

The Committee of 100

**RESPECTABLE OR
REVOLUTIONARY ?**
- By One of Them

ON September 28th, 1960, the *Evening Standard* brought the Committee of 100 into the news with a front-page scoop headed: "Civil Disobedience Campaign Planned". It is ironically typical of this body that its existence on the one hand should command such publicity and on the other hand should be revealed by a silly mistake—a copy of its appeal for members was sent in error to John Connell, the right-wing leader-writer of Beaverbrook's *Evening Standard*, instead of John Connell, the leader of the Anti-Noise Campaign (and even more ironically, the former's real name isn't John Connell at all).

The Committee of 100 was formally constituted on October 22nd in response to this appeal, which was sent out over the names of Bertrand Russell and Michael Scott who are the best-known figures in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear War respectively. Though most of the ground-work in the Committee of 100 has actually been done by a group of much younger and obscurer people, more or less led by Michael Randle and an American student called Ralph Schoenman, it is reasonable to see it in terms of its two inspirers; as an amalgamation of those elements in CND and DAC who were dissatisfied with the state of the campaign against nuclear weapons and who felt that the best way out of the impasse would be a combination of the methods of the two organisations.

(It is necessary to point out that the Committee of 100 is not a "breakaway" organisation. Most of its members have remained active in one or other of its parent bodies, neither of which has any formal membership, and great care has been taken to avoid any sectarian tendencies; Russell's resignation from the Presidency of CND was due to a personal difference with Canon Collins.)

The nature of the impasse the campaign has fallen into is worth examin-

ing, since it is common to all reformist or revolutionary movements. Here we have a predominantly pacifist movement—whose implications are totally pacifist—which nevertheless includes many elements who are far from pacifist: ordinary people who are conventionally patriotic but feel appalled by the imminence of disaster, scientists and artists and writers with various highly personal motives, left-wing socialists of all kinds (including communists and anarchists), and of course the obligatory lunatic fringe of poseurs and exhibitionists who would give George Orwell the creeps but should really be welcomed for their entertainment value (like Denry Machin the Card, they are "identified with the great cause of cheering us all up").

Two Approaches

Thus the campaign is not by any means a unified movement; even the pacifists have their differences. In fact the campaign never has been a unified movement, right from the days when it was set on its feet by such individualists as Bertrand Russell, Kingsley Martin, A. J. P. Taylor and J. B. Priestley under the leadership of Canon Collins. Collins has proved a brilliant publicist and organiser, but he has increasingly alienated the radical elements in the campaign by what may be called his *Fabian approach*. He is apparently convinced that the Establishment will yield to sufficient constitutional persuasion, so that if a large enough pressure is applied long enough the powers that be will give way

and ban the Bomb, and then we can live happily ever after.

What this means in practice is that CND has concentrated on mustering popular support by orthodox methods—marches and meetings—and in particular on trying to win the Labour Party over to the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament. As a result the real pioneering work in this field has been left to DAC who, we should remember, organised the first Aldermaston March three years ago. But CND has had considerable success. It is now able to muster larger numbers of people than any other political organisation in the country and has the support of about a tenth of the House of Commons. The Labour Party was committed at the Scarborough Conference last October to a vague formula of unilateral nuclear disarmament, though not by a majority large enough to make it official party policy (and the Parliamentary Party is still firmly multi-lateralist and Natopolitan).

The trouble is that it is difficult to see how CND can continue its success. Pretty well everyone who is amenable to persuasion must have been persuaded by now. Further persuasion might even be harmful—a larger unilateralist majority at the Blackpool Conference this year could easily lead to a split in the Parliamentary Labour Party, which would hardly advance the cause of nuclear disarmament. Even if CND gets a quarter of a million people into London at Easter we are still no nearer real unilateral disarmament of any kind, let

alone any changes that could get us out of the Cold War. We are far more likely to abandon the deterrent through poverty than through principle. More people would still choose to go to Wembley Stadium for the Cup Final rather than to Trafalgar Square for the end of the Aldermaston March, even when they have to pay for their choice.

But the real fallacy of the Fabian approach is of course its miscalculation of the nature of the Establishment, which does not have to be explained to readers of *FREEDOM*. This was realised almost at once by the DAC, whose relation to CND is rather that of William Morris to Sidney Webb or of Wal Hannington to Clement Attlee (let us hope the analogies are even more false than usual). But the *direct action approach* has turned out to be equally disappointing. The Christmastide demonstrations at Swaffham and Harrington two years and a year ago may have been satisfactory emotional experiences for the participants—and all credit is due to them for risking their comfort and liberty for the sake of protest and principle—but as examples of propaganda by deed they were almost completely ineffective. Nor is the current direct action against the unholy vessels in the Holy Loch likely to be any more valuable.

A New Approach?

There are two reasons for this, one physical and one moral. The physical reason is that DAC activities have always been on too small a scale. They have scorned such mundane considerations as weather and accessibility, and have no use for gimmicks. True, a few dozen or even a few score utterly sincere non-violent demonstrators may win respect, but they are unlikely to influence anyone who is not already on their side. The moral reason is that DAC activities have always been on a personal rather than a political level. They have seemed to be more concerned with saving their own souls than with saving other people's lives. This is a perfectly respectable motive, but it doesn't get things done, which was after all the original idea. It is difficult not to feel that if they ever succeeded in getting into a missile base their only reaction would be one of surprise and embarrassment. Civil disobedience that is too civil for words is transformed into a purely symbolic gesture.

The impasse, then, may be stated as a dilemma. Large legal demonstrations have not worked and are not likely to work; small illegal demonstrations have not worked and are even less likely to work. The question is: "What is likely to work, when there might not be time for the invaluable educative programme of both CND and DAC to bear fruit. Last year the answer seemed to be: Large illegal demonstrations in the form of really massive civil disobedience. Hence the Committee of 100.

The Committee was intended to represent a new departure in British dissent. The conflict between the Fabian approach and the direct action approach is familiar to anyone who has studied the rise of religious or political movements that challenge the established order. Christianity in the Roman Empire, Protestantism in Catholic Europe, Puritanism in Stuart England, Liberalism in the 18th and 19th centuries, Socialism in the 19th and 20th centuries—all have been faced with the same problem: is it better to win the top people over, or to push them aside from below?

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ON THE MARCH

THIS Easter week-end, for the fourth successive year, many people will be spending their holidays on the march. In spite of the fact that this year the number of participants will be higher than ever, that London will be approached by two columns instead of one (a brilliant innovation), the impact of the first march on the public imagination cannot be repeated. That first march, because it was the first, was unpredictable, and its destination was the centre of nuclear power in this country. Anything might have happened when the marchers got there. Even as a symbolic gesture it had more meaning than subsequent marches which have concentrated on London, "centre of political power which controls Aldermaston". For everybody knows that governments can come and go but the Woolwich Arsenal, the Aldermastons and the Vickers Armstrongs go on for ever.

In other words, Aldermaston marches are very successful methods of letting off steam without upsetting the *status quo*. They are as respectable as May Day demonstrations and Trades Unions; all part of the Establishment if they can hold out long enough doing the same thing. Like Rights of Way they can, by an annual formality, be accepted as part of our daily lives!

But what the unilateralists are trying to do, surely, is to change the pattern of political life since they are proposing (a) that the British government should conduct its international business with arguments, and moral example and not the threat of force and (b) that governments should be influenced by the will of the people.

No Excuses

Perhaps Canon Collins can be said to have lived, politically speaking, a cloistered life, and such illusions are excusable (though after 4 years he should have learned something about politics). But the Kingsley Martins, the Priestleys and the A. J. P. Taylors are really too old in the tooth, politically, to have any excuses for believing, or suggesting to others, that governments are amenable to argument or considerations of humanity. Is there not proof enough, when the Parliamentary Labour Party which professes all the brotherly love and internationalism which the Tories do not, is, even when not in office, unwilling to abide by the Party's Conference decisions on nuclear disarmament? Is it not, quite simply, that a politician who aspires to positions of power in politics cannot think in terms other than the conventional ones, whereby, though the people elect their "representatives", force is the only language they will respect when it comes to running the country. Similarly diplomacy without the argument of force is as utopian as the concept of democracy without the police and MI5. A fact of life which the lamented Nye Bevan was the first

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Laotian Puppet Games

NOBODY can say that the world is ever short of a good crisis. During the past ten days the spotlight has been shifted from the shambles that the big powers and their small allies have made of the Congo, to settle on Laos in the Far East, where during the past years there have been so many false alarms that, as the *Observer* puts it "Western opinion has become comfortably sceptical about crises in that remote corner of south-east Asia". Well now it is to be given the full treatment. Last week-end to emphasise to the world that it was being taken seriously, Macmillan and Kennedy

had a brief meeting to plan their campaign!

Now it is surely quite clear that it doesn't really matter what happens in Laos so far as the balance of world power is concerned. One would have thought that if China wanted to she could have overrun the country long ago. Perhaps the firm line adopted by the new man in the White House is linked to other negotiations in which he is interested in concluding a deal with the Russians. We haven't the President's confidence in these matters. But one aspect of the firm line which

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A FEW months ago Holy Loch was unheard of, it was the sort of place where those who made enough money to escape from the grime and poverty of Glasgow would move to. Close enough to be near one's less fortunate friends and relatives yet for enough away to be somewhere quiet and beautiful. Now the place swarms with U.S. sailors, and newly installed juke boxes blare out all sorts of indescribable noises and in the middle of the Loch one sees *Proteus*. "Evil" is the first word that seems to come to mind; "the ship with a cargo of death" one reporter wrote. Close by lies *Patrick Henry*, a submarine which looks perhaps even more sinister. Soon there will be more submarines. According to the Minister of Defence as many as ten are due to arrive within the next few years, to take their place beside their "mother" ship, *Proteus*. However the word which worries a large section of the local population is not *Proteus* nor *Patrick Henry*, but *Polaris*. For *Polaris* is the name of the missiles carried by the submarines.

Each *Polaris* missile carries an atom warhead having a destructive force equivalent to six times all the bombs used in the last world war, yes, including those used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Ten submarines each carrying sixteen missiles or a total of 160 missiles are the destructive equivalent of 960 World War

THE ANTI-POLARIS DEMONSTRATION-BY ONE WHO WAS THERE

6 against Polaris

II's. Can one visualise nine World War II's let alone 960, and that's just one base! Consequently a few people did not believe the captain of the *Proteus* when he said he had come on a mission of peace. "Cars and gas cookers can be dangerous but we have learnt to live with them, so too we must learn to live with *Polaris*", we were told. Somehow I could not help thinking that there was a slight difference between a gas cooker and a *Polaris* missile.

The Need to Protest

Early in the year a group of six people decided that they must at least make a protest. Realising the futility of a campaign limited to collecting signatures and appealing to politicians, they decided to use direct action. Their plan was to arrive in Scotland several weeks before the arrival of *Proteus*, and try to encourage the local population to take part in a campaign to protest against the arrival of *Polaris* in Britain, and to work for its eventual removal. Then when *Proteus* did arrive their idea was to sail out in canoes and try to obstruct its passage. If arrested, the members of the group, known as the *Polaris* Action Group, decided to practise complete non-violence and just go limp. They also decided to non-co-operate with the authorities, e.g. refuse to plead in court, and to continue the protest as long as they could.

On February 15th, the Committee of 100 organised a mass demonstration of Civil Disobedience. Four members of the group decided to participate and came down to London, whilst the two remaining members remained to protest to the United States Embassy in Glasgow. On being denied a hearing they refused to leave, whereupon they were

arrested and taken to Barlinnie Prison. According to newspaper reports, on at least one occasion since then large numbers of prisoners have been heard chanting "Ban the Bomb". The other members of the group returned to Scotland and were joined, a few days later, by two new members of whom the writer was one.

On Friday, 3rd March, not long after 10 a.m., *Proteus* slowly appeared. The three cargoes and one dinghy set off, two leaving from Graham's Point where the camp was situated, and two from an unannounced point several hundred yards away, so as to avoid any seizure of the boats a few minutes before the demonstration, by the police. Soon after leaving the shore, several naval launches came beside the dinghy containing John Beaumont and myself and shouted to us to keep out of the way of the *Proteus* and to return to the shore. We didn't, and a few moments later a grappling iron was thrown aboard and we were hauled in, whereupon they seized the painter in the dinghy and towed us off at what appeared to be 30 m.p.h. Well, only one thing can happen to a dinghy travelling at 30 m.p.h. containing two people, and it did. The front end raised itself about two feet in the air whilst the latter end sank a few inches below the surface. A few minutes later we found ourselves splashing about in the water and the dinghy floating nearby, upside down.

We were picked up a few minutes later and taken to Dunoon Police Station. Next to be arrested was Laurens Otter who on having his canoe seized by a boathook, went limp and was hauled aboard a naval launch by several policemen, and joined us in the cells a few



minutes later. Terry Chandler and Harry Smith who had made a tactical retreat earlier made a second attempt now that *Proteus* was nearer. They managed to out-maneuvre in their two-man canoe the less manoeuvrable naval launches for several minutes until finally they were rammed and sunk.

They too were pulled aboard. Terry Chandler however had not considered it all over, and jumped overboard and started swimming towards the *Proteus*. Once more he was picked up and this time the police made sure he did not get away again. Mike Nolan managed to out-maneuvre the launches for over 20 minutes. They tried catching him by bringing in launches on both sides, but he just went round the bows of them. They tried trapping him by surrounding him with three launches placed in a triangular formation, but each time the boathooks failed to reach him. Finally however, owing to his exhaustion, he was caught, went limp and was hauled aboard by two constables, one naval frogman, and a police sergeant.

And so we eventually found ourselves

together in the cells of Dunoon Police Station, some of us very wet and all of us very tired. We were all charged with "conduct liable to cause a breach of the peace", and a few hours later much to our surprise and pleasure, we were released. We were told that in a few days' time the charges would be reviewed and in the meantime we were at liberty to go where we liked. Our boats however were impounded.

The following Wednesday the first of the submarines arrived and onlookers saw, to quote one rather imaginative journalist:— "another fantastic game of naval ring-a-roses with a 'Polaris Action Group' lone canoeist, 30-year-old London schoolmaster, Laurens Otter, who, paddling like an Olympic slalom champion got within 20 or 30 yards of the submarine before being tumbled into the icy water." And so Laurens was arrested, charged and released once more. Recently we have heard that the six original charges have been dropped, but however Laurens' second charge has yet to be reviewed.

KEN MORSE.

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LETTER

Police & Crime in a Sane Society

DEAR FRIENDS,

Readers of FREEDOM often seem worried about the question of 'police' and 'crime' in a sane society.

I think it is true that a complex society might need some organisation for dealing with anti-social individuals, but it does not follow that such an organisation would resemble our existing police and prisons any more than an aeroplane resembles a stage coach—both means of transport, but that is all they have in common.

It is a fact that most crime is caused by the money and property system. The statement is so old as to be a platitude, but is, like all platitudes, none the less true. At one time, 'crime' was attributed to poverty. Our affluent society, which I prefer to describe merely as the 'present form of capitalism' may have eliminated poverty (though I'm very sceptical about that!) but it has not eliminated the universal scramble for money, on the contrary, this is being continually intensified to a frightful degree.

In a society with a different scale of

values, and quite different organisation most 'crime' as we know it today would simply not exist. There would remain only the occasional crimes caused by low intelligence, crude and brutal personalities and the various forms of nervous disorder, sex crimes, etc.

However, our society spends £500 million on a new atom bomb without batting an eyelid. Money is spent like water on research to produce new weapons and quite unnecessary mechanical toys such as faster and more ferocious automobiles and aeroplanes. Suppose all this money (that is, the equivalent allocation of physical and mental energy) were shifted to psychiatric research? Both anti-social behaviour and most unhappiness would probably disappear like smoke or a bad dream with the morning.

When Dickens' characters talked about transport they meant horses and coaches. Our talk about 'police' and 'crime' is at about the same level. We know no more than Sam Weller knew about transport.

Oxford, Feb. 19. J. W. SHAW.

IT is common sense to say that if our children are to take part in the Rat Race they must be caught young in the Rat Trap and conditioned to it; but there are some people who are not quite so common. Mrs. Joy Baker of Thuxton, Norfolk, said Mr. Justice Pennycuik last week in his High Court of Justice, "had a rooted objection to the principle of sending her children to school and she had waged a long defensive battle against the County Council as the local Education Authority"—the Authority of the Rat Trap. What exasperated the wielders of that authority was that it was not a matter of just one little animal escaping. No, Mrs. Baker has 7. Moreover, for reasons unrevealed but imaginable, "the mother and father were at present separated". And on top of that, Mrs. Baker and her private school of 7 live in "a country district". The impertinence—to set her "rooted objection" up against country ratcatchers and the law of the land! How dare she!

I know nothing more about the family than is told in *The Times* Law Report of March 16, a long story of prosecutions by local justices, fines, ineffectual appeals to Quarter Sessions and Divisional Court. Her case may already be

Mrs. Baker & the Rat Trap

as famous as it deserves to be and amply supported by admirers. And yet—and yet I find among my brave and educated friends—and even among the lightly littered affluent who really could afford to have principles—that the effect of conditioning in public school and university traps is so persistent that if a child fails in an exam they are in dread for its future. One little girl of eleven over whom there is headshaking because she failed in one, is keen on chess and chess problems—so bright and charming that her future is secure if not educationally interfered with. One of adult age who never passed a school exam is getting for herself, while earning her living, an education in Eng. Lit. of university standard for the joy of it. Another school failure has a fine secretarial job; another non-U earns £14 a

week demonstrating electrical goods, and so on.

Of course the future is uncertain for those who stand aside from the rats, but is it any more secure for the trained animals? I wish I knew. An irregular myself I am prejudiced. I don't remember learning anything in two years at Tonbridge School except a bit of masturbation and Euclid; I never passed an exam there or at the delightfully free school at Lausanne later, though there I did at least learn French and bits of other languages with a rather scrappy classical background and some maths; yet I've earned my living for over 60 years. Is it fair to quote that to the father and mother rats? They say not. That everything is different today. Have they then after all changed human nature by Act of Parliament?

Anyhow there will have to be another Act of Parliament if Mrs. Joy Baker is to be disciplined ratwise, for Mr. Justice Pennycuik, a Daniel come to judgment, said that in law he must refuse the application of the County Council to make the children wards of court or give directions for their education.

K.W.

BOOK REVIEW

A EXTRAORDINARY BOOK

THIS book*, published jointly by two university presses, is rather difficult to classify. It is claimed to be fact but some of its contents are so fantastic (e.g. the story of the loaves and fishes) that it can be classified only as fiction. The later chapters are in the surrealist tradition. The interior monologues of the psychopath Paul seem almost like a doctrine of fact in the style of Dostoevsky.

Many of the ideas are put across by the device of seeing the life of the main character who is what one might term a beatnik with delusions of grandeur. He is first seen through the eyes of a succession of friends and then in a series of letters written by Paul (who seems to know the main character of the hero only by hearsay). There are more letters from two more of his friends and the novel (if one can call it that), finishes with an extraordinary symbolic outburst.

The psychology of the main character is very sketchily drawn. His profession and sex-life seem to be left to the imagination. It invites comparison with the novels of Kerouac and like Kerouac seems to be trying—and too hard—to plit

over some new philosophy, but unlike Zen Buddhism it does not seem likely to have many serious followers.

The subsidiary characters do not emerge very clearly except in the way they regard the central figures. Obviously their accounts all differ widely, and they all seem to be determined to put him in a different light. There is a rather curious lack of female figures in the book which confirms a suspicion, but whoever the author is, he is no Marcel Proust.

The style is a mixture of terse sentences and obscurity reminding one at its best of Hemingway. There is a rather sickening account of the hero's death. (Must this cult of violence continue? Surely there is enough violence in everyday life without continually bringing it into literature). The insistence of some authorities (on rather slight evidence) that the hero of this book actually existed is thrown into doubt by the confused accounts of his disappearance from the graveyard.

The background of Palestine during the Roman occupation lacks authenticity, it can be assumed that the hero was unconsciously, if not consciously, a collaborator and his rather ambiguous utterances on this subject suggest this. Would it not have been better for the author to spare us all this moralizing and give us a concise statement of his (the author's) views, assuming him to have any? The hero talks much too much, like a hero by Shaw, and frequently (again like Shaw) contradicts himself. He is, on his own showing, a prig; occasionally humanity breaks in, where he curses the fig-tree, chases the money-changers from the temple, and when in a rather moving scene at his death says "My God, My God. Why hast thou forsaken me?"; but this is all too rare and the character lacks conviction.

The author has tried to pack in as much incident as possible into this already long work, no doubt with one eye on Hollywood. We believe this book is a sequel to a work which we understand is even more incredible.

Unless the reading public is more easily deceived than we think, we do not see this work becoming a best-seller although we believe there has already been some acrimony between publishing companies about the copyright, but there can be no question of plagiarism. J.R.

*New English Bible, O.U.P. & C.U.P. Library edn. 21/-; Pop. edn. 8/6.

ON THE MARCH

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to accept once he had sampled the fruits of office. It must not be overlooked that when Mr. Bevan declared, at the Labour Party Conference of 1957, that for Britain to scrap her stocks of nuclear weapons would mean "that you will send the British Foreign Secretary naked into the conference chamber" he was not in fact the Foreign Secretary but merely the nominee of the Labour Shadow Cabinet. That is, he was gratuitously telling the country what his position would be if he were in office even without the "responsibilities" of office. It is notorious that politicians are more radical (or less reactionary) in opposition than in power. If on the question of nuclear disarmament the Parliamentary Labour Party in opposition, is so reactionary that it is prepared to expel five of its members for dividing the House on the debate on Estimates for the Armed Forces (on the grounds that by so doing they were saying that they would be prepared for the country to be totally disarmed, an unthinkable situation to be in!) what could the CND hope from the Labour Party if they were in power?

Indeed this is one of the major dilemmas of the CND which though directing its protest to the Government, in fact seeks to convert the Labour Party to a unilateralist position. And the more successful it is in its efforts the more certain is it of splitting the Party and ensuring that it fails to win the next general election. We will not elaborate on this point, which is effectively made in the article on the Committee of 100 published elsewhere in this issue, but cannot resist underlining

WITHDRAW YOUR LABOUR FROM WAR WORK!

IN four years some supporters of CND have, to judge by our correspondent, reached the point where even the Committee of 100 will not satisfy their demands. The dilemma of the unilateral disarmers is that while on the one hand they have a cause which has a popular appeal, on the other they are seeking to remove the main prop from under the edifice of government; indeed they are expecting the government to do the job for them in response to "popular demand".

Quite rightly the government argues that if you remove the main prop the whole edifice of government collapses, and apart from replying, as some unilateralists do, that the edifice can be propped up with conventional bombs, there is no answer unless one takes the anarchist position of "down with all governments". But in that case one has no faith in governments or politicians, and there is no point in directing one's appeals and efforts to persuading them to act on our behalf. Certainly one would not attack government at its strongest point. Rather would one seek to withdraw power from the government by encouraging the people themselves to form their own organisations of production and consumption, of services and of international relations. In other words, by taking more and more the initiative for running our own lives we will succeed in dispelling the universal belief in the necessity of government, which is to our minds the biggest stumbling block to any radical change in the organisation of society and the relations between peoples and nations.

We know this is, at best, a slow

it for the benefit of the many readers to whom we hope we are addressing ourselves for the first time this week. It is, indeed, ironical that the chances of a popular movement succeeding is smaller as its numbers grow, but only if one believes that governments are impressed by numbers or that the system we live under conforms to the dictionary definition of democracy.

★

IF we rule out the Aldermaston Annual Outing as useless what do we suggest should be done? We only say that the Aldermaston marches are useless so far as removing the threat of annihilation of mankind by nuclear warfare is concerned. We are too modest as to our own efforts, as anarchist publicists, to decry the efforts of others. But there is this important difference between us. Whereas CND seeks to influence government by mass support we seek mass support for our ideas in order to weaken government. In other words, we are interested in influencing people, not governments. We are concerned with people taking initiative and not with wasting their time seeking to prompt governments to take initiatives on their behalf.

Undoubtedly, it will not be possible to abolish government and authority overnight; but we only strengthen governments and the state by assuming or expecting, that these institutions can satisfactorily represent or express our wishes and aspirations. Only by assuming the responsibility ourselves can we withdraw the initiative from government.

process. We know that for some impatient young people this is not doing anything whereas marching and sitting down is. Readers of FREEDOM know our views on marching and sitting-down. We always support positive expression of a people's feelings but if such manifestations are not to end in sterility and disillusionment it is essential to face the realities of such "action" and to point to the dead-end into which it leads.

The anarchist approach will take a long time, and in the meantime we may all be blown sky-high by the maniacs in power. The people of the world are in a position to prevent such a possibility since they both produce and handle these weapons of total destruction. Yet they do nothing about it, and to our minds they do nothing about it not because they are ignorant of the consequences of a nuclear war—everybody now knows what it would mean—but because they feel impotent to take any action which would be effective. In other words they are unaware of their own power as workers, as members of a community of workers. Is it not obvious that if they had this awareness they could simply, by withdrawing their labour from all work connected even remotely with war preparations, paralyse government?

Four Aldermaston marches have sought to influence governments and create "pressure groups" within the Labour Party all to no avail. Is it not time that all the goodwill present at those demonstrations be used to persuade our fellow workers to refuse to sell their labour to the merchants of death?

THE primary and indispensable condition for free discussion in an anarchist movement is the absence of uniformity. Monistic notion, such as discipline, obedience, and unity, are repulsive to anarchists, hence gospels, church, party, state are rejected by them. Yet there are some anarchists—*errare humanum est*—who neglect the pluralistic nature of anarchism and try to combine it with monism. They are utopians for whom the end of history is the realisation of the absolute spirit, or in the final analysis, its evolution to socialism. Such is the case with A. W. Uloth in his article: "Permanent Protest—a creed of reaction?" (FREEDOM, 17/12/60).

For A. W. Uloth, permanent protest, without the vision of an utopian island of equality and freedom, is reaction. It "is likely to help it (the authoritarian society) to remain, than to encourage rebels against it".

This argument reveals an absence of discrimination. Permanent protest is rebellion against society. It is the only weapon left at the disposal of the individual. A weapon that aims at the destruction of the very premises of authoritarian society, therefore it is destructive. Whereas Utopianism implies a reconstruction on the old authoritarian foundations. This implies that we can dictate the future with minds as yet conditioned by our present society and provides a convenient escapism for those who do not like to face that reality of the here and now. Distraction and vagueness underlie the position of utopians.

Their attitude is determined by the traditions of anarchism or the nostalgia of the revolutionary past, and is projected into undefinable future. Romantic inspiration! But without heaven, or the final judgment, Christ is worthless, and sin a meaningless utterance. So to the anarchist past is added the anarchist utopia. How could utopians bear the tragic experience of reality without the certainty of utopia? "But if there is to be no future just a continuous present, the struggle loses a lot of its meaning. All that is left is stoicism." If the above assertion is true then there is no room for permanent protest. The stoic does not protest, he accepts the divine order, escapes into meditation and regards his suffering as a character-fortification. He does not pretend to be an anti-authoritarian.

Permanent Protest?

On the contrary he is rather a fatalist because he tolerates his own destiny with complete resignation. He does not say no, nor does he rebel.

The upholders of the permanent protest are not stoics, they say "no" to authority. "There is considerable agreement between a position of permanent protest (such as the one formulated by Max Nomad) and what nineteenth century anarchists had to say. I am thinking especially of their attacks on the State, on the Church and other authoritarian institutions; their criticism of the security craving ideals of the bourgeoisie and of the workers who caught it from them; of the domineering relationships which characterise economic life; of the authoritarian ideology of Marxism and of the compromising stand of reformists, etc. But where upholders of permanent protest would part from old fashioned anarchists is over the contention that in all this there is something that will lead to a social revolution and a rosy free state of future society." (Anarchism, by G. Molnar—*Libertarian*, 1 Sept. 1957).

Molnar's position sounds more realistic. Perhaps his assumption of the permanency of the authoritarian society will be refuted one day, but by the same token A. W. Uloth's utopia could be an eternal dream.

Then why tomorrow, why utopia, why hopes for the future? They are the only rights the slaves are entitled to. They foster the illusions present day society is made of. It is these illusions that constrain people to obedience and force them into submission, lulled by the idea that justice will be done tomorrow. The future-pessimistic or optimistic, utopian or non-utopian, is but a drug habit.

The upholder of permanent protest

acts against the power of the Church, the State, the authoritarian institutions and regimentation because of the affirmation of his freedom here and now, not because of the trajectory of the future society. His action therefore springs from the contradiction between the individual and society and as such it does not necessitate any teleological precepts.

The above arguments indicate him not as a passive but an active participant in social affairs. But as a man without a mission he does not convince. He only expounds his anti-authoritarian theory. He argues that the coercive apparatus of the State-policy, army, jurisprudence serve a master, independently of his colour or euphemistic adjectives; that the workers are dupes by accepting power politics and party leadership; that their slogans are but manipulation in the hands of the politician; that the land of Canaan is a promise intended to constrain their rebellious spirit and curb their present demands; that priest and Church, heaven and future serve authority, etc. And more important is that in the eternal conflict between freedom and authority, the upholder of permanent protest accept libertarian values and reject authority.

Unfortunately for A. W. Uloth, permanent protest is not a reactionary creed. And let me say: a creed is only used by organisations, such as political parties, church, but not by atheists and anarchists who follow permanent protest. Those who are anxious to use the future as a binding force and to promote efficiency in organization are indeed in need of a creed to consolidate their unity. Although the deeds of the utopians may be determined by an Armageddon, we unbelievers act here and without projects or programmes for the future.

Let the future generation decide their own destiny. They, if anti-authoritarian, would not need our prescriptions.

J.G.

Around the Galleries

5 QUESTIONS FOR SIR PHILIP

RUMOUR has it that Sir Philip Henty dreamed up the "Van Eyck to Tiepolo" exhibition at the National Gallery while toe dunking with Baron Thyssen at his pad on the Lake of Lugano and the private view was held to be a personal triumph for Sir Philip.

As London's finest did a stately cha-cha among £250 worth of exotic blooms Sir Philip used the 118 paintings as a backcloth to publicly bleed to the assembled press. Sir Philip's point is that much of what is in private collections could have been bought by the nation if the political boys had been prepared to put down the money simply as an investment and to prove his point he singled out Holbein's portrait of Henry the VIII that was offered to the National Gallery for £45,000 in the thirties but was snapped up by the late Baron and now sails back into Town insured for £250,000. The emphasis of the present Baron's collection is for the works of the brilliantly depressing German painters and the first room is dominated by Dürer's melancholy "Christ among the Doctors" but this is happily offset by the group of magnificent Holbein portraits.

Floors and paintings appear to have been recently scrubbed and freshly polished so there is no reason why this exhibition should not beat the Tate at its own game and all for the old perennial 2/- entrance fee. Yet it is no virtue for rich men to collect, for all they need is an open cheque book and a ready pen for all these paintings now on view are part of the world's heritage and as such will always be with us.

The role of the rich dilettante is to commission artists to produce work, for he is the only one at this point in history who can perform this task and be the artist a bubbling genius or a shambling clod the rich man should still hire him that both may prove their worth and the rich man's reward shall be to ride to glory hanging on the artist's coat tail.

When Sir Philip has finished preening himself over this exhibition I suggest that he takes a walk into the room that contains the disordered remnants of Manet's "Execution of Maximilian" and then ex-

plain how the custodians of a nation's cultural treasures could so desecrate an artist's work. Manet painted this large group in the latter part of 1860 and various vandals appear to have taken a "delight in slashing the painting. It is that the Manet's brother-in-law used the head of Max to light the fire while Degas managed to salvage by purchase what was left of the dismembered painting. To his eternal credit Degas the artist reassembled the pieces onto a single canvas again until in 1918 it had the misfortune to be purchased by our National Gallery when our home-bred bureaucrats had the fantastic audacity to pull out a pair of shears and cut the painting into three separate pieces. Two pieces in separate frames now hang in solitary isolation and not even on the same eye level, while the third piece gathers dust in the vaults below the gallery.

A year ago I raised the matter and received a tart letter for my pains, but now that Sir Philip is riding the crest of popular esteem I would be grateful if he would answer these five questions. Why are these three fragments of Manet's painting not reassembled within the one frame as Degas sold them? How long has the "General Miramon" fragment been hidden in the vaults and how long is it intended that it shall lie there? Why is the fragment of the N.C.O. hung below the level of the rest of the firing party so that it is no longer a part of the whole? Why are the three photographs on sale completely out of proportion to each other and why does it take a written application to view, under personal supervision, when the Locard photograph shows each of these pieces united in a single painting?

Vandalism is not the prerogative of small boys with runny noses and bureaucracy an occupational disease solely confined to the politicians, for the keepers of the national galleries should remember that they owe a duty not only to the Barons of this world but to the artists whose work they are hired to guard and to the faceless majority who daily pace, to the inconvenience of the staff, these galleries.

ARTHUR MOYSE.

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