm in our adherence to fundamental anarchist principles. But one can oppose the monopolies of today without committing oneself to the creation of a new species tomorrow. It is a question of understanding that the problem of an economic basis for freedom is secondary (but not unimportant!) to the problem of making the sovereignty of the individual the central principle of human life. That, in other words, economic justice flows from individual liberty, not the other way round.

Since we are such a small minority in the contemporary world and since our ideas seem to have little chance of being adopted on any large scale in the foreseeable future, it may appear rather academic to raise these points. They are relevant to the here-and-now, however, as well as the there-and-then. For example, could not one of the causes of the failure of so many community experiments be due to their founders' efforts to make their internal economy of an exclusivist kind (usually communistic)? It might be worth while exploring the possibility of a community project which admitted of differing economic arrangements amongst its members, instead of a single system. Again, would it not be possible for comrades capable of producing useful commodities on their own behalf to exchange these by means of mutually agreed standards of exchange? These are but two of the things which could be considered once we no longer evaluated the character of a free economy in terms of the letter of Kropotkin (or Bakunin or Proudhon).

In our present situation, with authoritarianism becoming ever more subtle in its effects, we should aim at the broadest possible unity among ourselves. We need not sacrifice our various tendencies of thought in order to achieve this. All we need do is try to follow the path indicated to us by Jo Labadie, the 'gentle anarchist', when he wrote these words: "Make the people realize that they live in a wrong system of society and show them that Anarchy is a guarantee for real freedom. Where real liberty prevails, you can have your choice to live in Communism or Individualism. It will be your comrades either way as long as you keep off my toes and mind your own business."

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An Economist's Nightmare?

THE 1958 edition of Silvio Gesell's "The Natural Economic Order" has been slightly revised from the limited 1929 edition. For instance, the elimination of the sub-title which read, "A plan to secure an uninterrupted exchange of the products of labour, free from bureaucratic interference, usury and exploitation".

In the preface Gesell writes, "Its ideal is the ideal of the personality responsible for itself alone and liberated from the control of others—the ideal of Schiller, Stirner, Nietzsche and Landauer".

In the introduction Gesell writes that the abolition of unearned income is the immediate economic aim of socialist movements, but that he knew of only one socialist—Pierre Joseph Proudhon—who did not propose the nationalisation or socialisation of production to secure this aim.

Gesell, born of a German father and a French mother, does not appear to have been influenced by the many experiments and years of effort of the American individualist anarchists. And yet the theme of his book could be summed up in this one oft-quoted paragraph from Benjamin Tucker's address at Chicago in 1899:

"Free access to the world of matter, abolishing land monopoly; free access to the world of mind, abolishing idea monopoly; free access to an untaxed and unprivileged market, abolishing tariff monopoly and money monopoly—secure these, and the rest shall be added unto you. For liberty is the remedy of every social evil, and to Anarchy the world must look at last for any enduring guarantee of social order."

Although the 1929 edition was dedicated "to the memory of Moses Spartacus—Henry George—and all those who have striven to create an adequate economic basis for peace and goodwill among men and nations", Gesell did not advocate the Henry George "Single Tax" as a means of abolishing the land monopoly. He proposed the expropriation of land with full compensation to landowners by means of payment with parity flexible-interest bonds. Land parcels would be leased to the highest bidders and as interest on the bonds decreased year by year through the adoption of an unhoardable money system, the rental in-

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come would eventually be sufficient to redeem the bonds, and henceforth Gesell suggested that the income could be used "to pay mothers a national rent for the services in rearing their children, an equivalent to the use of soil by a part-time woman. It is proposed to pay the mothers' rents from rent on land, in opposition to the proposal of Henry George by which rent on land would be used for the remission of taxation".

Gesell held that with the introduction of Free-Land and Free-Money "the State itself and all other institutions would be superfluous, therefore would not be required and "all rent on land will flow into the wage fund" and a fund could be used as payments to mothers.

And yet he recognized that there was no one authority to control the issue of his "Free-Money". This would be a paper currency the face value of which would depreciate one-tenth of one per cent each week. This depreciation would be restored by the affixation or impressing of demurrage stamps. This form of negative interest would eventually be away with all interest on both money and real capital, prices would be stabilised and unemployment abolished. Although Gesell proposed that a "National Currency Office" would issue and withdraw currency as required, and this would eliminate the use of bank credit and transfer by the means of bank checks, many of the "Free-Economists", as supporters are called, feel that this would be "throwing the baby out with the bathwater". Demurrage could be easily applied to all cheques and bank accounts, aside from savings bank accounts.

No doubt all readers of the "Natural Economic Order" will agree with Otto Sachse who wrote in "The Socialisation of Banking", 1933, "In Gesell's work there are a number of other points which might be criticised, but on the whole I think it must be one of the most original works on economics that has ever been published."

L. A. GARDNER
*Translated by Philip Pye; Peter Owen Ltd., London, 452 pp., 30s.

... & Mr. Tatum's Dream

Arlo Tatum, Secretary of the War Resisters' International, writes: LAST night I dreamed that Britain not only ended conscription, but set up special Tribunals before which every volunteer for the armed forces had to appear.

The object, of course, was to make sure that every volunteer sincerely believed in the method of war, and wasn't volunteering just for the sake of a steady income or to get away from a dominating mother. To make it all perfectly fair and above board, the Tribunal was made up of pacifists who had been refused Conditional Exemption by a Conscientious Objector Tribunal during the Second World War. All except the Chairman, Sir Stuart Morrison Brock, who suffered imprisonment during the First World War.

One by one the hopeful applicants went before the Tribunal, which asked penetrating, honest questions like, "Are you absolutely convinced that Christian ethics are a lot of bunkum?" and "Would you kill the person you love most, if ordered to do so by your Commanding Officer?"

I must admit that Sir Brock was clever at confusing the would-be volunteers. I felt especially sorry for the lad who was forced to confess that he had not resigned from the Society of Friends until two weeks after he was old enough to volunteer. He had trouble as well in explaining away the Commandment "Thou shalt not kill".

One vegetarian was declared eligible for military duty, after convincing the Tribunal that he had more love for animals than for people. Sir Brock stated that this position was perfectly understandable to him and his colleagues, but that to make the applicant's position even clearer he should consider including human flesh in his diet.

The only other successful applicant, aside from an obscure Anglican Priest, was a boy whose mother was a naturalised Russian and father an American. The Tribunal was convinced he really hated and feared foreigners. I awoke this morning refreshed, and have been in a cheerful mood all day.

DISCUSSION

On Literary Art and Esperanto

grateful to you for the publication of my article in the *Esperanto* magazine, recently published by me, in your paper. At first I had no intention of saying anything about A.D.F.'s observations, but on re-reading them it occurred to me that it was my duty as a publisher to say at least a few words about my ideas on poetry, and *belles lettres* in general, since it was precisely those ideas which urged me to devote no small portion of my time and energy to Esperanto. And since I am not improvising these criteria for the occasion, I will make use of certain considerations I expressed in a thesis when taking my degree in classical philology, even though these are now focused on the theme under discussion.

A.D.F. asserts: "Poetry has to have roots in society. Since Esperanto is still, after all, only a cultural movement, its poetry is lacking in the specific relevance necessary to great art". And a little later he adds: "It is the native usefulness of the elements at the writer's command, allied to his own transforming power, which results in universality".

These assertions I consider to arise from literary chauvinism and a philistine nationalistic taboo. Here are my reasons. Having studied the works of Sophocles for the thesis mentioned above, I put the following questions to myself: why do these works, unlike many later ones, always give an impression of freshness? And I found that this is due mainly to three factors: first, to the fact that Sophocles is indeed concerned with man, but chiefly, to be sure, with his essential constituents, above and beyond the altering historical circumstances, and conse-

quently survive all change and remain, for all time in imperishable freshness; secondly, to the fact that Sophocles dramatised realities, not hopes or dreams; thirdly, to the conviction that Sophocles speaks not of this or that man under this or that name, but of the man. But since only individual examples can exist by describing these individual examples the artist creates eternal values, just as the scientist, having studied individual phenomena, sets out eternally valid scientific laws.

Thus, then, the classic quality of Homer, of Pindar, of Sophocles or of Virgil lies in the fact that what they attribute to their heroes rouses an eternal echo, since it eternally re-occurs in each separate individual. And because examples are necessary to support assertions, here are one from each of the above four poets:

1. In the *Iliad* (XVI), Sarpedon and Glaucus, two Lycian princes, are fighting beside the Trojans. Sarpedon dies. His friend Glaucus is unable to defend him, or even his corpse, as a lance has pierced his, Glaucus', arm. Then Glaucus calls upon his god, Apollo, and says to him: "Hear me, O Lord, whether you are in the rich land of Lycia or in Troy, for you can hear a man anywhere when he calls to you in distress". That is very opportune in Glaucus' case, but it is profoundly the human attitude, from which stems the moral god-idea.
2. In Pindar's first Olympian Ode, after a complicated biography symbiotically developed on earth and in heaven, Pelops, on the evening before the dangerous contest which he must undertake

Esperanto

in order to win Hippodamia, standing on the seashore, calls on the god of his childhood "all alone in the darkness"—in the darkness of a satanic and communistic world. Deianeira, wife of Heracles, is almost a comic heroine because of her concupiscent, her wavering indecision, her stupidity, but she has been loved by three demi-gods: Achelous, Nessus, Heracles. Now she has grown-up sons, is old, fears to lose the love of Heracles—which in fact has happened. Because of her jealousy, the great hero, who is never at home, being occupied with his famous labours on behalf of mankind, dies miserably, poisoned by a gift sent, with the best intentions, by his wife in the hope of regaining his love. No doubt other authors' verses about the intrigues or the intellectual or social failings of women have either already faded or will some day fade; but the tragic story of the fifty-year-old Deianeira is physiologically eternal.

4. Among the minor characters of the Aeneid, Virgil presents Ripheus (II, 426), "the justest of all Trojans, who never wavered from the right". Yet this justest of men dies as drearily as any other at Troy's destruction, and the poet comments merely: *Dis aliter visum*, "the gods thought otherwise". In point of fact, who can tell what is just or unjust to the gods? This is much more important and eternal and profound than the burning of Troy.

Many other examples can easily be

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The Question: HOW WOULD WE BAN THE BOMB?

It was during the frequent stops that one of our marching companions, who had read his copy of FREEDOM, put the question: "If this demonstration gets one nowhere—so as banning the bomb is concerned—what kind of action do you think would?" We could not think of an answer which would not contain a hundred qualifying "ifs" and "buts". Here we were, 15,000 people walking from the Albert Hall to Trafalgar Square being handled by the police as if we were a procession of motor cars among motor cars, stopping at crossings to let the traffic through, taking our turn with the columns of buses in Whitehall. Hours after the leaders had cleared Trafalgar Square columns of marchers were still inching their way up Whitehall.

Compare this with the occasions when the Queen sets off for King's Cross Station (police are posted at every road junction and traffic lights are switched off to ensure that the car will nowhere be held-up), or when she attends some pieces of country or an official dinner, in each case the roads in central London are closed to traffic, and special police boards are posted up all round the prohibited area and the traffic is left to manage as best it

can. It must surely have been obvious to some of the 15,000 marchers that no special arrangements could be made by the authorities to facilitate their march through London it was so very unlikely that the Government would bother to pay much attention to the demands over which some 3,000 of them had marched the 2½ miles from Aldermaston. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament declares that it aims "to change public opinion and the policies of the political parties through the usual democratic channels". This presupposes that we live in a democracy but if 15,000 citizens do not equal one V.I.P. it is obvious that we still have a long way to go along the road to democracy!

It is also clear, however, that in a democracy the wishes of 15,000 people, however sincere and determined they may be, at most represent an important minority of public opinion. It may be frustrating to feel that probably a majority have no opinion of their own, but can one by-pass that problem without supporting authoritarian ideas and methods which invariably perpetuate the existing machinery of State, government and privilege? Free elections, the so-called "usual democratic channels" dear to the hearts of our political reformists are a Hobson's choice; one is free to choose among a number of aspirants to positions of power, but never to

*As we go to Press we have read a report of the speech made by Mr. Bob Willis, chairman of the T.U.C. who declared that "he was astonished and dismayed to see that the authorities had not stopped the traffic for the marchers" and went on: "If we have to have demonstrations in the future the authorities should realise that a procession against mass suicide is as important as a procession with gilded carriages". Canon Collins then quickly said that the police, carrying out their instructions, had been extremely helpful. (*Manchester Guardian*). Whose instructions? that, surely, is the important point. Presumably from the same authority which decides to close the streets to traffic when the gilded coaches pass through?

question the machine of government which they operate; one is free not to vote but not free to ignore the decisions made by governments which apply to every man, woman and child whether they voted for or against or not at all.

It is not without significance that *anarchy*, "absence of government", is also defined as "disorder, confusion" not only by the *Oxford Dictionary* but by most "progressively-minded" people as well. Anarchy, they argue, is possible only in sparsely populated rural communities, in an age of the hand loom and the individual craftsman, where time and Science stand still and ambition is dormant. Modern society, with its dense agglomeration of urban population, its Mass production and Mass needs cannot afford the luxury of anarchy! (If only one could detect a little anarchy in their small family groups, one might be convinced of their objectivity).

We anarchists remain unconvinced by this argument because we see that whilst mass production can lead to the creation of Mass Man, it is also the key to a society of Leisure in which Man can be himself, because freed from a preoccupation with sheer physical survival. We are anarchists because we believe that life is bread not as an end but as a means to an end. And we believe in the possible achievement of anarchy because we are convinced that more than ever before in Man's history, we have a choice: between using our knowledge either for our own destruction—or for our emergence—as human beings; between Mass Man and Individual Man.

The sneers and the jeers, the compassionate smiles we received from the politically-bound, Party-Leader-saturated marchers as we offered them FREEDOM "The Anarchist Weekly" far from being discouraging, convinced us that the alternatives are not between party and party, but between centralisation and decentralisation, between centralised authority and individual responsibility. In other words a political de-intoxication; a contempt for political expediency born of a growing belief in individual responsibility and ability.

HOW would we anarchists ban the bomb—that was the question we started with and which we have apparently studiously avoided answering so far though not *in fact!* For have we not made it clear that the H-bomb—and what is much more important, *war itself!* will not be banned by attempts at persuading governments or by direct assaults on government itself (after all when Labour won an overwhelming majority in 1945 did they dispense with the machinery of force? And is there any evidence that government, whatever its political colouring, can reconcile such white-blackbirds as authority, privilege, and Mass-man, with freedom, justice and the individual?

The anarchist road is undoubtedly a slow one, but since one of the speakers at Trafalgar Square last Monday was talking about the demonstration next Easter, we must not feel that our road is any slower than that of the political optimists, the more so since we believe that our road leads somewhere! We think there are two kinds of necessary activity. On the one hand any kind of protest is salutary, if only for ourselves. As one of FREEDOM's editors, the late Marie Louise Berneri, once put it so simply:

It may be true that our protests will not change the course of events, but we must voice them nevertheless. Workers all over the world who rallied to the defence of Sacco and Vanzetti were not able to save them from the electric

Let us at the same time put on record that at the time of writing we know that more than 450 copies of last week's issue were sold during the March.

*See last week's FREEDOM "Which Road from Aldermaston?"

chair, yet who can say that their protests were useless?†

But at the same time if the enemy to human emancipation is the State and government, and we are agreed that we cannot easily destroy them by direct assault, then the only alternative left to us is to eventually destroy them by attrition, by withdrawing power from them as a result of taking over direct responsibility for more and more activities which concern our daily lives. That governments are more aware of the dangers herein involved to their power and indispensability than are people to the possibilities of real freedom, if only they took the plunge, is shown by the political parties' "social plans" on the one hand, and the despondency and apathy of the people on the other. Whatever credit the Labour Party may claim for improved working conditions and living standards in this country must be offset by the new aura with which they have surrounded State and Government.

In the past fortnight the Tories, in their pamphlet "The Responsible Society", are at pains to show that they are human and understanding and anxious, in the words of the *Manchester Guardian* to make "the worker's life more bearable". They even put forward the view, when dealing with the welfare state, that "security, even automatic or unearned, is not necessarily demoralising: it is as much a spring-board for vigour and family devotion as insecurity—the whole history of the middle class is evidence of this."

And any time now we can expect Labour's Plans for Leisure which will include a State subsidised National Theatre Chain and State financial assistance to all kinds of sporting and cultural initiatives as well as the supplying of instructors and organisers to "go out and build up creative leisure activities".

We can well imagine that Labour's

†Neither East nor West, Freedom Press.

plan will be warmly welcomed by the "progressive" elements in the acting profession as well as by the counterparts on the other side of the footlights, and yet another reason (with the Independence of Nyasa-land) to vote Labour when the time comes. But cannot these people see that by allowing the political parties to take the initiative of organising even our cultural and leisure activities, and incorporating them in the responsibilities of government (even if they operate through an Arts Council and not through a Ministry of Culture) they are consolidating the power of the State and at the same time limiting our freedom of action both as individuals and as artists?

We are not saying that the idea of a National Theatre Chain rather than a National Theatre in London is not a good one. But why should its establishment be a matter for government, and government finance? Are there not enough people connected with the theatre, either as executants or as spectators, sufficiently interested in this art form to come together and launch a nationwide appeal to raise the funds needed for such a project? After all when the Government takes the initiative it is only providing the money from the public's purse, by force, of course. It is perhaps simpler that way and guarantees jobs for a number of actors and a show for the public.

§The following news item appeared in a recent issue of the *Manchester Guardian*:

The Vice-Chancellor and Proctors of Oxford University have given approval in principle for the Oxford University Dramatic Society and the Experimental Theatre Club to launch a fund for a university theatre on May 1.

An official statement issued yesterday by the two societies states that the fund will in the first instance be limited to undergraduate contributions. It will be administered by a small joint committee of senior and junior members with probably a senior technical advisor and

But who would deny that what springs from the people's own initiative is always better or that what is sponsored by the State is almost invariably academic and unenterprising? And besides these arguments for individual and group initiatives is the one that the more we do ourselves the more we will want to, and know how to, do for ourselves.

We must starve the State of initiative. Every radical worthy of the name has shared Jefferson's view "that government is best which governs least". Both the Labour and Tory Parties promise us *more and more government*. It is up to us to resist this threat by protest and demonstration (not so much for the Government's sake but to draw our fellow citizens' attention to the dangers) and through our actions, showing our sense of community and initiative, that we are more than capable of running our own lives—including the enjoyment of our leisure hours!

WHAT can we do to ban the H-bomb? Very little, friends, until we decide that running our own lives is an important part of life for which we will *always* "find the time". When we "find" or "make" this time we shall have little time or patience for the antics of politicians and power maniacs, or, energy to waste on weapons for our own annihilation!

A neutral chairman. Both societies have promised substantial sums to the fund. The entire profits of the Magdalen Players, the Wadham Amateur Dramatic Society, and of a production of "The White Devil" by the St. Peter's Hall Fantastiks during the first week of next term, are also to be devoted to it. The Vice-Chancellor, Mr. T. S. R. Boase, said that congregation approved in principle the idea of a university theatre two years ago. "We have nothing against it at all. As far as I can see it is being done in a very sensible way."

On Literary Art and Esperanto

Continued from p. 2

harvested from the vast world-wide literature, such as the episode of the birth of love between Francesca and Paolo (*Inferno*, V), or the peaceful flocks which were called armies in order to justify an attack on them (*Don Quixote*, I, 18), etc. But we must call a halt, owing to lack of space and to the fact that more are not necessary here. Let us go on to the second quarter of the 19th century, the Russian literary critic Belinskij believed that true literature, like all true art, can only arise from nationalism, from the history, development and environment of a nation. Its culmination is universality, a gift to all humanity of that which is peculiar to the nation but of value to all. Now, a very similar thesis is put forward by A.D.F., when *a priori* he gives us to understand that even the local Cornish language is for him more capable of literature—because it is national!—than Esperanto. But Stellan Engholm, from whom I have taken the above quotation from Belinskij, rose above the waning national framework when, correctly analysing the importance of our *Esperanta Antologio* (in the Swedish review *La Espero*, Jan. 1959), he penetratingly concluded:—

"Our poets and story-tellers cannot nourish their creative imagination on national glory, either past or future, nor

DISGUSTING:

Major Basil Huggins, a retired Army officer, is campaigning in Eastbourne to prevent shops displaying nude dummies of women in their windows. He has written three letters to the town clerk, Mr. F. Busby, complaining that the unclothed dummies are "offensive to public decency".

Mr. Busby said yesterday there was nothing the council could do. Major Huggins now plans to approach Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce. He said at his home, Harrington Mansions: "All the people I have spoken to are in complete agreement with me. The majority of people in this town are decent people."

Observer 22/2/59.

The major, we are sure, found nothing disgusting about military offensives. It's all a matter of values, we suppose.

upon common social problems and endeavours. What remains as soil for the cultivation of the creative imagination? What is a suitable theme for the whole world? For thousands of years men have struggled and fought for societies, leaders, creeds, gods, social forms, in practice and in literature. But in the last extremity the question was one of men, mainly a question of their relation to the above and similar matters.

"There remains to us man himself, man with man, man in the universe and confronted with the mysteries of his very existence. What remains as a living world-literature, has as its theme precisely man, although he has grown up in places to a greater or less degree surrounded by barriers of nationality and dogmatic creed (J.R.'s italics). The more the authors have freed themselves from such shackles, the more enduring their works have proved. Our ideas and themes are sufficient as a common soil for cultivation, are sufficient to create images having greater force than philosophical reasoning and admonitory investigations."

It was my wish to add to these sage conclusions the above classical examples, as a demonstration of eternal validity irrespective of their historical, environmental, national or linguistic background. Similarly, over and above the background, lauded by A.D.F., of *Dr. Zhivago*, consisting of the historic Soviet revolution, there will remain always no more than the superior, timeless, essential human events between Zhivago and Lara. In the same way, in the *Divine Comedy* or in *Don Quixote* beyond the respective theological or knightly backgrounds. Thus also in the many enduring—because essentially human—poems in our *Esperanta Antologio*, to quote when individually must be left for another time and place.

There are other conclusions of A.D.F. which I could similarly contest; but I feel them to be less essentially important. They must therefore be omitted for the present, not least owing to the length to which my reply has already run. To sum up: because of what has been said above, and because of everything else implicit in what has been said, I consider the assertions of A.D.F. to be wide of the mark. It would seem that A.D.F. has still not penetrated to the core of the famous slogan of our pioneer Eugene

Lanti, who laid it down unconditionally that, in order correctly and justly to judge Esperanto, it is essential to accustom oneself to *anational feeling, thought and action*.

La Laguna,
Canary Islands,
Feb. 26.

J. REGULO.

C.P. & Popular Front

Continued from p. 1

say that he knew what was behind their crocodile tears—they were enraged that the Communists had a united, disciplined party. The party was not governed by orders from above but by majority decisions based on Marxism-Leninism. He pointed to a new clause in Rule 15 on the right to reserve opinion in the event of disagreement with a decision, while at the same time carrying out that decision!

Presumably this is an aspect of liberalisation which the British C.P. has caught up with. It is however, a dangerous one, and the party is well advised to think again.

That comrades should be allowed to think differently, even while carrying out the party line, is opening the door to deviation, and could very well lead to a breakdown in the iron discipline of which Mr. Lauchlan is so proud.

However, the Party Line is safe enough, really. When it came to choosing their executive—the policy makers, whatever may be said about 'majority decisions'—the delegates voted overwhelmingly in favour of the officially recommended lists of executive councillors and other office-bearers. No unrecommended candidate was elected and none even received a substantial vote.

The pretence of speaking for the working class and the reality of toeing the Moscow line can thus go on undisturbed.

On the Road... But How Far?

Continued from p. 1

weary and exasperated we thought of that early poem of John Betjeman's which begins, "Come, friendly bombs, and fall on Slough/It isn't fit for humans now". But, having undertaken to obey the rules, the organisers were powerless, and some capricious change of mind by the authorities had prevented the demonstration from being seen by the people of Slough. Discussing this, on the floor of the Baptist Hall that night, someone made the very good point that, instead of accepting the police re-routing, the tactic at Slough should have been to lower the banners, get off the road onto the pavements and walk into Slough as pedestrians, and our failure to do this, he attributed precisely to the fact that we were well-organised. What could the police have done? You can't arrest 3,000 people for obstruction.

This is not a "wild" direct-actionist point of view. For though no challenge was made by the organisers to the principle that the column should give right of way continually to motor traffic, even Mr. Willis, Chairman of the T.U.C. said from the Trafalgar Square platform on Monday, "I was astounded and dismayed at the way in which traffic was allowed to break up the demonstration. The authorities knew the demonstration was taking place days ago. I hope the authorities will take note that a procession of protest against mass suicide is as important

as a procession with gilded carriages."

But, having accepted the authority of the authorities, what else can you do but what you are told, and certainly, with no common factor of militancy, and with the aspect of a family outing for many marchers, this column was in no position to take matters into its own hands.

Given its scrupulously law-abiding character, the organisation was, in many respects a triumph. When you think of the enormous authoritarian structure required to move a regiment of soldiers 50 miles, and then think of the limited resources of the organisers of this march, its *ad hoc* system of baggage wagons, despatch riders and support vehicles, and its reliance on the purely moral authority of its marshals over a crowd of people who were the very antithesis of an army, you can appreciate what an immense fund of goodwill and responsibility had been drawn from this "unruly mob... this rabble", as a correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* called us, even to the extent, unprecedented in an English crowd, of leaving no litter behind.

THE march is not going to change anything in the world of public affairs. Its significance is in the personal history of the people who participated. And only for them if they will start thinking as well as feeling. In the cold light of Tuesday morning, when Sundays' heroically sodden clothes are merely damp, and Trafalgar Square is empty except for pigeons, and the atomic weapon workers at Aldermaston go back to work after their holiday, they must ask themselves, what has been achieved, apart from a week-end walking tour. In October 1944, Alex Comfort (who was there last week in his medical capacity dressing blisters), wrote these bold words:

"The Maquis of the war may allow themselves to be reabsorbed into the structure of citizenship. We will be the Maquis of the peace. They have shown us that it can be done—that we can keep the shell of society while devouring its heart and undermining its tyranny. Our only weapon is responsibility. Murder and sabotage are not responsible weapons—they are the actions of desperate men or imbeciles. We are desperate men but not imbeciles. We do not refuse to drive on the left hand side of the road, or to subscribe to national health insurance. The sphere in which society exceeds its powers and its usefulness. The chief of these excesses, the most impertinent and insupportable, is conscription. It is also the easiest to defy. I believe that in the interval of exhaustion which elapses between this war and the next we can so undermine that calf-like obedience which made possible 1914 and 1939 that when next the irresponsibles try to make it bear their weight, it will precipitate them into the filth where they deserve to be. Everyone who attempts to make war, or to make

the peoples acquiesce in war, is as much our enemy as the Germans. We must remember that, and direct ourselves accordingly. Up till now, it has been an article of pride among English politicians that the public would shove its head into any old noose they might show it—unflinching steadfast patriotism, unshakable morale—obedience and an absence of direct action. When enough people respond to the invitation to die, not with a salute but a smack in the mouth, and the mention of war empties the factories and fills the streets, we may be able to talk about freedom. I do not expect or hope for this. I only know what I myself am going to do. The people learn slowly, and learn incompletely. They remain somnambulists, but the pressure of the times moves them. They will be loudly congratulated after the Peace, and quietly diddled after that. But they are learning the lessons of the war, not unique lessons, but as old as humanity, the lessons of responsibility and disobedience."

IT didn't happen then, and it isn't going to happen now. The mention of war may fill the streets (on Easter Monday, under the kindly supervision of the metropolitan police, and with due regard to the sacred rights of the holiday motorists), but it isn't going to empty the factories—in fact it would solve the unemployment problem. But his words remain true, and the most we can hope for from the Aldermaston march is that some of us may be learning the hard lessons of responsibility and disobedience.

C.W.

FORM versus MATTER

THE old battle of idealism versus materialism can be expressed in Aristotle's ideas of form and matter. Form may be defined as shape, pattern or relationship: matter as the constituent parts that produce form.

Idealism is of course a logical development of early experience. When we learn about the outside world we memorise patterns and, becoming self-conscious, tend to see ourselves in the same light. We are mere abstractions, patterns, spirits without body. Idealists therefore tend to strive for pure form through such ideas as perfection, mind or God.

Form devoid of its constituent parts, or matter, is nothing. Hence idealists strive for nothing! This is recognised by spiritualists who find it necessary to postulate ectoplasm and astral bodies in order to explain spiritual phenomena.

The passion for abstraction is noticeable in some self-styled materialists who regard generalisations as more important than individual experience. Dialectical materialism is not strictly materialistic. If matter contains contradiction, then the contradiction must be non-material. This is evident in the writings of Marx which contain metaphysical ideas.

Materialists in rejecting pure form veer to the other extreme. Everything must be reduced to identical material units such as atoms, mass-energy, or electrical charges. But, being obsessed with matter, one tends to ignore its essential interconnection, form. One searches for the lowest denominator. Sex, not psychology; chemistry, not biology: electrical charges, not atoms.

But the assumption of identical material units is untenable. Abstractly, separ-

ate units cannot be identical for complete identity means complete coincidence, distinction or separation. Materially two atoms cannot be spatially identical since they occupy different space. Complete identity means no distinction, no distinction whatever implies nothing. So we are back to nothing against nothing appears therefore that both idealism and materialism are insufficient in themselves.

Aristotle, one was taught, suggested that interaction of form and matter produces change. But this assumes separateness whereas all form can be reduced to matter and all matter to form. An illustration of the latter is the atom which is a spatial relationship between nucleus and electron. No doubt the units will be further analysed.

The integral approach, which I favour, regards form and matter as inseparable. Hence ideas are both abstractions and manifestation of biological activity.

This can be applied to political idealism without an understanding of economic factors is futile. On the other hand the reduction of everything to labour power by the "scientific" socialists produces a narrowness of outlook. The anarchistic approach, however, with its emphasis upon co-operating individuals, embraces both ideals and economic activity.

P.G.

Letter

Non-Conformists

DEAR SIR,
Your paper continues to fascinate, infuriate and encourage, and the recent articles by "G" and "C.W." have been of great interest.

C.W. is however right in saying that one cannot divide people on the matter of social protest, etc. along strict lines of sectarian belief. I am myself an Anglican and a Common Wealth-er. Within the C. of E. politics, like tectotalism and bigotry, do tend to follow the various party lines, e.g. *Anglo-Catholics* used to be Socialist or rather Labour, but now tend to be reactionary—a case of politics finding the same level as religion. Evangelicals, if extreme, are very Tory ("Squires from the Shires and spinsters from the spas"). Methodists are quite often pacifists but yet are great believers in the state connection. Strange to say, about the only Christians who seem to approach Anarchism, e.g. the Catholic Worker Group or the TAENA Community, are R.C.

But what matter? Let all flowers bloom in the Libertarian/Anarchist garden and let the lions of the Malatesta Club lie down with the shorn lambs of other, more septic flocks. And heaven preserve us all from dogmatism of all sorts.

Yours fraternally,
Manchester, Mar. 23. A. ROBERTSON.

A Story Without a Moral Communism & Population Problems

(1)
Professor Bernal solemnly states that a fraction of what the capitalist countries now spend on armaments (he does not mention the Communist countries' expenditure), if properly used, could end world-malnutrition 'in two or three years or sooner'. I can only suppose that he has not troubled to think quantitatively on the subject. According to WHO, about 1.8 billion people are now insufficiently nourished, and even two years would add over 100 million new mouths to be fed. He also says that 'birth-control' by itself can never bring about such

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a result'. No one ever supposed that it could: but it is still necessary.

In general, we must consider the relation between quantity of population and quality of life, and must take account of all kinds of resources, not only food resources but resources of space, enjoyment, education and fulfilment. Excessive numbers and population density impinge on the quality of human life, and curtail the realisation of many of its desirable possibilities such as health, human dignity, active employment and sense of individual significance. They are producing water shortages, traffic congestion and cities far beyond optimum size for efficiency and beyond optimum scale for truly human living. Above all, they promote over-organisation and regimentation and reduce the area of human freedom.

—JULIAN HUXLEY in
The New Statesman (21/3/59)

(2)

Certain demographic aspects of Soviet industrialisation that have received inadequate notice should not be overlooked. Considering the territorial annexations which added over 20 million people, and the high rate of natural increase in 'normal' years, the total population has increased relatively little in the past three decades; from about 152 million in mid-1928 to some 206 million in mid-1958, or by 36 per cent.

The explanation of course lies with the two great demographic disasters: one associated with the collectivisation crisis of the early 'thirties, and the other with the War and the hard years immediately thereafter. Superimposed on both was the human toll of the forced labour camps. The population loss—in the sense of the difference between the number that would have obtained at the end of the period had the 'normal' yearly increment of about three million held good, and the number actually on hand—may be placed at over 10 million in the former case and over 40 million in the latter. (Not all these were deaths, of course; a large part were, so to say, non-births).

—GREGORY GROSSMAN in
Soviet Survey (Oct.-Dec., 1958)

(3)

Russia at the conference of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East in Brisbane last Friday came out against the limitation of the Asian populations. She was the only country to do so.

Mr. P. M. Chernyshev, deputy leader of the Russian delegation, said he felt the key to progress did not lie in limitation of population through artificial reduction of the birth-rate, but in speedily overcoming economic backwardness.

—Times Educational Supplement (20/3/59)

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENT

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Regular Sunday meetings now held "Marquis of Granby" Public House, Rathbone Street (corner of Percy Street), Rathbone Place and Charlotte Street, 7.30 p.m.

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APRIL 12.—H. B. Gibson on THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COMMUNAL LIVING

NEW YORK

APR. 3.—Russell Blackwell on REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CARIBBEAN AREA

APR. 17.—SYMPOSIUM—THE RECENT EVOLUTION OF STALINISM

Speakers: David Atkins—"News and Letters" Group. M. Reese—Revolutionary Workers' League. Sam Weiner—Libertarian League.

APR. 24.—William Rose on IS INDUSTRIALISM COMPATIBLE WITH FREEDOM?

MAY 1.—SPECIAL MAY DAY MEETING

MAY 8.—Sam Weiner on THE GROWTH OF THE MILITARY CASTE IN THE U.S.

MAY 15.—Vince Hickey on YOUTH AND SOCIAL CHANGE

MAY 22.—David Atkins of the "News and Letters" Group on ART AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

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