

There have been immense changes in international politics over the last year. These have partly resulted in there being some very serious financial problems within CND. This was the background against which this year's CND national conference took place. The theme of the conference this year was 'Seize the Moment'.

CND's officers consist of a Chair, four vice chairs and a treasurer. Only two of last years officers, Marjory Thompson the chair and Mary Brennan as vice chair, stood and were elected this year. The other's, for a variety of reasons, decided not to stand. One is about take a job in the USA and the other's wanted to spend

recently, one of CND's regional workers, Laurie Gibson was, until recently, CND's group development worker and Clair McMasters who works for Anti Apartheid and has, in the past, been one of CND's youth workers.

One motion, which was defeated heavily, was an amendment to the constitution to make individual membership of CND a precondition for attending the conference. This was opposed vociferously by delegates from trade union organisations.

On the whole, delegates left the conference feeling that CND was responding to the changing world situation and that we are an organisation capable of having a serious and positive impact on the politics of Britain in the coming year. Despite our financial problems the local groups appear to be holding well and the core membership appear to be remaining

with us. All of this demonstrates that there still a great deal of potential within the peace movement.

Traditionally CND pass a range of resolutions but vote on the priority given to each at the end of the conference. This gives a clear indication of what the conference feels should form the mainstay for work in the coming year.

The two main priorities decided at this year's national conference were;

1 Campaigning against the Trident submarines, the first of which will be named in April 1992.

2 Campaigning for the peace dividend and for arms conversion. The motion on the peace dividend and arms conversion was moved by Trade Union CND and seconded by Stevenage CND.



Graham Donning, NUCPS delegate, speaking against an amendment to the constitution

more time campaigning at a local level.

Of the new officers, Jenny Maxwell, the Treasurer, was the treasurer for West Midlands CND, Janet Bloomfield, who topped the poll was, until

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**TRIDENT...**

**"...what the bloody hell is it for?"**

Field Marshal Lord Carver



## USA AND USSR UNILATERAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT TOGETHER

George Bush announced a set of unilateral proposals to do away with a range of nuclear weapons. These were serious and significant proposals and not by any means simply cosmetic. He did so with the clear expectation that the Soviet Union would reciprocate.

He proposed to scrap plans for building and deploying the MX missile system, the mobile version of the Midgetman missile and the short range air launched cruise missile system. In



Grobachev - His lack of control of the political processes he unleashed has created a very dangerous situation.

addition, a number of older systems, such as nuclear depth charges and systems currently deployed with the US Navy (accounting for roughly 2,000 nuclear weapons), will be scrapped, as will 1,300 nuclear artillery shells and 850 Lance short range missiles.

Bush also announced that a number of systems would be 'stood down'. That is, they would be taken off permanent alert. These include the B1 and B52 strategic bomber forces and about 450 Minuteman 2 missiles. The weapons will be placed in storage.

At this stage the US Trident fleet will not be affected and nor will its further development.

### THE RESPONSE

The Soviet Union has stopped testing nuclear weapons for a year, scrapped plans for a small mobile ICBM, stopped the further development of a rail based missile system - those already deployed will be put into storage - scrapped a number of tactical sea and land based systems, such as tactical missiles and artillery shells, and removed its heavy bombers from alert.

Intensive talks were due to start immediately the first START treaty was ratified by the US, with the aim of reducing the stockpiles both sides hold by 50%. The aim would have been to bring both the US and the Soviet Union down to somewhere in the region of 6,500 nuclear weapons. However the breakup of the Soviet Union has meant that the START negotiations have stalled until such a time that the structure of the governmental relationship between the various countries in the former Soviet Union is clarified.

It is probable, however, that strident efforts will be made by the US and the new states in the former USSR to reduce their nuclear weapons. In effect they are now seen as a liability rather than bargaining chips.

### PASSING BRITAIN BY

It wouldn't be realistic now for Britain to ditch Polaris and expect something in return from the Russians or any of the other parts of the former Soviet Union. It has been clear for some time that the four Polaris submarines were more of a danger to Britain than to the Russians. In other words Britain has nothing it could include in any future bargaining process.

### UNILATERALISM

It is ironic that this type of competitive disarmament is exactly the model that CND and other peace movements in Europe have been arguing for, for 30 years and which has been persistently dismissed by a string of US administrations. It is difficult to see how it could be argued that it is valid now but would not have been over the past 3 decades.

One of the reasons for Mr Bush's 'U'turn is clearly the probable break up of the Red Army, the possibility of the nuclear weapons currently held under central control being passed on to some of the Republics and the unstable future of the whole region.

HMS Repulse, which has had only two short patrols over the past two years because of problems with the reactors, went on patrol after refitting work without a trial and is at sea at the moment. HMS Resolution is the only one of these vessel which appears not to have had major problems over the past five years and, consequently, has been doing double patrols to cover for the other boats. HMS Revenge is at Faslane undergoing refitting work and Renown is 2 years overdue from a refit at Rosyth dockyard. They have all reputedly suffered from cracks in the pipes which go from the reactor to the turbines, which caused very very serious problems. This problem is reputedly solved but some people doubt this. Because of the conditions this equipment works in - high pres-

The National Trade Union Defence Conversion Committee (NTUDCC) held a very successful conference on the 16th of November 1991 which had roughly 70 people registering for it. Most of those attending were people working in the arms industries with a smattering of people from local authorities.

The NTUDCC was set up in 1964 with Ron Todd as the first chair of the organisation. Jim Barnes, the secretary of Trade Union, CND is also secretary of the NTUDCC.

The speakers at the conference were Martin O'Neil, Labours Shadow Defence Spokesman, Peter Crompton MEP, Tim Webb, MSF national officer for Aerospace and Brian Sturtevant, CPSA national officer covering the MOD. Alec Ferry, General Secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions chaired the conference. Martin dealt with the way the proposed Defence Diversification Agency would work. He went into the basic forms of support the agency will be able to offer, outlining a number of organisations, such as local authorities and regional development bodies, which will also be involved in a package of measures aimed at resolving some of the problems for particular companies.

Peter Crompton dealt with the problems associated with European legislation. At the moment this legislation prevents EC funds being used to support arms companies. It also places

## POLARIS WHAT'S HAPPENING TO IT

sure, high temperature and nuclear radiation - the metal in the pipes appears to be crystallising, making it difficult to weld effectively. It also means that people can only work close to this equipment for short periods before reaching their maximum dose of radiation.

Nuclear submarines travel quite slowly, roughly 4 knots (walking speed), which means that it takes a week or two for them to reach their patrol areas. Because of these problems, the Navy has had to deploy boats late which, in theory, makes them vulnerable to a pre-emptive

strike. The reason for having nuclear weapons on submarines is to avoid them being vulnerable to such a strike.

The MOD also appear to be combining trials with the patrols - which may mean that they don't have enough time to check the vessel properly. The MOD appear to be trying to have at least one Polaris at sea at any one time rather than at least one on patrol.

### THE DANGER OF A REACTOR MELTDOWN

There are strong rumours that the problems with the subs are far worse

than has previously been estimated, or that the MOD are admitting to. A number of sources have reported that there are cracks in the reactor pressure vessels as well as the pipes that go from the pressure vessel to the turbines. If these began to leak to any significant degree it could result in the loss of all the coolant from the reactor and a probable meltdown. Welding work is being carried out at Faslane on the pressure vessels, which suggests that this rumour has some strength to it. It is difficult to imagine anyone irresponsible enough to put submarines to sea with such cracks in their reactor pressure vessels, but, there are strong indications that Britain is doing precisely that.

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CONVERSION AND BRITAIN'S MANUFACTURING BASE

limits on the support that member states can offer to their industries. Although, in theory, this latter legislation should mean that industry throughout Europe functions under a common legislative framework, individual countries apply this legislation in radically different ways. Britain applies the limits enthusiastically which means that far less support is offered to manufacturing industry here than is the case throughout the rest of Europe.

Tim Webb went through what has happened and what is happening to the aircraft building industry and Brian Sturtevant dealt with an often forgotten area, that of the problems facing civilian workers for the MOD and Civil Servants. 170,000 civilians are employed either by the MOD or directly by the services. Of these as many as 50,000 jobs are under threat in the next five years.

The conference dealt with ways of making possible a shift away from a de-

pendency on arms production. The problems identified which are preventing that from happening at the moment are the attitude of government towards supporting Britain's manufacturing base and the EC legislation.

In the early 80's Arms Conversion was seen as a way of dealing with the problems of individual plants. What tended to happen was that studies were done into the possibilities for individual plant, looking at the skills amongst the workforce, the equipment in the plant, the local economy of the region and a number of other factors. The intention was to look for products for which there was a need within the local economy.

It is clear now that a different approach is needed. The problems facing arms plants relate to the state of Britain's manufacturing base as a whole. The engineering industry in Britain, for instance, has to compete with companies abroad who enjoy systematic government support through a range of different mechanisms. Arms conversion will be very difficult indeed unless this imbalance is rectified. This was the basic theme the conference was called to discuss.

A full report of the contributions from the speakers together with the background material sent to delegates, will soon be available from -

NTUDCC

65 Bishops Rd

Newcastle NE15 6RY



Peter Crompton MEP, Alec Ferry and Martin O'Neil MP on the the platform of the National Conference on Britain's Manufacturing Base



## DEMONSTRATIONS PLANNED AT THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST TRIDENT

The first of Britain's Trident submarines is to be "Dunked" around the 26th of February this year, at the VSEL yard in Barrow. This means it will be put into the water to be checked and to have some work done on it and then taken out again. The VSEL yard in Barrow has a specially built ship lift so that submarines can be raised and lowered in and out of the water. Work, such as the precise positioning of the tail fins, means that the submarine has to be checked in the water before it is finally welded in position.

At another ceremony, later in 1992, it will be formally named. According to the local paper in Barrow the Queen will do this on the 7th of April 1992, although this is more likely to be the end of April. A wide range of protest activities are being planned for both of these events.

A number of major Scottish newspapers have carried a story that Trident may be cancelled by the Conservative Party should they win the next election. These quote senior naval sources as saying that they can no

The US Navy is resisting pressure to have their Trident programme scrapped altogether. It is improbable that this will happen but the pressure may have the effect of reducing the number built. That in turn will increase the cost to Britain of buying the missiles and of having them serviced in the US.

### THE LABOUR PARTY MAY REDUCE THE NUMBER OF WARHEADS

Because of the deals being done between the US and the Soviet Union over nuclear weapons, it is possible that the multiple warhead missiles deployed by the US will be phased out. Martin O'Neil, the Labour Party front bench spokesman for defence has said on a number of occasions that a Labour Government may well reduce the number of warheads carried on each of the Trident missiles Britain deploys.

However, since this will have little impact on the cost of the Trident

the nuclear materials in a warhead have a relatively short life expectancy before they cease to be able to detonate a nuclear chain reaction (nuclear explosion), therefore, bits of the warhead have to spend time in a reactor at regular intervals. All of Britain's nuclear weapons have to be transported, by road, from their storage areas to Burghfield where this takes place. The greatest number of these convoys carrying these weapons travel from the Polaris base in Faslane.

As Trident comes on stream this traffic will increase considerably - because the number of warheads will increase considerably.

This is especially dangerous because of the dangerous nature of the warhead Britain will be deploying. Some time ago the US Congress discovered that, were one of the Trident warheads to be dropped, there was a possibility that it could either explode, spreading nuclear material, or detonating a nuclear explosion. The US decided to look at ways of modifying their warheads so that this couldn't happen. Britain, however, decided to continue with the old design because of the cost involved in changing the warheads.

In the past six years, there have been at least four crashes involving nuclear weapons carriers. Recently a convoy got lost in the middle of Corbridge, Northumberland, and a nuclear weapons carrier drove into a wall. The most recent incident involving a convoy was where one broke down on the M25 causing the motorway to be blocked off, in both directions, for a couple of hours. Some reports say that this incident involved having a crane transfer a nuclear weapon from one carrier to another.

There is a growing campaign against the trafficking of Warheads with a number of people tracking, and occasionally harassing, the convoys.

If you would like further information on the campaign against the Warhead convoys, or of the demonstrations against the launch of the first British Trident submarine contact TUCND either through the national office 071 700 2393, or on 091 272 2046.

programme, it will mean that this measure is unlikely to reduce the pressure from the Royal Navy to scrap the system altogether and there is no reason to assume it will reduce pressure from the peace movement to do so either.

### TRACKING THE MISSILE CONVOYS

Currently regular convoys of nuclear weapons pass from Faslane to Burghfield to be refurbished. Some of

## THE INDUSTRIAL CASE AGAINST TRIDENT

A number of shipbuilding and heavy engineering concerns have been drawn into campaigning for building the fourth Trident Submarine, most notably the Confed in Barrow. This article is intended to set out the arguments against this approach.

The rationale adopted by the union organisations involved is, that the Trident work is far more of a possibility than any feasible alternative. There are three problems with this argument. These are:

(i) It is looking increasingly unlikely that Trident will be built (ii) That the funding for Trident when taken over its lifespan is so great that it will inevitably inhibit government funding for the alternatives.

(iii) The alternatives are a real option but will require considerable campaign work from all the trade union organisations implicated for them to be made a possibility. In essence, Trident, and the creation of possible alternatives, are not compatible.

### WORK ON TRIDENT IS INSECURE

Trident, in military terms is obsolete. It was designed to perform a function which no longer exists and advances in the technology of tracing submarines has advanced to such a degree it is unlikely that the system would be appropriate even were the cold war persisting. It isn't feasible to see it as usable for anything other than as a threat to the Soviet Union as it existed a year or two ago.

The United States is currently considering further cuts in nuclear weapons, in the hope that this will stimulate further cuts in the weapons held in parts of what used to be the Soviet Union so that these weapons are less likely to fall into the hands of unstable regimes. It is likely that the Trident programme will be affected eventually. If that happens, the cost of maintaining the four submarines held by Britain will escalate. This is one of the factors which will be being considered both within the government and the MOD.

There is, according to the press in Scotland, pressure from some leading figures in the Navy to have the whole programme scrapped. While the navy's procurement budget is being cut it is clear that continuing with the Trident programme will considerably inhibit other areas of naval procurement. It is possible, therefore, that were the Conservatives to win the next election Trident could be cancelled altogether. So, for a number of reasons, the Trident programme may not be guarantee of jobs at all.

But there is another thorn on this tree. Modern technology means that a ship can be built in a number of different places at once. There is also a trend toward greater cooperation within Europe. It is entirely feasible for a company, not necessarily one of the current shipyard managements, to be the primary contractor for work which is distributed throughout a number of yards in Europe. BAe have set up a section to do specifically that. It is likely, for instance, that the next generation of Nuclear Submarines, if they are developed, will be built in cooperation with France. That opens the options for the primary contractor even further. That means that whereas VSEL are currently virtually the only submarine builder in Britain they are not the only one in Europe. VSEL have, in real terms, lost their monopoly of a niche in the market. Even the fourth Trident will not, therefore, secure a future for the yard.

### TRIDENT INHIBITING THE ALTERNATIVE

Aside from the problems the Navy may feel it has if Trident is built and deployed, it also represents an obstacle to other work being carried out within the places currently dependent on Trident for work. A rough estimate of the cost of running a warship is that it will take roughly twice the original cost of the vessel over a 20 year period. Polaris, on the other hand, has had specific problems associated with it in trying to keep the reactors safe. It would be a fair estimate that Trident could cost 50 billion (at current prices) over 20 years

rather than the 10 normally quoted by the government as the cost of building it.

The real alternative to building warships in yards such as Barrow and Camel Laird, is building merchant ships. However, this would mean competing with other shipbuilding nations who support their industries in a number of different ways. This could account for as much as 20% off the final price of the vessel. For Britain to compete in this market would require systematic intervention on the part of government on a par with our competitors. Were a quarter the probable cost of Trident put into merchant shipbuilding it would push Britain into a position where no one in the world would be able to compete with our domestic shipbuilding industry.

This is true of military spending overall. The massive funds pumped into the military by Britain directly inhibiting investment into what are now more commercially viable civil manufacturing areas.

### THE ALTERNATIVE

The Financial Times recently devoted a special section to the shipbuilding industry throughout the world and the way in which the market was changing. It drew the conclusion that there is likely to be a sustained growth in shipbuilding over the next ten years at least. British Shipping, the British ship owners organisation, estimate that 80% of the British merchant fleet will need to be replaced over the next ten years. The EC estimate that there will be a considerable shortfall in Shipbuilding capacity within the EC over the next ten years. In other words there is a market for merchant vessels in Britain, for the EC and for the world as a whole.

However, getting to a position where our industry can match the market will require a radically different attitude and a great deal of money from our government. That will need to be campaigned for.

Continued P6



A convoy of nuclear weapons entering Newcastle Upon Tyne recently, on route to Burghfield.

longer see a role for such a system and that it should be scrapped altogether. They also quote the same sources as saying that the overall cost of Trident, taken over its probable working life, would be closer to 200 billion rather than the 10 billion normally quoted by the Government as the cost of building Trident in the first place. If these press stories are at all accurate, then Trident will be a major burden on the Royal Navy's budget over the next 20 or so years and so opposition from the Navy would be natural in those circumstances.



## UNIONS COMPETING

At the moment the VSEL in Barrow have, in their projections for the next ten years cycle of work, building type 23 destroyers, refitting work on Trident and manufacturing Howitzers. Swan Hunter in Newcastle and Yarrow in Glasgow also have the type 23 destroyers in their estimate of what they will be doing in the next ten years. Rosyth and Devonport also believe that refitting work will be carried out in their yards. Some of them will go to the wall unless other work is found. It is almost inevitable that the trade unions involved in the yards will be drawn into campaigning for the plans the employers have defined. We therefore face the reduction of warship-building over the next five years and a consequent reduction of jobs from 22,000 to probably less than 8,000. This will result in the trade union organisation in the various yards, in effect, competing against each other for an extremely limited amount of work.

Were the resources for political campaigning, represented in the warship yard union organisations, to be concentrated on changing government attitudes to civilian shipbuilding, they could create a long term future for their industry and preserve skills and an important section of our manufacturing base.

## MERSEYWATCH

(The Merseyside Alliance for a clean Mersey and Irish Sea)

The Inaugural meeting of the above organisation took place at the Trade Union Resource Centre in Liverpool recently, following a conference earlier in the year of interested parties. The meeting was attended by a broad range of people, some attending as individuals and others representing groups concerned with environmental issues.

The meeting approved a constitution which set out the aims of the new organisation, which were to work towards zero emissions of toxic waste, sewage and radioactive pollutants into the Irish Sea, Mersey Basin and bordering coastline, by the following means:

- Building awareness among the public and relevant organisation of the pollution which is currently taking place around the Region;
- Assisting as far as possible in monitoring the extent of such pollution;
- Promoting and supporting measures to reduce the extent of that pollution, as far as possible.

It is intended that in support of these aims, MERSEYWATCH, will engage in activities which will make repre-

sentations to local and national authorities and industries, promote alternative technologies, producing news-letters and leaflets, address outside bodies, develop links with other similar campaigning groups and take direct action in order to highlight environmental concerns.

It is proposed that these activities should be carried out through sub-groups covering a) Toxic Waste, b) Radioactive Pollution, c) Sewage and d) Waste Pollution (including incineration)

There has been close co-operation with TEESWATCH (a similar organisation already established on Teeside), and with Greenpeace nationally, and this cooperation will, we feel sure, continue. It was also agreed that the group should affiliate to Campaign Against Toxins (CATS) which is the national umbrella organisation coordinating the activities of such groups.

It is confidently expected that local trade unions will play a prominent role in the work of the organisation. A number of union branches have already affiliated, together with two Trades Councils and Merseyside Action For Peace/TUCND.

The contact for this group is Ms V Strattan, 26 Trevor Dr, Gt Crosby, Liverpool, L23 2RW

encircle some 80% of the disputed territory. These barriers are protected by barbed wire mines and sophisticated early warning systems. In the meantime, Polisario has continued a war of attrition waged from the refugee camps, undermining the morale of the superior Moroccan forces. Also, it has sapped the financial resources of Morocco, with combined military and civil costs of the occupation estimated at more than 200 million per year. Ironically, it has been generous aid from Morocco's main ally, Saudi Arabia, which has made this burden much easier to bear, although Morocco has been forced during the 1980's to renegotiate its foreign loans.

Morocco's military superiority has not been matched, however, in the diplomatic arena and Polisario has been able to gain international support and recognition for its state, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). The major success of Polisario was to achieve recognition from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1980, which led to the withdrawal from OAU of Morocco.

Further movements towards a diplomatic solution to the conflict began in 1987 with the visit of a UN Technical Mission to the Western Sahara. This was the beginning of a concerted diplomatic pressure on Morocco, and, after years of refusing to even recognise Polisario, Morocco

finally agreed in August 1988 to the principle of a referendum on self-determination. The principle of the plan for a referendum was then enshrined in UN resolution 658 (1990).

The Gulf War stopped the peace plan in its tracks, but the end of the war led to new progress. At the end of April 1991, the timetable for a referendum was established. It began on May 17th. This timetable envisages a ceasefire (which has been effective from the 6th of September), the compilation of the electoral register (a complicated process using the old Spanish colonial census of 1974 as its base) and the return of 160,000 Sahrawi refugees from their camps to their homeland. The referendum will then take place in February 1992.

For the Polisario Front, this marks the final stage in a long struggle to achieve self-determination. The next months will be a very demanding period, since Polisario will have to fight a difficult referendum campaign against an entrenched and powerful Moroccan presence which will be trying to convince the electorate of integration into 'Greater Morocco'.

Already, there have been dangerous developments, with the unprovoked attack by the Moroccan airforce of the Southern oasis of Tifariti in late August and the incomplete release of information by Morocco about Sahrawi prisoners and 'disappeared'.

Given these conditions, support for Polisario at this time is vital, and to achieve this, a committee has been set up in this country to monitor the UN peace plan. The labour movement has an important role to play in the work of the committee, and resolutions which have been passed in support of the Sahrawi people, both at Labour Party Conference and various union conferences, must now be translated into practical support. Media coverage has been particularly poor and the issue deserves a much higher profile. Vigilance must be maintained to ensure that Morocco does not exploit its hold over the Western Sahara and engage in unscrupulous tactics in the run up to the referendum.

Also, financial support must be given to Polisario, ensuring that an independence campaign can be waged on an equal footing with the integration campaign which will be fought by King Hassan. Our solidarity and practical support in the UK will parallel the activities of support groups world wide. It is also hoped that a team of independent observers will go from Britain to see first hand the operation of the referendum.

With our support, Polisario will win and the Sahrawi people will finally achieve peace and justice in their own state - the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

## WESTERN SAHARA - THE PEACE PROCESS BEGINS

By Martin Hughes, Deputy Director of War On Want.

The Gulf crisis led to a huge scale response against Iraq, yet, there have been a whole series of similar breaches of international law which did not result in anything like a 'Desert Storm' operation.

One of the many aggressions by one country against another, which has been highlighted as an 'unpunished' breach of international law, was that of Morocco against the Sahrawi people of north west Africa. The fact that Morocco has been able to maintain a long period of occupation of another country, made its key strategic support for action against Iraq particularly irreconcilable.

There have been a number of resolutions passed by the UN (1966, 1972 and 1973) which recognised the right of the Sahrawis to independence and had established the case for a referendum on self determination in the territory of the Western (formerly Spanish) Sahara. The International Court of Justice had ruled against Morocco's claim to the territory in the latter part of 1975. Meanwhile Morocco's direct response to the ICJ ruling was to launch a 'Saddam style' invasion after the withdrawal of the Spanish colonial administration. Presented with a fait accompli of 350,000 Moroccans occupying the territory, in what became known as the 'Green March', Spain drew up a secret agreement with Morocco, the UN was

powerless to act. Thus began the struggle for the Western Sahara.

Prior to the Moroccan invasion, the Sahrawi national independence movement had been galvanised by the Polisario Front (Frente Popular para la Liberacion de Saguia El Hasmra y Rio de Oro), which was formed in 1973. Since the invasion by Morocco, Polisario has been waging a war of liberation. Thousands of Sahrawis live in a harsh desert exile, in refugee camps based in south western Algeria, forced out of their own country by the cluster bombs and napalm of the Moroccan air force.

The military struggle has been in stalemate for some time, since Morocco built its own version of the Berlin Wall - a series of sand barriers which



A refugee camp in South West Algeria