

GCHQ Trade Unionists Support Peace

Summary of a short address given to Trades Union CND by Dave Gallop, Chair of GCHQ Trades Unions.

"I am glad to have the opportunity to address you. Whilst my colleagues at Cheltenham and the outstations have become accustomed to travelling all over the country speaking about our own campaign, we must not lose sight of the fact that there are wider issues which concern us as Trades Unionists.

"One great benefit that we have reaped from an action (the ban on the unions which the Government attempted to impose in early 1984) which at first seemed to promise only hardship and difficulties, is the widening of our horizons and the achievement of greater freedom of thought.

"The accusation could be made (although I don't have time to address this here) that before the ban, Trades Union members at GCHQ were too introspective and too easily conditioned to the rigorous security restrictions imposed by the nature of GCHQ's work. Some constraints are necessary and sensible, but on the other hand I can remember when GCHQ management felt it necessary to warn all staff of the undesirability of attending a local folk club for fear of the harm that, they said, could ensue from mixing with certain elements of society!

"My members in GCHQ Trades Unions have come a long way since then, but we suspect that many others at GCHQ who did not have the strength to join us are still living in a similar kind of self-imposed "dark age". With our stand on this matter of principle has come a much greater freedom of thought and self-expression and a concern — perhaps greater, or perhaps simply no longer unstated — for wider issues affecting society. Far from heeding unnecessary

restraints, some of our members (to give an example) openly wear and display CND emblems, or organise collections at work in support of other workers such as the miners. A small thing, perhaps, but in GCHQ pre-1984 it would have been unthinkable and moreover would have resulted in instant compulsory removal to a far-off Government department (Bootele, I recall, was for some reason the Siberian equivalent).

"The foolishness of the Government's action on 25th January 1984 can be measured by the trend towards the politicisation of civil servants, and this is true not just at GCHQ, and not only because of the ban, but in the civil service at large. I shall not attempt to speak for my members, who are of varying political persuasions (though few, if any, are now apolitical) but I can attest to a much greater political awareness amongst them and deepening affinity with sections of the population — the Silentnight workers, the printers, the journalists who have refused to be bought — with whom we have a common cause.

"Management at GCHQ has proved to be incapable of sacking those of us who refuse to accept the new, non-unioned, conditions of service. Our thanks for that go to thousands of ordinary Trades Unionists who have barred the way. But the threat is still there, and meanwhile we suffer financial and career discrimination. The struggle is worth it — with your help we shall still be there when the present Director, and Sir Robert Armstrong, and Mrs Thatcher, have gone.

"When Unions are restored, the experience and lessons of the past year will not be lost on us. Stronger Trade Unionism will emerge, the GCHQ will not be allowed to return to the introspective closed society we once took for granted."

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TUCND's AGM A report by Jimmy Barnes, Trade Union CND Secretary



RAISING FUNDS FOR RAISING ISSUES

As you will gather from our conference report and from some of the other items in this Bulletin, it is clear that we have an enormous amount of work to do. Some of this we already have planned. Our ability to do this work is related essentially to two things: the size of our organisation and the resources that we have available. In other words, the bigger we are and the more money we have available, the more effective we will be. So if you are in a position to raise with your organisation the possibility of making a donation, we would be very grateful if you would do so.

The Trade Union CND has a financial problem which is related to our growth. In a sense we are growing faster than our income can sustain. One of the ways we can resolve this problem is by increasing our rate of growth. Although our growth has created this problem, if we increase our rate, this will ease the problem considerably. One of the other things therefore that you could do to help is to raise the possibility of affiliation with any other non-affiliated Trade Union body with which you are in contact.

Work for peace. Join CND.

Yes, I'll join the CND

Name _____ (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Address _____

Post Code _____ (IMPORTANT)

MEMBERSHIP
RATES Adult £9 Two people at same address £12 Student £3
Unwaged & Pensioner £2 Youth CND (21 and under) £1 (tick one)

Please find enclosed £ _____ for membership
£ _____ donation (tick for donation receipt).

I'd like more information about CND and the Trade Unions.

My Trade Union is _____

Please send me details of how to affiliate my Union organisation to CND.

Please make cheques or postal orders payable to CND and send with completed form to
TUCND, 22-24 Underwood St., London N1 7JQ.
Telephone: 01-250 4010.



Planning for the Future

Trade Union CND held its AGM recently in London with roughly 200 people attending as delegates and as observers. The day was divided into a number of sections. Joan Ruddock opened with a general speech on the development of the peace movement. This was followed by ten workshops covering a wide range of subjects. These reflected the wide range of activity and work planned for the coming year by Trade Union CND. There is now a general feeling of enthusiasm and excitement within Trade Union CND about the rate at which we are growing and the way our work is expanding. John Edmonds, the General Secretary of GBMA-TU, spoke in the afternoon before the various reports and resolutions were taken. This fact alone, that the General Secretary of the second largest union in the country, which has not in the past had a reputation for radicalism yet is now participating enthusiastically in the work of TUCND, indicates the standing which CND has achieved within the Trade Union Movement.

We elected a greatly expanded EC of twenty five people, needed because of the rapid expansion of work that we are

planning. This year's AGM was in part a working conference and also in part symbolic of a milestone in our history. We have, until now, been working towards establishing policy within unions. To a very large extent this has been achieved, with the exception of the teachers unions and of the Electricians, all of the major unions within the TUC have adopted a policy favourable to CND. Trade Union CND are now in the process of preparing campaign work which will be undertaken within the unions themselves, around issues that relate to their own particular industries. So, for instance, amongst other initiatives, we will be discussing organising a campaign within the health service unions around civil defence. Similar campaigns have been organised in the past, but hopefully this time there will be a much greater participation by the unions in the running of the campaign itself, utilising the union's own internal communication systems. This will be the first of a series of initiatives aimed at raising nuclear disarmament issues amongst working people.

Jimmy Barnes
Trade Union CND Secretary

MOLESWORTH BLOCKADED!

Molesworth Feb 6th

Great admiration has been given to the thousands of people who faced the awful weather to take part in the Molesworth blockade. People from all walks of life travelled from all over the country, facing treacherous roads and freezing conditions, to protest against nuclear weapons and the vast amounts of money spent in the name of defence — especially in relation to the price paid by Third World countries. As a nurse and union steward, the link between death and destruction and the lack of money invested in health care is always brought to mind and forms a strong base to my personal protest. The whole day was very well organised and coordinated by CND — perhaps too well for some. Many had expected a confrontation and had gone well-prepared to be arrested and face prosecution. The police were present in large numbers but kept a low profile and were extremely pleasant and friendly. Nobody was prevented from blockading nor arrested for breaking the law. We were merely being allowed our protest without any real disruption to the machinations of war.

It was hard to feel a great sense of achievement following the day's success. The base was closed for a day by peaceful means; the media coverage brought attention to Molesworth — especially pertinent in view of the leaks from Sellafield — and the thousands there represented thousands more who recognise the insanity of places like USAF Molesworth.



Razor barbed wire, reminiscent of Fortress Wapping.

PHOTO: MELANIE FRIEND

Going to Greenham

I was delighted to receive an invitation to visit Greenham with women and miners from many coalfields led by George Bolton the Scottish NUM vice-president, to build the solidarity between the two issues.



Jean Miller, a member of Women Against Pit Closures.

On August 7th the Women's Peace March came through Barnsley. Women Against Pit Closures organised a reception. There were doubts expressed in our group about whether we should do this, that they may be lesbians, people we would not want to associate with, and so forth. On the day the importance of the two issues overrode the personal fears and the meeting helped to erase them further. Women in our group, new to the labour and trades union movement, learned from the experience and realised how important both issues

were and that we should be further building the links between them. W.A.P.C. were fighting for jobs and the Greenham women were fighting for a world without war.

We need both in order to change our country and make it fit to raise our children in. Both groups of women exchanged names, addresses and telephone numbers in order to keep in contact and develop the links. Our appetites having been whetted, some of us began to wonder what it was really like to live outside an American nuclear weapons base. Arriving around noon, we met the women, exchanged experiences, and sat talking around the fire for the afternoon.

With the miners' strike over, there was still an enormous amount of work to do in our area. Families had a year's debt to overcome and as more bills came flooding in, the need for women to support each other became greater and greater. Morale was helped greatly when we took the opportunity to visit Greenham again. This time we took food, polythene sheeting, vitamin tablets and logs for the fire. We learned more about life at the camp, about the evictions twice a day and about how they lost all their possessions. While we were there two of the women used a spade to dig the toilets for that day in the woods. Walking around the fence which had been decorated with children's clothes and toys, realised how important it was that we participate in the struggle to eliminate American nuclear weapons from our soil. We saw the soldiers inside the razor-wire fencing and admired the women who had spent long periods of time away from their families in order to protect future generations.

Women became involved in the miners' strike for many reasons, most of which arose from the necessity to feed, clothe and keep a roof over the heads of their families. Many lessons were learnt from the struggle but none more important than unity and the realisation that peace is the most important struggle of all. We will continue to be involved in that struggle.

We salute the women of Greenham.

Jean Miller,
Women Against Pit Closures

Planning for the Future

BRUCE'S LONG MARCH

Bruce Kent plans to walk from Faslane to Burghfield between June 29th and August 6th, speaking at meetings in the evening on the way. This is planned to highlight the traffic of nuclear warheads from the Polaris base in Faslane to Burghfield where the nuclear element of the warheads is refurbished. We hope to arrange it so that Bruce is greeted by Labour movement activists along the way, as well as raising money for the campaign.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Trade Union CND are planning a major campaign around Civil Defence within the Public Service Unions for the early summer. Although we have done this in the past, this time it is hoped that a great deal more activity within unions themselves will be planned.

DAY SCHOOLS

The intention is that Trade Union CND will produce packs which will include all the material needed for a local group, a Union Branch or a Trades Council to run a day school on the issues related to Peace and Disarmament. This material should be available in time for our next issue of TUCND News.

STAR WARS CONFERENCE

A joint Trade Union Conference on the economic consequences of the SDI programme is planned for June 21st. Trade Union CND may have some input in this and if you wish further details please contact Trade Union CND at the Central Office.

TRADE UNION CONFERENCES

One of the important parts of our work is making sure that Trade Union CND has a presence at the National Conferences of Unions. It would be very useful if people who are active in their unions could help us organise activity at their own union conference, especially if they themselves will be delegates.

The Basic Case material will be especially relevant to the conferences.

'I'd rather build a school, but it's this or the dole'

In mid 1985 Rose Clarke, an AUEW/TASS Branch Secretary, together with a west country Trade Union peace committee, ran a day conference on conversion. This was based on two major speakers and upon a series of workshops. The speakers were Ron Todd, General Secretary of the T&GWU, and Danny Pearson, who was until recently an AUEW/TASS convenor at the Vickers yard in Barrow.

There was a clear overall direction in both of the speakers' contributions and from the workshops. Ron Todd for instance began by demonstrating that for most ordinary working people building nuclear bases or producing weapons was not the way they wanted to spend their lives. He quoted a construction worker at Greenham Common: "I don't like what I'm doing. I'd rather build a hospital or a school, but it's this or the dole."

The bulk of the reasoning for conversion was entered upon the effect on the economy and on people's livelihoods. The scale of government spending on armaments is so large that it represents a major part of this government's spending policies. This is not only damaging the economy overall; the defence industries themselves are considerably distorted by the way this money is used. So despite the fact that spending has grown dramatically, 400,000 jobs have been lost in the defence industries since the 1960s. Defence workers also have a stake in the economy. The health, education and social welfare programmes, which defence workers and their families also need, are being destroyed to pay for the Trident and other missile programmes. Conversion, on the other hand, holds tremendous possibilities. Defence industries employ highly skilled people. These skills used elsewhere could be of tremendous value to our society. But if these skills are not redirected to work that plays a constructive role in our economy, then the future of British industry and the British people is pretty dreadful.

A full report of this conference is available and may be of use to people considering holding similar dayschools or conferences. Write to Jimmy Barnes, TUCND.

Trade Unionists Against Star Wars

A planning meeting for a conference on SDI (Star Wars) was held in the ASTMS offices on March 5th. This was called as a joint union meeting following a joint union seminar on the subject held late in 1985. Below is a list of the decisions taken at this meeting. Present were: D Dollard ASTMS, K Hopkins NALGO, S Fitsimmons FBU, J Hodder FBU, A Read UCW, B Face ACTT, M Malina TUCND, J Barnes TUCND, W Milne GMB&ATU. The meeting was chaired by J Chowcatt ASTMS.

That we try and arrange a major national conference on the effects upon the economy of the SDI programme, for the June 21st 1986 for Trade Unionists.

That we ask National Trade Unions to both sponsor this conference and to participate in its planning. This sponsorship need not imply a financial contribution but the conference would be organised under the auspices of a number of Trade Unions.

That we produce a series of factual reports for this conference on the economic consequences of the SDI programme.

That we produce leaflets and a poster for this conference and we try and have a draft of these for our next planning meeting.

That we try and hold it in Congress House.

That we try and arrange both an American speaker and a Soviet speaker at this conference.

That the next planning meeting would be at the ASTMS offices on the April 8th at 4 pm.