anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

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INSIDE : ANARCHISTS AND THE BOMB

ON Sunday, 26 October, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is holding a march and rally in central London, and the result is expected to be the biggest demonstration against nuclear weapons in this country for more than a decade. During the past couple of years, with a militarist Conservative Government and a divided Labour Opposition, and with a revival of tension between the great nuclear powers, the Bomb has once again become a central issue in British politics, and the nature and extent of popular support for the revived campaign to Ban the Bomb will be tested properly for the first time by the numbers walking from Hyde Park and the speeches in Trafalgar Square. Anarchists support any action against nuclear weapons, and we shall be present at this demonstration in as much strength as we can bring. But we shall not be satisfied with even the largest march from one empty place to another or even the loudest speech from some empty politician or other. We have no doubt that the only chance for nuclear or any other disarmament in this or any other country is the deliberate development of a mass movement which is able to initiate and coordinate direct industrial action by workers who are involved in the war machine and direct obstructive action by residents who are affected by the nuclear bases and direct libertarian action by everyone who is personally involved in or affected by the nuclear warfare state. We don't want to challenge particular weapons or bases or to change particular politicians or policies. We want to transform the whole social and political system which is based on the Bomb and on which the Bomb is based. We see this and any other demonstration not as an end but as a means and as a beginning for a new nuclear disarmament movement which starts where CND stops. Anarchists were very active in the unilateralist movement in the old days. Here we are again.

Let's not forget Torness

WE are aware that many people and groups in the Anti Nuclear Movement do not like to be reminded of Torness. Not only is the construction of yet another nuclear power station well under way without much effective local opposition; but Torness also stands for a split in the Anti-Nuclear Movement. In May 1979 ca. 300 people occupied the 'inner compound', while another 1500 demonstrators decided not to take this step. The occupiers of the inner compound were later denounced as 'wreckers' by part of the Anti-Nuclear Movement. When the more 'militant' faction called for another occupation in May 1980, most people stayed at home, and only about 200 demonstrators came, facing perhaps 1000 or more police.

The proposed nuclear plant is under permanent occupation by an army in black uniforms who barricaded themselves behind a 10ft. high fence and barbed wire. Landrovers and helicopters are also used to make sure the occupiers will not be disturbed. This is the age of nuclear power: Stop, No admission beyond this point. Torness power station is going to be built. One out of 20 more for the 1980's. Nuclear power is more than spliting atoms: it is highly intensive capital research, expensive power stations, it is part of a European Nuclear programme, it is weapons and a flexible security force.

Torness has become a demonstration of the security forces, who are making it clear to everybody that protest will be limited to a point where it does not affect the progress of the building work.

This was experienced in May 1980. The people who came refused to accept that nuclear power stations shall be built quietly and peacefully, and showed that opposition still exists. Four or five times as many police there with the clear order that nobody should steal any of the ever so valuable atoms, and to show that whoever came to Torness on May 3rd was in fact a very dangerous person, the militant core of the movement with the obvious intention to wreck this building site and the rest of Society immediately afterwards. And after the police learnt this from the united Scottish press and from their superior officers before being sent off to the battle of Torness. They knew they had to carry out an educational task too: To teach at least a few a lesson -to educate those few and all others that whoever leaves the path of lawful protest, i.e. delegating one's interest rather than being active directly, has to be punished. Knowing these objectives, reality does not matter that mich anymore: demonstrators turn into terrorists, footballs into bombs, camping gear into offensive weapons, having an independant opinion into a breach of the peace.

The police had it well organised: During a demonstration in front of the main gates, a rubber ball with the word 'bomb' written on it was thrown over the fence. In an attempt to arrest the guilty anarchist, the police arrested 27 people who suddenly found themselves in the heart of the building site in already prepared interogation centres, and later inside Edinburgh police station where they were kept for two days. They were released on the condition that they should give up their protest, a condition which everybody refused.

Only 8 were picked out later - in line with the old tactics 'divide and rule'- and charged with criminal offences; resisting arrest, obstruction, trying to free a prisoner, carrying a weapon. One person has already been tried and charged £50. Three more will be tried on 20th November.

We think it is very important to give our full and undivided support morrally and financially. Let us demonstrate our support on the occasion of the Anti-Waste-Transport Demo in London, 20th November, and lets turn the day of the trial into an Anti-Nuclear day of action all over the country.

We cannot afford to be split and divided into 'good' protestors (Sharpness- to be supported) and 'bad' protestors (Torness- to be forgotten)

Hackney Anti-Nuclear Group

Donations to help pay fines to : 'Torness' c/o Sun Power, 83 Blackstock Rd., London N4

Kilner House squat

GLOBALLY the historical moment is one of capitalism in crisis. This is masked by shrinking economies and the last-gasp policies of right-wing Governments. In the industrial centres of Britain this is manifested at a local level in the form of closing not only factories but also empty and rotting housing stocks. Areas within the cities which were built to house a growing work-force in times of prosperity are now increasingly run-down, amenity-starved ghettoes where people exist rather than live. The Tory Government's obsession with monetarist policy compounds the problem, since it means an even higher degree of cut-backs in social spending than was already evident when Labour was in office. This, in a country where local councils own so much property, leads to such facts as the following:-

Homelessness is rising, and 30,000 people (at least) are now squatting;

About 850,000 houses in Britain (100,000 in London alone) are kept empty by spending cuts and speculation;

About 200,000 families are on council housing waiting lists in London;

Over 160,000 building workers are unemployed in Britain.

From the general to the specific. Three years ago the Greater London Council had the idea of renovating one of its old properties, Kilner House, a block of 60 flats on an estate of similar blocks in Kennington, South London. The tenants were moved out and were given to understand that they could move back as soon as the work was completed. The ground and first floors of the block were to be adapted especially for the aged and infirm. As recently as last June, former Kilner House tenants were assured that they would be reoccupied in the block.

Then it was suddenly announced by the GLC that Kilner House was to be sold on the open market. Asset-stripping profits were more important than mere tenants, even the aged and infirm. The average asking price was to be £20,000; prospective buyers would have to earn a minimum of £9,000 p.a. to qualify for a GLC mortgage; the prospectus made sparkling references to the flats being ideally suited "for lovers of cricket" and "for buses to the City" -- all this made it obvious that the tenants who had been lied to would have no chance at all of buying back

their old flats. How many pensioners or handicapped people have £20,000 or work in the City?

The renovation cost the GLC £560,000, and at £20,000 a flat sales would bring in £1,200,000. A neat bit of asset-stripping, completely in line with the social thinking of the GLC Tory leader, Horace Cutler. On 3 October he wrote in the South London Press:

> "For this policy of financial stability and prudence I make no apology. (Other GLC property and land have gone the same way.) Quite the reverse. I am proud we have achieved it and am prepared to justify it to anyone."

In answer to such unabashed piggery a group of homeless people in association with London Squatters Union occupied the empty block at midnight on 3 October -- just as the Housing Act came into force. Within hours the tenants on the rest of the estate were posted a letter telling them the reasons for the occupation. The next day the estate Tenants' Association passed a motion giving full support to the squat. Also some tenants who were sick of paying rent for their run-down accommodation in other blocks joined the occupation. Within a week most of the block was occupied by people who had heard of the squat, most of these being single homeless. There are also families with kids. For security reasons a 24-hour guard was mounted on the only entrance to the block.

More support soon rolled in, mainly from local Labour groups and union branches. A local branch of the building union UCATT whose members had been put on standby by the GLC to board up the flats blacked the job and sent support. Workmates of an occupant who works as a refuse van-driver collected mattresses for the squat. Regular general meetings are held to thrash out problems and allocate work such as publicity, etc.

News coverage has been centred on London itself -- LBC radio, Thames Television, the South London Press, The Trotskyist News Line and the Stalinist Morning Star are the only national papers so far to have taken any interest.

While the occupants have been rallying support, our enemies too have been busy. Tremlett, the GLC Housing Chairman, issued a statement on the radio saying that we would be "smacked hard" with "as much force as is necessary". Within days the GLC had applied to the High Court, and summonses appeared with 51 names. Some of these names had been freely handed over to the GLC by the Gas Board after people had registered for gas supply -- a lesson learnt. The police have been on their toes. A telephoto lens was seen sticking out of a bedroom window of a house overlooking the courtyard of the block. Occupants and other local tenants have had periodic interference with their radios -- a situation which a radio engineer said could only be created deliberately. What can this portend?

There have been two recent big events. The first was a press conference, held in the House of Commons by the local Labour MP, Stuart Holland. It was generally thought that, while the bourgeois national papers would ignore statements from us, they might take an interest if comments were mediated through a bourgeois politician. However, once more the nationals ignored the news, so the squat is still being covered only within London.

The day after the press conference was the court case. Because the preceding case took up so much time, ours was not heard and was put back to Wednesday, 22 October. It will be in closed court, and we shall be trying to get it changed to a public court, as well as trying to string it out as long as possible. A demonstration was held outside the court, and another will be held again with -- we hope -- more coverage than there has been so far. An open day party is to be held for the tenants on the estate, with music, games, food, creche, etc.

It is highly unlikely that so eminent a member of the ruling class as a High Court judge will be sympathetic to people who have occupied a renovated council-owned block of flats which are on the open market. So between now and the granting of an eviction order to the GLC we must make more people aware of the Kilner House squat and the reasons behind it. If a mass eviction takes place, a large force will be needed (the block is self-contained), and this is when the vultures of the bourgeois media will descend and focus on the aggro, thereby distracting attention from the real issues -- homelessness, the cuts, asset-stripping, etc. We must not let ourselves become isolated. Here everyone can help. Messages of support can be sent to us; motions proposed at union meetings, notifying us if passed; articles written and the issues involved discussed; etc. And, of course, more actions like ours can be taken elsewhere.

Sherlock Homeless

(Kilner House Occupants)

Messages of support etc:
The Occupants
Kilmer House
Pegas Place
Clayton Street
Kennington Pk Estate
LONDON S.E.11.

(Speakers available for meetings.)

London Squatters Union:
48 William 1V Street
LONDON W.C.2.
(Charing Cross Tube)

Open: Mon; Wed; Fri; at 6pm-8pm
Phone c/o 701 5691.

From the Home Front

Tehran

"WE MUST thank Allah for this war which is uniting us" (Ayatollah Khomeini): or, in anarchist terms, "war is the health of the state". The present fighting provides the latest red herring for the Tehran establishment. Until now we have had American imperialism (the Great Satan), helped by Britain (the little Satan), given shots in the arm by the abortive raid, the British deportations and the like. All along there have been denunciations of the godless Iraquis, a bit of shelling over the border. Now all that lovely paranoia has come true. God's People have their chance at martyrdom.

And these distractions are certainly needed. Discontent with the Islamic Revolution was widespread. Unemployment was still increasing. So were shortages - meat, bread, cooking oil (in Iran, yet!) And general social repression. Iran is back to the old habits of disappearing dissidents. Nowadays the speciality is a knock on the doorat four in the morining, followed by an indefinite interview with the local Komiteh. Evin prison, outside Tehran, is full again. It gives quite a nice symbol of the course of the Revolution. Though there doesn't seem to be the systematic torture practised by SAVAK. Just general beating up.

The position of women is still deteriorating. More and more are disappearing behind chadors, just to save general hassle. There's now a rule that all women working in government offices must wear Islamic dress (either a chador or a scarf and a loose tunic). Many private firms follow suit. Many religious women see this as an advantage - better than being treated as a sex object. Which, if you know the sexism of the usual Irani male, is understandable. But they don't seem to see the bias. There is little call for men to stop wearing tight jeans. And this reduction of women to a pair of eyes is helping reinforce practices like arranged marriages based on family status. It is widely expected that women will be banned from jobs totally. (Though the present steady reduction in candidates for these jobs might postpone that. There's nothing like the National Interest for submerging ethical stances. It's easier to hold a job when the men are away at the war). Contraception is still available, for what is left of the middle class. There is little objection to it under Islam. However, the old campaign to reduce family size has disappeared. Abortion is now strictly banned.

Politics remain incredibly confused. Before the war a pattern was beginning to emerge. The central state was reforming and there was jockeying for power within it. The Shah's regime was destroyed by broad popular unrest. The major political strands within the movement were religious, nationalist and left. Immediately after the revolution the secular politicians had considerable influence. This has been consistently eroded. There used to be a lot of harking back to the early 1950s. This was when Mussadegh's government nationalised the oil and briefly forced the shah into exile.

"ARM THE OPPOSITION"

Then he was put back by the CIA. So Mussadegh was OK and his picture appeared on posters. along with Khomeini and Bani-Sadr. Pahlavi Street (a major road in Tehran) was renamed after him. However, Islamisation has progressed. The street name has been changed again, and there's an empty space on the posters. Most of the secular politicians have disappeared. Bazargan, ex prime minister, is keeping quiet. Yazdi seems to have gone back to the USA. (It is widely accepted that he worked for them anyway). Qotzbadeh has resigned as foreign minister. Madani, ex admiral and presidential candidate, is in West Germany. The Majlis is predominantly Islamic. Bani-Sadr survives. He's a protege of Khomeini and particularly well in with his son, Ahmad.

The left was silenced for a time. The fedayin (Marxist-Leninists) went underground. Even the mojahedin, with all their islamic trappings, came in for persecution. Their meetings were attacked etc. (Tudeh, the pro-Moscow Communists, support the present government). However, all this enthusiasn, and the old guerrilla skills, can't be wasted. So the young militants are encouraged to go south and get themselves killed. As the dominant group, the pasdaran (Revolutionary Islamic Militia) hog all the propaganda and make out that they alone constitute the volunteers. Members of the fedayin are made to remove red armbands. Yet now Khomeini himself exhorts the army to provide weapons to the irregulars. It does at least reinforce the point that he is not a conventional politician. He refused to be head of state (just faqih - 'supreme guide'!) He refused to allow his son Ahmad to take a high office. He constantly supports Bani-Sadr against the religious-politicos. And now he suggests arming the opposition. The man is sincere. A sincere, bigoted loonie.

The Tehran Libertarian Group still gets by, though there's a lot of pressure. Selling the newspaper (Nafaman - 'no authority') is now

Answer to Young Liberals

In reply to Steve Dawe's letter (last issue):

1. He refers to the Young Liberal policy of the 'dual approach' and to the necessity of taking libertarian ideas into the machinery of government. The trouble with this, as history bears out, is that it is the ideas which get ripped up in the machinery, not the machinery which dissolves in the ideas.

2. For evidence that the 'revolutionary posture', as he puts it, does not work, he refers to the events in France in 1968. The parallel is not valid, since the rebellion of France 1968 was such that it did not actually represent an attempt at revolution.

3. Insofar as reforms reduce human suffering, of course they are to be welcomed. But while YLs may say they differ from anarchists only in their means, not their ends, how can they seriously hope to attain these ends through parliamentary means? Reforms can and should be effected through extra-parliamentary pressure and direct action, and in such a way as to reduce not only human (and any other!) suffering but the power of government as well. Otherwise the victory will be a spurious one.

4. He assures us that YLs organise against 'the public face' of the Liberal Party - currently Steel's Yet this means that as so-called libertarians YLs are in the untenable position of trying to put libertarian ideas across to people as members of an essentially authoritarian power structure. This is to demand a great deal of faith, in fact a total suspension of good sense.

5. Anyone acquainted with anarchism and anarchists know that while some among us may look to an insurrection followed by a utopia, many others see libertarian revolution as a long and complicated, even perpetual process (as I hinted in my article). To refer in such sweeping and one-sided terms to 'the anarchist approach' (my emphasis) is simply to betray the thinking habits and the jargon of young liberalism (eg. 'the dual approach'!)

6. This is merely to argue with labels. It means nothing to say that the "social democrats are the real inheritors of the old liberal tradition". In its early stages social democracy too showed the influences of pacifism, socialism, Marxism etc. So what? The real point is that as a party grows more powerful it always loses its original idealism. So: do radical liberals exist to prevent their party growing more powerful? Or do they believe in the possibility of a libertarian government? But here surely we are plunging into the realms of the surreal ...

GAIA

(see also page 6).

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very dangerous. Copies of Nafarman openly posted to FREEDOM have been intercepted, though, oddly, copies of FREEDOM have got through to Tehran. Until a couple of weeks ago.

The old hobby of Conspiracy Studies flourishes. It is an accepted fact that both America and Russia are supporting Iraq in the war. Also, that an incredible ragbag of exiled politicians is cooking up a plot to overthrow the islamic republic. This includes Bakhtiar, ex prime minister and Oveisi, ex military governor. These two have certainly spent time in Baghdad. It is not generally thought that the plans include the installation of Reza Pahlavi as king. He's still in Cairo with his mother and aunt and presumably a comforting supply of money. The plotters in exile are supposed to have links inside Iran, even after the 'exposure' of plans for a coup a few months ago. The more sophisticated do not think that the Americans coordinate all this lot. They think the British do. Really advanced conspiriologists have a real breathtaker. Ayatollah Khomeini, Supreme Guide on Earth, is a British agent.

There have been stirrings among the minorities. Down south, near Shiraz, are the Qashq'ai. They are still semi-nomadic, despite a long campaign by the shah's regime. They had a spectacular uprising in the 1960s, put down by strafing of their flocks by modern jets. Their old aspirations are resurfacing. And those of the Baluchi, spread across the border into Pakistan. Kurdistan continues to simmer, despite appeals to patriotic conscience. They have a different view of patriotism. Iraq has been putting on a big show of conciliation towards its Kurds in the last couple of years. (The front line army unit is called the Saleh el Din - Saladin - Division. There's irony. He was a Kurd). Neither country wants a big northern revolt at the moment. There are rumours of negotiations between Tehran and Iraqi Kurds. Enshallah, do people never learn.

So there we are at the moment. I presume it's the same in Iraq. The war is away in the south. There's increasing rationing. The opposition hopes that the government will be undermined. The government hopes that it can use the crisis to consolidate its position. Most people are discontent, but respond to the appeals, the patriotism, nationalism, xenophobia, religion, sectarianism. Enshallah, do people never learn.

ALI

Good luck lad and while you're marching carry with honour that self same banner that your old dad once carried and in another 20 years time your son will carry it in his turn and give my love to Peggy Duff.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTI

Frustration

Dear Comrades

I would like to reply briefly to Terry Liddle's criticism of FREEDOM's report on the Solidarity meting on Poland at which I, like Terry, was a speaker.

I saw the report, already set and pasted up just as it was being despatched to the printer and I thought it was a bit 'over the top' but there was no time to do anything about it. The meeting was on a Tuesday, the report was written, set and pasted up by midday Wednesday. For once we had a topical item of news !

Although the report was intemperate, however, I think it was justified criticism. I felt myself in an invidious position as the meeting progressed, under a chairman who claimed that the TUC were in the Kremlin's pocket and who grunted approvingly every time the Catholic Church was mentioned as an anti-communist force.

I had been advised that 'Polish anarchist' speakers had been invited. No doubt the two Poles who did speak were sincere and informative but they weren't even libertarians, the last speaker flatly opposing my line on anarcho-syndicalist pattern of organisation if the Polish workers wanted a free industrial movement. He supported 'free trades unions' on the British model - although the audience had already shown what they thought of that!

The only common ground on the platform was anti- Leninism, and indeed the only contributions from the floor by Solidarity members was also the purely negative one of attacking bolshevism (one contributor taking us back to extended quotes on what Lenin said in 1921) and forgetting that the workers of Gdansk had already shown their opposition to that. I had (mistakenly) thought the meeting would be discussing revolutionary or at least libertarian alternatives instead of which it was hogged by representatives of various Marxist splinter groups plugging their lines.

I hadn't realised that Solidarity's main raison d'etre of anti-Leninism makes them a honey-pot for the Marxist flies.

And at the end the chairman did not call on the speakers to reply or sum up - a traditional courtesy which was presumably skipped because he knew there was little agreement amongst the speakers. (He would say there was no time!)

Terry's assertion that the chairman was libertarian in offering the chair to John Rety must be a joke, as he knows full well the original offer was. And to offer as an excuse that it was, after all, the only meeting called on Poland does not ease the frustration that I, and the FREEDOM reporter and others felt at a missed opportunity to make some constructive contributions to the anti-communist struggle by presenting viable revolutionary alternatives instead of simply making anti- Leninist capital.

We know what Solidarity don't stand for - we still don't know what they do stand for.

Fraternally
Philip Sansom

Spoiled Votes

Dear Freedom

Re: P.E.'s letter 'Using the Census'. (FREEDOM 11th october) One point must be made in this whole argument. If one objects to the idea of a consensus or election, ignoring it is not the answer. Every vote or consensus that is not returned is written off as electoral apathy.

Whether consensus or voting card it must be destroyed ie. write a large A right across your return and then leave the powers that be to explain why there are so many destroyed returns. Eventually, the message may get across.

Don't hide in the closet, come out into the open, they can't nick us all.

Yours in comradeship,
D. LAMMIN

Deluded YLS

As an ex- Young Liberal who has been active in anarchist activity on and off for the past five years, I'd like to debunk some of the delusions Steve Dawe (of the YLM national executive) adheres to.

Far from my three years of involvement in YL circles being grounded in 'practical expression' the opposite was the case, I was a typical idealistic student being inculcated in the nuspeak jargon of social science. Far from being 'less arrogant and authoritarian' YL pursuit in community politics merely reinforces parochialism and entry points for local activists (sic) into the system's channels. Take a concrete example; I understand that Kelvinside YLs 'go to the people' in true narodnik fashion and put into practice' community politics in nearby Maryhill. Their altruistic candidate runs a legal/advice surgery (she had to move premises when the local kids burned the community centre down - it had been a police station before) which dispenses advice and goodwill without any self-organisation being proposed (even claimant unions are better).

I would agree that there is a qualitative difference between radical liberalism and social democracy BUT there is a world of difference between the latter and anarchism. Part of the link is of course caused by the militant liberalism (non-party) of environmentalists who like Dawe are 'willing to take our ideas into the machinery of government that the system can be changed for the better'. This is the crux of the Dual Approach, the original architects of which, in the immediate post-'68 period (Lichman, Hebditch, Hain etc. - the last two are now radical reformists in the Labour Party) recuperated the vitality of revolt against the system and transformed 'libertarianism' into being nice, tolerant issue orientated- as if there is anything 'nice' about revolution (although it is enjoyable). The Young Liberals like the Young Socialists will continue despite the 'join us and stop pinching our clothing' appeal of Gaia. I would be more satisfied if anarchists spent more time communicating with all the 'young anarchists' out there!

JIM McFARLANE

Wrong!

J.H. (Bookshop Notes) is wrong: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was not an anarchist. She became a member of the IWW and the American Socialist Party at the age of 16. She spoke for some years on Wobbly platforms, and Joe Hill called her the original Rebel Girl.

Flynn was, for some considerable time, Carlo Tresco's 'lover'. She, later, joined and became a leading member of the American Communist Party. She was probably one of the world's most fanatical Stalinists. She was closely associated with a number of Communists who were most certainly Soviet (NKVD) agents in the U.S., Spain and Mexico. And in her latter years she suffered for her Stalinism, during the McCarthy era.

She probably knew more about the murder of Carlo Tresca than she was prepared to admit. She was no friend of ours!

P.N.

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From Carl

Greetings Brothers and Sisters!

Here I am still in the most racist, gang-run, violent prison in America but good news is I am finally out of segregation and in a less restrictive unit! Took some doing too, but I made it. As I mentioned in my last letter we prisoners won hands down the Civil Suit in Federal Court up in Washington State around treatment, conditions, and brutality in the penitentiary there. Also all criminal charges were dismissed against me in the 9 May, 1979 takeover of that penitentiary. In progress now is the struggle to have all exiles scattered all over Amerikkka (including many members of the Anarchist Black Dragon Collective) returned to Washington State. Looks like we may have a victory here too shortly in the State Supreme Court where a transfer case is now being heard. The issue is Due Process i.e. Prisoners have a right to a hearing before they can be transferred to determine/question why. Cross toes, eyes, and fingers kids! And thank all who have protested the transfers - keep the protests coming (Office of the Governor Olympia Washington). Demand that all prisoners transferred without hearings from the Wn. State Penitentiary be returned to Washington State. Personally in January I have another Civil Suit in Federal Court up there going to trial around treatment and conditions in segregation in 1976-77. Hope to win, but we'll see.

In this unit I am presently in there is more movement, more privileges, contact and conjugal visits, but the unit is segregated by race and gang. The section I am in is supposedly 'Neutral' i.e. no gangs. Guns are everywhere 24 hours a day.' The unit outside (tiers) is filthy and the noise level is unbelievable. My cell is 5 ft. wide and 10 ft. long with another prisoner as a cell mate! Moving slow and being careful. Practically every day prisoners fight and try to kill each other in this prison, and the guards blast them with automatic rifles and shot guns. A Nightmare, but trying to keep my head. Many legally, politically, and personally fighting to get me out and back to Washington cause we all know why I am here. I am still struggling with spirits good.

More good news is a book by and about me titled 'Love and Rage' (diary with drawings) is out in Canada by Pulp Press. $2.00 plus postage to: Claire Culhane Prisoner's Rights Group 3695 Pandora St. Burnaby B.C. Canada. All funds go to my defense fund P.R.G. and Pulp Press. Also from Prisoner Solidarity Collective P.O. Box 1817 Bancroft Ontario Canada KOL 1CO are posters of my drawings for sale (6 for $10.00) All funds go to my defense fund and the P.S.C. My National Defense Fund address is Susan Harp 7075 132N.E. Kirkland WN 98033 and internationally it is HAPOTOC International P.O. Box 10638 Amsterdam Holland. All funds go to my struggle for a new trial and other legal struggles in prison plus to help A.B.D.C. Appreciate even smallest help and I hope all will like my book etc. Also appreciate all of you who have written to me and those who came to visit especially that postal worker (ex by now) from England- love you brother!

Guess this covers the Western Front. Be good to yourselves and take care. My love to all and especially to all locked-down in England and Ireland.

Love and Rage
CARL HARP
(San Quentin)

P.O. Box C-7100
Tamal
California 94974.

Akashic Record?

Dear Freedom

If I may be permitted another crack of the whip before retiring from a fruitless clash of cosmologies I would like to counter the materialist diatribe of Nicolas Walter published in the last issue of FREEDOM. To set the akashic record straight, I am a professional scientist with reseach work published in the most orthodox of journals and understand only too well the limits and constraints within which one is compelled to operate. These constraints are necessary for certain insights to be obtained and rendered useful but we must not make the mistake of imagining them absolute. Science has erected barriers of impossibility beyond which it is not permitted to penetrate. However I am interested in reality as I see it not to conform to some outmoded nineteenth-centuary materialism which is an act of faith as much as a belief in the angelic hierachy or the divine right of kings. Politics in general including anarchist ones belong in the main to the era of the spinning jenny having a touching faith in materialist progress. That science applied correctly has improved the living standards of the world is not questioned: the implications are. It could be reasonably argued that Russian Bolshevism, German National Socialism or even British Harold Macmillan-arianism improved the living standards of the majority of these societies - in the short run. But the important nature of these structures is their impact upon the life of the world as a whole. The disintegration of industrial civilization in war, pollution and economic crises is just one aspect. The destruction of society is another. Authoritarian politics is one more corollary of this tendency.

If parapsychological experiences are counter to anarchist belief then we are well on the road to having a creed to sign before admission into the anarchist empyrean. If my involvement with the investigation of other realities means expulsion from the universal brotherhood of anarchy then it must be counted a sad day when doctrine triumphs over the quest for truth. My stance is for an absence of doctrine an open yet critical mind on all issues orthodox and unorthodox official and unofficial. If the dogmatic choose to disagree then I must travel beyond a limited anarchism. Adieu.

N. Pennick

FREEDOMCONTACTS

FREEDOM PRESS
in Angel Alley
84b WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET
LONDON E1 Phone 01-247 9249

This list shows all groups who have given us an address. If you want to be on it - drop us a line.

INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIA

Australian Capital Territory
Research & Resources Centre for Libertarian Politics and Alternative Life-Styles, 7/355 Northmore Ave., Lyneham, A.C.T. 2602.

New South Wales
Black Ram, PO Box 238, Darlinghurst, NSW 2010.
Disintegrator! PO Box 290, Bondi Junction, Sydney.
Sydney Anarcho-Syndicalists, Jura Books Collective, 417 King Street, Newtown, NSW 2042.

Queensland
Libertarian Socialist Organisation, PO Box 268, Mount Gravatt, Central 4122.
Self-Management Organisation, PO Box 332, North Quay.

South Australia
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Victoria
La Trobe Libertarian Socialists, c/o SRC, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Vic. 3083.
Monash Anarchist Society, c/o Monash University, Clayton, 3168 Melbourne.
Libertarian Workers for a Self Managed Society, PO Box 20, Parkville 3052.

Chummy Fleming Bookshop, 26 Regent Arcade, 210 Toorak Road, South Yarra (Libertarian Workers shop).

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Freedom Collective, PO Box 14, Mount Hawthorn 6016.
Libertarian Resource Centre, PO Box 203, Fremantle 6160.

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Daybreak Bookshop, PO Box 5424, Dunedin.

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Black Cat Press, Post Office Box 11261, Edmonton Alberta.

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California
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Minnesota
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Missouri
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New York
Libertarian Book Club, Box 842, GPO New York, NY 10012.
SRAF/Freespace Alternative U, 339 Lafayette St., New York City, NY 10012.

Texas
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Federal Republic of Germany

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Graswurzel (grass roots) c/o W Hertle, Grozerscippsee 28, 21 Hamburg 90.
Schwarzer Faden (Black Thread) Obere Wiebemarktstr 3, 741 Reutlingen.

FRANCE

Federation anarchiste française, 3 rue Ternaux, 75011 Paris. (Groups throughout France).

Union Anarchiste, 9 rue de l'Ange, 63000 Clermont Ferrand.

ITALY

Autogestione, Casella Postale 17127, 1-20100 Milano.

Grupp Hem Day, Giovanni Trapani, CP6130, Roma-Prati.

The Netherlands

De Vrije Socialist, Postbus 411, Utrecht.

SCANDINAVIA

Denmark

Aarhus: Regnbuen Anarkist Bogcafe, Meijlgade 48, 8000 Aarhus.

Copenhagen: Anarkist Syndicalist Bogcafe, Studiestrade 18, 1455 Copenhagen.
Rainbow Anarchists of the Free City of Christiana, c/o Allan Anarchos, Tinghuset, Fristaden Christiana, 1407 Copenhagen.

Norway
ANORG, Hoxtvedtv. 31B, 1431 As. (Publish 'Folkebladt' 4 times a year.)

Sweden

Syndikalist Forum, Tenstiernas Gata 51, 11631 Stocklholm.

Syndikalistiskt Forum (anarcho-synd. Bookhop), Husagatans 5, 41302 Gothenburg (tel.031-132504).

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Anarchists and the Bomb

'Governments were to free men from the cruelty of individual strife to give them security in the permanence of group life. But instead of that they subject man to the same necessity of strife merely substituting strife with other states for strife with individual neighbours and the danger of destruction both for the individual and for the state they leave just as it was.'

LEO TOLSTOY 1893

Things haven t changed much Anyone still under the illusion in 1980 that Government is there to "serve" us and protect our interests has only to look at our defence policy: Government is not only committed to turning us into radioactive waste at some future date but causes immense suffering now through cutting public services and generally reducing the quality of our lives. Of course it intends to protect itself both from any possible nuclear attack and from any kind of protest at its behaviour. The home defence network has been perfected to maintain the authoritarian state in any emergency. The rest of us are expendable. (See recent issues of the New Statesman, and FREEDOM Vol 41 No 20.) If anarchy is concerned with the abolition of power structures, then it must concern itself with weapons that are the ultimate expression of centralised power. If it is concerned with building a society based on trust and cooperation then disarmament is a prerequisite for this.

So much for theory. It suddenly struck me at the beginning of this year that progress towards a freedom-loving, mutually supportive society was slow, and that nuclear annihilation seemed more imminent than any form of revolution. So perhaps it was time to concentrate one's energies, even to the point of joining a single-issue politically unaligned campaign. And so, for the first time in my life, I became a member of an organisation -- the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The rest of this article is about the conflicts that might occur in such a situation, our aims and ways of organising, and how we may resolve them.

Lowest common denominator

CND today is constantly begging us to 'put aside our political differences' and unite behind this single most important issue of unilateral nuclear disarmament. There is an attempt to approach basic moral values such as "Weapons of mass destruction are wrong because they cause human suffering" -- so never mind if you think that apartheid is a jolly good system, or that Stalin was the last word on socialism: all this is mere trivia and can be sorted out after we've got rid of this bigger threat. This results in what I call "lowest common denominator" politics -- the trimming of everyone's rough edges so that they fit neatly together. An example of this kind of thinking is a decision by my local group not to continue with the "Against the Cuts" campaign because its left-wing associations might antagonise possible conservative supporters. The result was that we dissociated ourselves from a group of potential supporters working in a similar political direction for the dubious and at present non-existent support of a group who don't want to think about the problems of defence, let alone support nuclear disarmament. Rough edges may cause friction, but they prevent inertia.

Disarmament is an intensely political issue which must affect domestic and foreign policy and government itself. To be more specific -- one of the most frequent questions I get asked is: "If we disarm and we are invaded, how do we defend ourselves?" Anarchists would agree that we do indeed need to defend ourselves from any kind of totalitarian domination. Where they might differ from other supporters of disarmament is over what they are defending and how to defend it. They do not want to defend the nation state and its supporting institutions -- an elitist and oppressive educational system, a rigid class structure, and oppressive working conditions -- all features of a centralised capitalist economy which undoubtedly requires some kind of military defence. On the other hand, freedom and the right to control one's own life are values without a territorial or institutional basis, and they are best protected by small, highly socialised and mutually supportive groups. This would also be the best basis for a civilian resistance network -- whether practising non-violent non-cooperation or guerrilla warfare. Robin Cook in his pamphlet Alternatives to Nato touches on such possibilities, but I do not think that he or CND in general face up to the political implications. Any government that actively propagates such a form of defence must also be sowing the seeds of its own destruction (good from an anarchist viewpoint, but not if one is committed to social democracy through a Labour Government, as is most of CND). So any government which is committed to disarmament is going to have to come up with some other alternative. The Labour Party at the moment is desperately trying its own version of lowest common denominator politics by commiting itself to unilateral nuclear disarmament and at the same time to staying in a nuclear alliance -- thus having no coherent policy at all.

Are such different aims reconcilable, or does the disheartened anarchist down tools and try to go it alone? There are possibilities -- CND is not so firmly attached to the Labour Party as it was last time round. People have learnt to be less trusting of a political party whose answer to an election promise to spend less money on defence is simply to spend a great deal more in secret. CND rather than trying to sanitise the issue, could allow it to be part of a politicising process. Through working for disarmament, people would then gain understanding, and anarchists should play a part in that educative process -- not by trying to make CND an anarchist movement (coercion and infiltration are not our line), but by presenting people with all the dirty political facts and letting them find out and choose for themselves.

Means and ends

Malatesta said: "Anarchy is above all a method " It is not simply a utopia at which one arrives, but the process by which one travels. If you are opposed to hierarchical power structures which control every aspect of your life, your best weap-

on is to create a non-hierarchical structure where people take power for themselves. In the past, quarrels over the way to work caused major splits in CND. So far this time round it hasn't happened that way. This may be because many people who are weary of the past and are influenced by the more libertarian anti-nuclear movement have simply formed separate organisations. This may be the best solution -- one finds the working environment that suits one best. Otherwise the sort of conflict which has arisen in my own local group -- over direct action, decision-making, form of organisation and so on -- is bound to occur.

Direct action

At the present moment, there is no nationally coordinated direct action movement, and CND is able to hedge its bets by neither condemning it nor openly supporting it At a local level, having formed a non-violent direct action sub-group we were able to use the name of CND while training ourselves but when we actually carried out an intervention during Operation Square Leg we had to act autonomously to avoid offending potential CND supporters On the small scale this probably doesn't matter much; but a national network will eventually form, and CND will once more have to commit itself one way or the other, or end by losing support all round If CND were to offer its full support to direct action, there would be a much greater chance of such action being massive and effective. Cruise missiles will, after all, be here well before the Labour Party regains power and we are not going to wait that long.

Organisation

"Give people too much freedom, and it turns to drivel."
"The constituency is ordinary people who want to be reassured so let's get the business done and go to the pub."
"People do need leadership, and we've got to give it to them."
"I'd like to question your assertion, Comrade, that the present world situation is a result of the present democratic process. Voting is part of that democratic process, and if we were more efficient we might have changed the world by now."

The discussion in my local CND group was on decision-making Some unruly libertarians and anarchists had suggested that the traditional way of making decisions was not necessarily the best. There was a strong feeling that the discussion itself was time-wasting and prevented us from acting efficiently. But if efficiency means success in achieving the aims of a campaign, this must be affected by the way a group functions together.

Take role-sharing, for instance. Keeping fixed roles means that one must end up with a hierarchy where the less skilled defer to and are led by the more skilled. Encouraging people to take on new roles may mean more clumsiness at the beginning, but will result eventually in a greater number of skilled and therefore powerful people. CND, realising this to some degree, has encouraged public speaking schools and briefing sessions for everyone, but it still has its elite of charismatic leaders

Voting may result in rapid decisions, but we would query its effectiveness. In the discussion before a vote, views become polarised, people become more firmly entrenched in their positions, and then, if they lost, they have no interest in implementing the decision. They may leave, or actively sabotage it, if it is a matter of principle. After all if you believe that murder is wrong, do you give in to a majority vote in favour of murder? You may then find yourself in the position of having to vote on which form of murder is best while still being in principle against it. Or do you do what you can to prevent the majority vote being implemented Consensus decision-making tries rather to move forward from oppositing viewpoints to establish some common ground It attempts to use the best thinking of everyone, so that everyone has a stake in the final decision. Far more people participate in the decision-making process, and they thus gain confidence in themselves. This isn't a new idea after all. Quakers use it -- so did hanging juries in the old days.

Of course it is always easier to stick to the well-tried centralised hierarchical form of organisation. The masses dutifully vote, leaflet, march as directed by anxious committees of activists who burn themselves out with overwork But this was not exactly effective twenty years ago This time round, can t we create structures where everyone can actively participate and take a personal initiative? The world outside is at daggers drawn, because governments are unable to find a way of resolving conflicts peacefully. The democratic process which allows us to change a government perhaps ten times in a lifetime has noticeably failed to improve the quality of most people's lives. Its main effects are alienation and apathy. This is surely a reflection of what is happening on a smaller scale -- our lack of concern for each other, our lack of interest in and tolerance of new ideas and initiatives.

One member of our CND group said: "Solidarity doesn't just come from efficient decisions or common beliefs. but from sharing something." You can't share a decison taken by vote or sent down from on high. Another member replied "But CND isn't here to conduct a social experiment" I disagree. Disarmament is the greatest social experiment of our time, and it begins here and now.

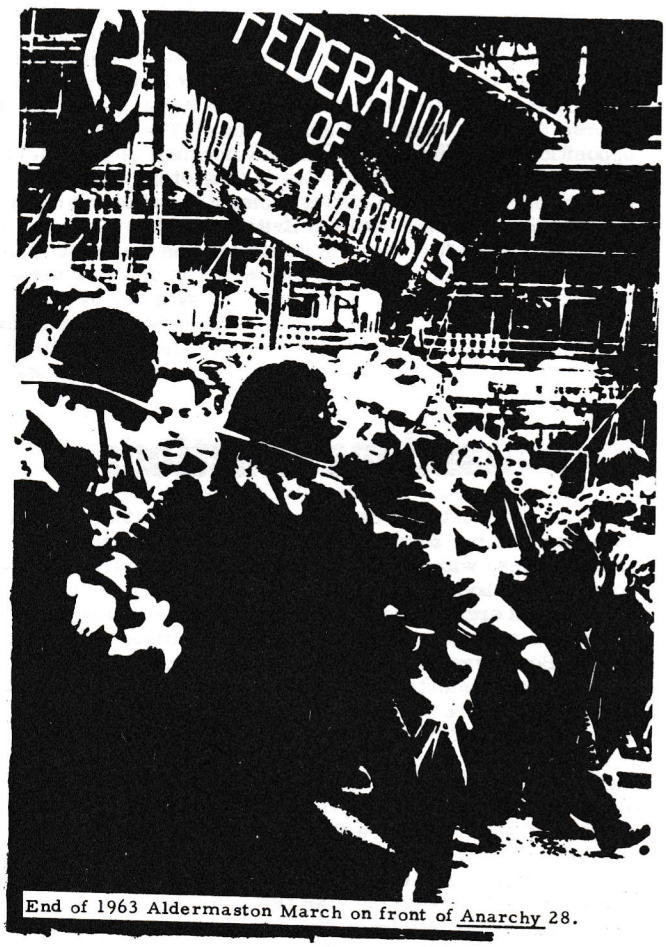
L M J

Aldermaston March 1968, second day, near London Airport.

The old and the new

Anarchism is based on the belief that human society can and should be organised by free agreement between individuals and groups, without the systematic use of power by some people over other people. The ultimate expression of such power is the state, the ultimate sanction of the state is violence, the ultimate form of state violence is war, and the ultimate type of war is nuclear war; so anarchists are especially opposed to the state, to violence, to war, and above all to nuclear war.

Few anarchists are committed to complete non-resistance or non-violence in political activity within a country, and most anarchists are prepared to use power and even violence against greater power and violence. But almost all anarchists are committed against the violence and counter-violence of wars between countries. A few individual anarchists have supported particular wars - Peter Kropotkin in the First World War, for example, or Rudolf Rocker in the Second World War - and there are occasional wars which anarchists and even pacifists hardly oppose - the Indian invasion of Bengal in 1971, for example, or the Tanzanian invasion of Uganda in 1979 - but the anarchist movement, like the pacifist movement, has repeatedly repudiated war. For a century anarchists have been active in opposition to war, and in this country anarchists were imprisoned for their resistance to both world wars - the victims including the editors of this paper in 1916 and again in 1945 - so it is not surprising that for thirty-five years we have been involved in the movement against nuclear war.



End of 1963 Aldermaston March on front of Anarchy 28.

The nuclear quantum leap

Like pacifists, anarchists don't oppose only nuclear war while accepting other kinds of war; but, like most other people, they do recognise that the nature of the weapons developed during the past forty years makes nuclear war different from all previous kinds of war in kind as well as degree. For the first time in human history, fighting between one group and another may cause the death not only of the people involved and the people around them but also of all the people in any country or on the whole earth. It is at last possible to start the war to end war, and everything else; the ancient myths of Armageddon and Ragnarok, the Stoic and Christian doctrines of the catastrophic end of the world, are now within the realm of reality rather than fantasy.

The rapidly accelerating advance of military technology is part of the exponential advance of all forms of science and technology in the modern age, but it is particularly striking, in both senses. For five hundred years - from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century - the power of gunpowder hardly increased at all, though the ways of using it became much more efficient; then in fifty years the development of high explosives and aircraft increased the power and range of shells and bombs hundreds of times; then in just under five years the first nuclear fission weapons (atom bombs) were thousands times more powerful than any weapons used before; then in just over five years the first thermonuclear fusion weapons (hydrogen bombs) were another thousand times more powerful. It took thousands of high explosive and incendiary bombs to destroy Hamburg in 1943 and Dresden in 1945, killing about a hundred thousand people (the peak of the British war effort); it took single atom bombs to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, killing about the same number of people (the peak of the American war effort); since 1954, a single hydrogen bomb can destroy a large city and kill a million people - and there are now about fifty thousand hydrogen bombs ready for use.

One aspect of this process is especially relevant to the anarchist opposition to nuclear war. Until about a century ago, the military technology which was available to a government was equally available to its opponents - guns, like swords, could be used against rulers as well as by them. High explosives and aircraft tilted the balance in favour of governments, and nuclear bombs and ballistic missiles tipped it over completely. Nuclear war can only be waged by a sophisticated scientific and bureaucratic system backed by an efficient military-industrial complex against a large population; it is, above all, war by the state against the people. There probably isn't much difference in the end between being hacked or beaten to death by stone weapons and being incinerated or irradiated to death by nuclear weapons, but there certainly is a crucial difference in the way to the end.

Nuclear thinking

These changes in military technology have meant changes in military thinking. With nuclear weapons, there is no such thing as defence, only various forms of attack; and, when two states have nuclear weapons, there is no such thing as victory of one and defeat of the other, only various forms of destruction of each by the other. So, in place of the old balance of power which prevailed in Europe for several centuries, a new balance of terror has prevailed in the world for three decades; and, while the balance of power could be upset several times and restored with the loss of a few million lives, the balance of terror can be upset only once.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that nuclear deterrence doesn't work. It has after all worked for three decades -the United States and the Soviet Union have each been deterred from using their own nuclear weapons by each other's nuclear weapons, and the same is true of the later nuclear powers, first Britain and France, then China and India, now perhaps Israel and South Africa. So far, nuclear weapons have been controlled by relatively rational governments, though the Americans were tempted in Korea and Vietnam and were tested to the edge of the brink in the Berlin and Cuban crises of the early 1960's; fortunately, the Russians have so far been more cautious. Nuclear deterrence may also have limited conventional war, though conventional war was bad enough in Korea and Vietnam and is significantly worse for civilian populations in general than ever before. But the balance of terror, like the balance of power, could easily be upset by irrationality, by incompetence, or just by accident - as has already nearly happened on several occasions which are known, to say nothing of those which are not known - and as it is more and more heavily loaded and widely distributed it seems more and more likely to collapse under the strain.

Nuclear disarmament

The traditional demand for disarmament, which had been voiced for a century but which had no effect on the arms races leading to the two world wars, became heard again when the Cold War began to thaw during the 1950's. Anarchists have been involved in this new phase from the start, but they differ from most advocates of nuclear (or any other) disarmament in two ways. The first difference is that anarchists have no faith in disarmament by the state, since the system which is responsible for armament is hardly likely to be responsible for disarmament. War is the health of the state, and nuclear war is the health of the super-state. If states do disarm, it is not because they wish to do so but because they are forced to do so, whether from outside or from within, So anarchists have little interest in putting constitutional pressure on the opposition party to promise to disarm. We are interested in putting pressure on the state itself, so that disarmament is part of the wider process of dismantling government.

The second difference is that anarchists have no faith in disarmament by several states, since international pressures for nuclear (or any other) armament seem to be even stronger than national pressures. The institution which is based on a monopoly of force within its territory always tends to strive for superiority or at least equality of force outside its territory. The warfare state depends on a war economy, and the world economy more than any national economy is dominated by arms manufacture, arms trade and arms consumption. Popular pressure, which can to some extent be applied to the state in a single community, can hardly be applied to the community of states. Of course anarchists would welcome nuclear disarmament by one state or by several, but we don't expect to see it, and meanwhile we support disarmament which is libertarian and unilateralist.

There was a large movement for such disarmament in this country for more than a decade - from 1957 to 1968 - and after more than a decade there is a revival of this movement. Anarchists were very active in the movement then, and are active again now; it is worth considering what happened then and what has been learnt since.

The British movement

The call for nuclear disarmament won more support in this country than anywhere else, and began here first; indeed it began before there were any nuclear armaments - right back in 1943, when Bob Edwards described and criticised the preparations for nuclear war two years before it came. Much of the basic research into nuclear physics had been done in Britain - in 1933 one of its leading figures, Ernest Rutherford, said that the idea of harnessing nuclear energy was "moonshine"! - and several British scientists helped to develop nuclear power and weapons in the United States during the Second World War. Despite the shock of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, protests against the new weapons subsided in the combination of elation aroused by victory and despair aroused by the Cold War.

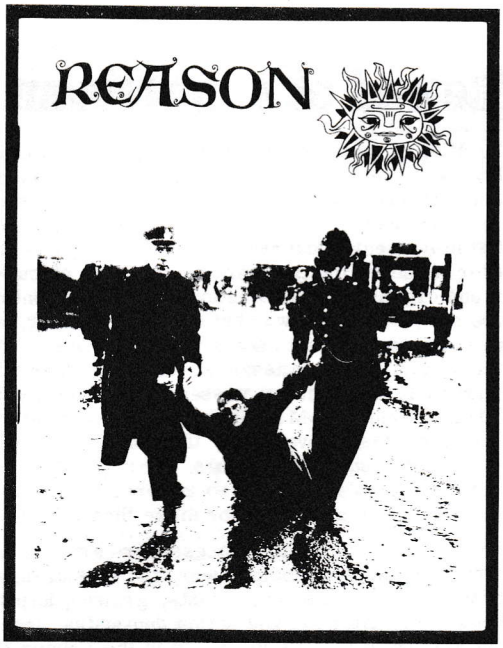
Committee of 100 sit-down in Whitehall on 29 April 1961.

The change came at the end of the 1940s. The first factor was the decision of the British Labour Government (without any electoral mandate or democratic consultation) to develop nuclear weapons in 1948, so that Britain became the third nuclear power; the second factor was the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation after the first Russian nuclear test in 1949, so that American nuclear weapons would be deployed from Britain (which became Airstrip One, as in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four). The rising opposition was reinforced by the development of the American thermonuclear bomb, then by the testing of the British bombs and finally by the NATO decision to build American thermonuclear rocket bases in Britain in 1957. The movement which had so much importance on the left in this country and so much influence on the left in other countries was fuelled by the double grievance of having our own nuclear weapons and also having American nuclear weapons based on our soil - a situation which was and still is unique. No wonder the British nuclear disarmament movement was the biggest in the world.

Organisations & actions

From the start, the campaign for nuclear disarmament tended to take two forms. There have been conventional organisations, with respectable members, formal constitutions, and orthodox activities; and there have been unconventional organisations, with disreputable members, informal constitutions and unorthodox activities. When the British Bomb was announced in 1948, prominent figures on the left made protests and left-wing Labour M Ps supported them, whereas the main pacifist body, the Peace Pledge Union, formed a Non-Violence Commission to consider direct action. While the moderate, legal campaign gradually grew during the early 1950s, an extremist, illegal campaign gradually grew up with it.

The PPU Non-Violence Commission launched "Operation Gandhi", which organised the first nuclear disarmament demonstration in Britain on 11 January 1952, when eleven people sat down outside the War Office in London. For five years the Non-Violence Commission and the Pacifist Youth Action Group built up the basic experience of such



DAZ demonstration at North Pickenham on 6 December 1958.

demonstrations, including the first one at Aldermaston in 1952, but there was virtually no impact on ordinary people. The turning-point in the public attitude to unilateralist activity came at the end of 1956 and the beginning of 1957 - the time of Suez (when the Labour Party discouraged "unconstitutional" obstruction of the British attack on Egypt), Hungary (when thousands of Communist activists found themselves in the political wilderness), and the first British nuclear tests (when the Labour Left began to consider a serious unilateralist campaign). During the following year a whole series of organisations were formed for both legal and illegal action. On one side there were the National Council for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapon Tests and the Labour H-Bomb Campaign Committee, which were superseded at the beginning of 1958 by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. On the other side there was the Emergency Committee for Direct Action Against Nuclear War, formed to support Harold and Sheila Steele's unsuccessful attempt to take a boat into the British nuclear test area, which was transformed at the end of 1957 into the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War.

The dual nature of the movement appeared at the inaugural meeting of CND, on 17 March 1958, when a large public meeting in Central Hall was followed by a small sit-down in Downing Street. And a few weeks later the first proper Aldermaston March was organised by DAC, patronised by CND, and largely supported by a mixture of old pacifists and New Leftists. For the next couple of years CND and DAC were respectively responsible for a series of legal and illegal demonstrations, of which the most striking were the Aldermaston March each Easter and the sit-downs at nuclear bases every few months.

For those who took part in these demonstrations, an impartial judgement is difficult. For the present writer, who fell in love on an early Aldermaston March and took children on the later ones, and who came to political maturity on the sit-downs, it is impossible. Instead let us recall two contemporary comments in FREEDOM. After the first Aldermaston March: "The Aldermaston March was a warm ray of sunshine because it was generated by ordinary people and reached the hearts and minds of other people along the road from London to Aldermaston and beyond" (12 April 1958). And after the sit-downs at North Pickenham: "Thirty-six hours of courageous action by forty individuals has done more to ventilate the issue than thirty-six thousand letters to Parliament. What could forty thousand individuals do?" (13 December 1958). But a more sober point was made on the earlier occasion: "Now, if we mean business, it is needful to clothe the slogans with action informed by a dispassionate examination of the problem."

A short judgement is that not enough individuals did enough things, not enough hearts and minds were reached, not enough action was informed by a dispassionate examination of the problem. But no one could say we didn't try, and anarchists tried as much as anyone to do what was needful, supporting CND in its work of education and demonstration, and supporting DAC in its work of propaganda by deed and direct action. But there were serious criticisms of both CND and DAC, and they are still relevant twenty years later.

CND was - and still is - primarily a body bringing pressure on the British Government and the Labour Party, at least in intention. It often seemed to fall into a sentimentalism as dangerous as the old pacifist sentimentalism - so that by getting rid of the British Bomb without changing anything else, we can kill people so long as we don't kill too many at once, and we can let other countries kill as many as they like as long as we don't. But CND nevertheless served - and still serves - a most useful purpose - for pacifism, despite itself, by building up mass opposition not only to the British Bomb but to all bombs and all war; and for anarchism too, even more despite itself, by building up mass opposition not only to the Warfare State but to the social system which maintains the Warfare State, and so to all states. The rank and file of CND was - and still is - more radical and militant than the leadership, so that what first began and has again begun as a campaign to make the British Government and/or the Labour Party Ban the Bomb tends to become an unwilling apprenticeship for non-violent revolution.

DAC was the true vanguard of the unilateralist movement, putting illegal non-violent action on the political map in this country. Other organisations organised bigger demonstrations, but DAC did something quite different - getting ordinary people used to the idea of not just thinking for themselves and speaking for themselves but taking drastic action for themselves. Yet the DAC demonstrations were not really "direct action" - they went further than "constitutional action", but only as far as "symbolic action". Despite all the dedication and preparation, DAC never persuaded more than about a hundred people to take part in a sit-down in England, and the attempts to organise industrial action and a Voter's Veto were equally unsuccessful. Yet the work of laying the essential foundations for effective unilateralist action should never be forgotten.

The Committee of 100

By 1960 the movement had reached an impasse, between the large numbers but moderate action of CND and the militant action but small numbers of DAC. The breakthrough was achieved by the formation of the Committee of 100 as an act of dissatisfaction with both approaches, and also as a gesture of no confidence in orthodox political action - its inaugural meeting was held in the very month of the unilateralist vote by the Labour Party Annual Conference at Scarborough, October 1960. The idea was simple - demonstrations of mass civil disobedience and non-violent direct action should be planned by a working group, approved by a committee of a hundred well-known people, and accepted by the pledges of at least two thousand people before taking place. It never happened quite like that - the working group always tended to take over, unknown people had to be added to the committee to make up the magic number and well-known people soon dropped out, the number of pledges was never as large as the target set, and the demonstrations were never as efficient or as effective as was expected - but for a year or so the Committee of 100 took the initiative in the unilateral movement. CND was officially opposed to illegal demonstrations, but much of its membership unofficially supported them, and unilateralists marched and sat without seeing any contradiction between the two forms of activity. DAC organised one more big demonstration - a march from London to the Holy Loch near Glasgow, with a large demonstration against the American Polaris submarine base - and then was absorbed by the Committee of 100.

During 1961 there were several large planned sit-downs and several small unplanned sit-downs in London, culminating in the weekend of demonstrations in Trafalgar Square and

at Holy Loch, with more than a thousand arrests, then the simultaneous sit-downs at two American bases backed by five simultaneous demonstrations at other places around the country. The demonstrators numbered in thousands and the arrests in hundreds. But the Committee had moved far too fast - its leaders were imprisoned, its membership was divided, its support was scattered. During 1962 there were several more sit-downs, but they became smaller and smaller, and so did the Committee itself. The organisation was decentralised, but the result was chaos rather than anarchy. When the Cuban crisis came, in October 1962, the unilateralist movement was helpless. During 1963 there were temporary revivals of activity, connected with such things as the Spies for Peace pamphlet on the Aldermaston March or the Greek Royal Visit. But during 1964 and 1965 the dwindling number of survivors failed to do more than organise small sit-downs or encourage various activities unconnected with nuclear disarmament, and during 1966 and 1967 fewer people were involved than before 1960. The Vietnam War drew off most of the remaining energy, and the death of the Committee of 100 in 1968 was a merciful release.

There were many anarchists in the Committee of 100 during its eight years, not because anarchists tried to infiltrate its membership as Communists infiltrated CND, but because its members tended to become anarchists as a result of their experiences. The Committee began almost as an anarchist front, and it became the most influential vehicle of libertarian thought and activity in the country. Learning to resist the Warfare State, hundreds if not thousands of people learnt to reject the state as such. To recall one more contemporary comment in FREEDOM: "There are no short-cuts to peace. There are no compromise solutions between the rulers and the ruled. The day we are in a position to influence governments, we shall also have the strength to dispense with governments" (28 March 1959). If many people resisted the appeal of either the Labour Party on the right or the Marxist sects on the left after 1968, much of the credit belongs to the work of the Committee of 100 before then. And if many people are to resist the same appeal today, the same work may have to be done again. Meanwhile many people have carried their libertarian lessons into such a activities as work, welfare education, housing, communes, prison reform and personal life. The Committee of 100, more than any formally anarchist organisation, laid the foundation for the libertarian movement of the past twenty years.

Demonstration at RSG-6 Warren Row on 13 April 1963 on back of Anarchy 29.

The end of a movement ...

The British movement for non-violent direct action against nuclear war came to an end in 1968, with the last illegal demonstrations against nuclear bases and the dissolution of the last Committee of 100 organisations. The wider unilateralist movement of course continued to exist -- the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament continued to circulate information and organise demonstrations, pacifists continued to oppose not just nuclear war but conventional war, ecologists began to oppose not just nuclear war but nuclear power too -- but the media and the masses moved on to other things. On the wider left the initiative passed to the movement against the Vietnam War, the Marxist sects, the student movement, the Northern Irish movements, the women's movement, the gay movement, squatters, drugs, everyday life -- and the movement which had seemed so important for more than a decade almost disappeared for more than a decade.

The main factors in this process were growing boredom with the very issue of nuclear war, the loss of the most prominent and courageous activists, growing impatience with methods of organisation and action demanding great patience and the failure of the unilateralists in the Labour Party and the Trade Unions to have any real or lasting effect on the policy of the new Labour Government. Harold Wilson, like Clement Attlee, came to power with the support of the Labour Left -- but, like Clement Attlee he used his power to keep the Left in its place, and followed imperialist and nuclear policies as enthusiastically as his predecessors. No wonder that one of the last demonstrations by a large number of old Committee of 100 activists was that in the Brighton church at the beginning of the Labour Party Annual Conference of 1966 and consisted of noisy and angry heckling of Harold Wilson.

For a decade the most important issues were felt to be not international but national, and to be social and economic -- unemployment and inflation -- and anti-war feeling was directed towards the conventional wars in South-East Asia and the Middle East, or the guerrilla wars in South America and Southern Africa. Most people had learnt to stop worrying and, if not to love, at least to live with the Bomb.

But it would be wrong to suppose that the movement had just failed, that nothing had been achieved Here it is worth recalling a last contemporary comment in FREEDOM. "The march is not going to change anything in the world of public affairs," it said after another Aldermaston March. "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" (4 April 1959). Thousands and thousands of people did start feeling, and thinking, and acting in the nuclear disarmament movement, and as a result they changed not only their personal history but also the world of public affairs. It affected the partial Test-Ban Treaty of 1963, whatever the politicians said and say; it affected attitudes to the Labour Party and all parties, to Parliament and the police, to law and order, to violence and non-violence, to war and peace, to reform and revolution, to socialism and anarchism, in fact to all the important questions of social and political life. It is not too much to say that a generation was changed -- and changed for the better. Now a new generation is faced with very much the same situation all over again.

So the question is whether anything has been learnt from the old nuclear disarmament movement, from 1957 to 1968, and from the period since then, from 1968 to 1980. What sort of lessons may we apply to the new nuclear disarmament movement, which has appeared during the past year or so? But first we must make it clear that we cannot lay down any line for the new movement, just as we laid down no line for the old one. We do not say we were right then or are right now. All we have is a voice, to undo all the lies which are already tying us up. And at the end of it, if there is time for an end, all we shall be able to say is that we told you so. But perhaps this time round we shall not need to do so.

...and a new beginning

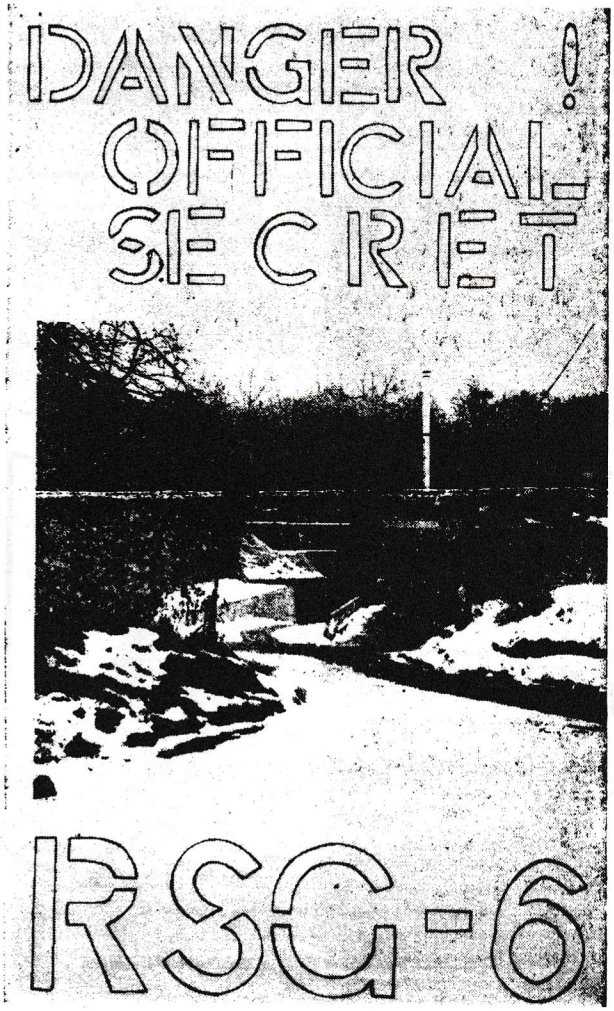
People who lived through the old nuclear disarmament tend to see the new one as a repeat performance, and the similarities certainly seem uncanny at times. There are Cruise and Trident coming instead of Thor and Polaris, the priest in charge of CND is called Kent instead of Collins, the Labour Party Annual Conference votes unilateralist by a large instead of a small majority, the man who hopes to ride the tide into Downing Street is called Benn instead of Wilson, and so on -- and such trivial differences only emphasise the parallels. Yet there are some important differences. Above all, a great deal has happened during the intervening twenty years, and it is indeed a new generation which has come forward to try again. If nothing else, we have all learnt not to believe many things.

This time no one is going to believe that demonstrations can change anything. This is true not just of conventional demonstrations but also of the most unconventional ones, not just of marches from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square or from London to Aldermaston or the other way round but also of the biggest boldest sit-down you can imagine All that demonstrations do is bring us all together and show how many we are -- a useful function but not a significant one. Too much work is done before demonstrations, and not enough after them -- but it is after we are brought and know how many we are that the real job begins. And the real job is the propaganda by deed and the direct action which change other people's hearts and mind and then change the system we are up against.

This time no one is going to believe that elections can change anything. This is true not just of Conservative victories but also of Labour victories, and even of real socialist ones. In 1964 when the old nuclear disarmament movement was still strong (or thought it was) a Labour Government was elected with a mandate to get rid of the so-called independent nuclear deterrent which the previous Labour Government had decided to develop back in 1948. But the Wilson Government didn't even get rid of Polaris. One of the last Committee of 100 demonstrations was at the launching of a Polaris submarine by Mrs Denis Healey, wife of the man who was then the Minster of Defence and is now the heir presumptive to the leadership of the Labour Party. All that elections do is to decide which political party pretends to be in charge of our safety, and plans its own. Surely no one can even pretend to believe that a short sharp campaign will win the Labour Party and the Trade Unions and commit a future Labour Government (under Healey or Benn, Foot or Shore) to real nuclear disarmment and withdrawal from nuclear alliances That illusion is gone for ever, and not even good old CND can bring it back.

This time no one is going to be frightened by slogans. We used to be asked whether we really believed that it is better to be red than dead, and we used to hesitate to answer. We can now say that of course we believe it is better to be red than dead -- like almost everyone who lives in a Communist country. While there is life there is hope for a better life More to the point, anyway we believe that it is better to be red than to kill which is what nuclear deterrence actually means. We used to shout "Ban the Bomb", but we now know that we want something much more real and radical -- to get rid of the whole system which makes and is made by the Bomb Nor is it enough to shout "Cruise Out" or "Trident Out" or any other cliche of that kind. We have learnt to make no compromises in our demands We want to get rid of the British Bomb, and the European Bombs, and the American and the Russian Bombs, and all the little bombs too and the whole apparatus of the Warfare State from bottom to top

This time no one is going to be frightened by the law We used to be told that we mustn t walk in the street, let alone sit down in it, and we had to learn the hard way to take no notice of such talk, to stand up to the police and then to sit down to them. But we also learnt the hard way not to get excited about breaking the law -- it is something which has to be done at some stage, but it has to be done with due care and attention, like everything else worth doing. One of the most valuable lessons of the old movement was that open



civil disobedience is all very well in its place, but that quiet direct action is better in most places. One of the most useful things the Spies for Peace did in 1963 was not to get caught, so that instead of wasting time and energy on trials and prisons everyone got on with the job of spreading information. As a result their sort of information now appears in left-wing papers week after week as a matter of course, which is what it should be. This is anarchy in action no matter what it calls itself, the best kind there is.

This time no one is going to care about big names We used to follow Bertrand Russell this way and that, until he forgot which way he was going himself, and we used to use Vanessa Redgrave or David Mercer until we realised they were using us. Now we listen to what E. P. Thompson has to say and we can take it or leave it alone Surely one lesson which was learnt in the 1960s and 1970s was not just Do it yourself but Think it yourself. Anarchists are lucky to have no big names, but we can still warn you -- don't listen to what we say but work it out for yourself. To do something because an anarchist says so is even worse than doing it because someone else says so, since the anarchist says you shouldn't!

This time no one is going to care too much about violence and non-violence, or about the working or the ruling class It has become altogether much simpler We must do what ever is appropriate with whoever is appropriate without too much fuss about theory or ideology. Because this time it is all or nothing, us or them. It is no time to worry about a movement, only about movement against death, for life. You have begun to act. Now think on.

NW

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Printing these articles about Aldermaston brings back memories! A personal request: does anyone know the whereabouts of a photo-collage from the first march, with a photo in one corner of a pile of CND circular placards propping up a tree with one marcher, a placard at the ready, apparently standing guard. All info, with usual reward! to: 'Ian the Printer', 22 Dane Road, Margate, Kent CT9 2AA. Tel:0843 25902.