

NOTTINGHAM CND

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SPRING 1997

TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE?

that is the question

FOR WHOM

this is a more

urgent question



To vote or not to vote ----- YES! YES!! YES!!! the right to vote was most tenaciously fought for, particularly for the right of women to vote. Not to vote is perhaps the last right in a democracy, but to do so would let the politicians think that we were satisfied with the conditions which they are imposing upon us OR that we were mere zombies who will take anything.

I first voted in 1940, but this time I find it very hard to make a decision upon where to put the cross, though very cross I am at the impositions being slowly put upon us. This would be the time for the Green Party to be making headway as a viable protest party.

Some of our members have interviewed several of the candidates in this area and we are offering our combined efforts for your interpretations. This information, along with your knowledge of the candidates, allied to similar issues - the arms trade: elimination of land-mines; environmental issues etc. may perhaps help you in your choice.

ABOVE ALL ELSE DO USE YOUR VOTE.

D. Gower.

A General Election Lobby

in Broxtowe

Six months after receiving a General Election lobby pack from CND, we finally got around to using it. We arranged to see Broxtowe's Conservative MP Jim Lester and his Labour challenger Nick Palmer on March 22nd.

First we went to see Jim Lester at Winston Churchill House in Beeston. Jim has been Broxtowe MP for many years and is a 'wet', pro-Europe Tory with an interest in Third World issues. He sits on the Foreign Affairs Select Committee which recently looked at weapons of mass destruction, so he is fairly knowledgeable about defence issues (and difficult to argue against!).

Jim said that he feels that Trident is of declining value as a deterrent. He told us that there is a firm Conservative commitment to move to negotiate away nuclear weapons, and although we would have some reservations as to the urgency of his party's commitment, he seemed genuinely to believe in this goal. Indeed, he said that since the last time we had lobbied him a couple of years ago, he is now more optimistic about the feasibility of a nuclear weapons free world although it would require strong treaties and a stronger United Nations. He feels that the process is moving in the right direction and in time - when numbers of American and Russian weapons come down to our level - UK weapons would enter the negotiations. He doesn't think that our lack of movement on nuclear weapons reduction is a problem with non-nuclear weapons states on the whole, although he did agree that it might make a difference to threshold states like India. His (almost) final words were that since the demonstrations against Cruise in the 80s "we have moved dramatically in the right direction and I want it to continue".

Later in the day we had a visit at home from Nick Palmer, the Labour candidate in Broxtowe. He is a businessman who has recently worked in Switzerland and was sufficiently impressive to be chosen as Labour's challenger ahead of other local candidates. (Labour requires an 8% swing to take Broxtowe and the local party feels it has a good chance.) Nick told us he is a former CND member, and retains an interest in the issues.

Nick said he doesn't see Trident as a deterrent any more. He told us that Labour is committed to reducing Britain's nuclear deterrent in line with (ie in same proportion to) reductions in other countries which differs from the Conservative line of waiting for other states to reduce to our levels before joining the process. He said that Labour is committed to a defence review in which he would favour reduced defence spending and would take "an energetic line" on nuclear disarmament. He looked at CND's "10 Steps to Disarmament" sheet and agreed they were largely feasible with one or two sticky points. Finally he said that, if elected, he would be interested in reporting back on parliamentary business to local groups like Nottingham CND which could chivvy him on certain issues. He believes that CND has a vital role to play in its ongoing attempts to persuade the general public that nuclear disarmament is the obvious next step.

In Nottingham East:

John Heppell - Labour - is personally against retaining the Trident missile but points out that he was elected on the Labour programme and will abide by the opinion of the most of the electorate. Is in favour of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; Missile Material Cut-off Convention and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Expressed great concern at the export of arms and weapons of torture, particularly to countries with a bad human rights record and is in favour of a ban on land-mines.

Andrew Rade - Conservative
Kevin Mulloy - Liberal Democrat

Neither have responded to an invitation to a meeting to discuss nuclear issues.

In Nottingham South:

Alan Simpson - Labour Does not see any justification for retaining the Trident project. Apart from financially it is also morally unjustified.

He is in favour of an immediate ban on land-mines and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; Missile Material Cut-Off Convention and the Non-Proliferation Treaty and thinks that Britain should be taking more positive action to bring these treaties into being. He thinks that the use of Lazer weapons are equally as destructive as nuclear weapons.

Brian Kirsch - Conservative
Gary Long - Liberal Democrat

Neither have yet replied to an invitation to discuss nuclear issues.

In Sherwood:

Paddy Tipping - Labour Personally against the use of Trident, but feels that the Labour Party should follow the wishes of the majority of the electorate.

He is in favour of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; Missile Material Cut-off Convention and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Conservative and Liberal Democrat candidates have so far not responded to an invitation to discuss nuclear issues.

in Rushcliffe:

CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT - LOBBYING OF PARLIAMENTARY
CANDIDATES

I have interviewed the candidates for the Rushcliffe constituency and reminded them of the continuing concern about nuclear weapons.

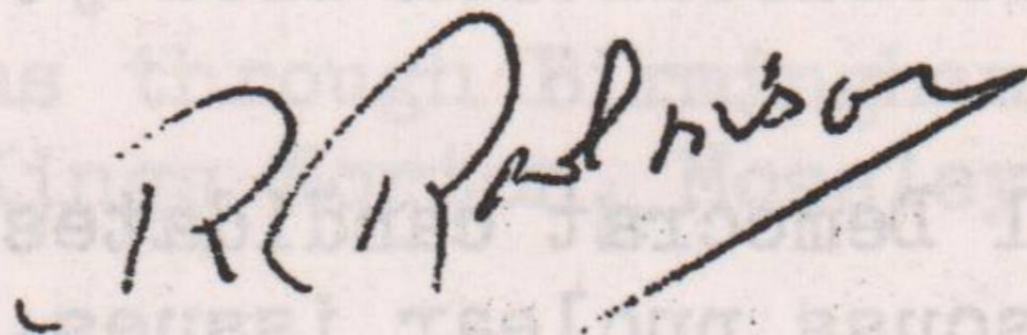
I found the views of all three candidates to be much the same. Kenneth Clarke Q.C. M.P. Chancellor of the Exchequer :-
" I do think that we need to retain a nuclear capacity in our defence for — the foreseeable future."

Jocelyn Pettitt, Chair of Broxstowe Labour Constituency and the local branch of the Labour Party - "In the present climate Trident is essential for Britain's defence."

Samuel Boote, Liberal Democrat. Member of Keyworth Parish Council and of Rushcliffe Liberal Democrats. - " I do not regard Trident as being strictly necessary for Britain's defence but would not rule out its becoming necessary in the event of a future conflict." - " Trident should be restricted to three warheads per missile."

All three indicated their support for negotiations and eventual ratification of : The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Missile Material Cut-Off Convention and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They all agreed with cooperation with France over nuclear matters. Mr Boote thought the two countries should operate joint patrols.. all were opposed to a European nuclear force. Labour and the Liberal Democrats believe that any defence review by the next government should include the question of whether nuclear weapons are still needed or not. The Conservatives seem less clear on this.

Roger Rawlinson.



p.s. Since this was written Roger has received a letter from Jocelyn Pettitt in which she states 'that Labour is committed to a nuclear free world' and will work for a freeze on nuclear warhead numbers; a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a negotiated, multi-lateral no first use agreement

Political Public Meeting:

Six members of Nottingham CND attended a public meeting organized by Nottingham Real World Coalition, on April 4th. The aim of the meeting was for members of the audience to question a panel, representing the three main political parties, on Real World's Action Programme for Government.

Mark Simmonds from Ashfield represented the Conservative Party. Kevin Mulloy represented East Nottingham for the Liberal Democrats. John Heppell represented East Nottingham for the Labour Party for the first part of the meeting and was then replaced by Nick Palmer who is contesting Broxtowe.

John Heppell spoke effectively for progressive proposals, winning active support for a number of points that he raised.

The meeting was attended by about 50 persons. There were twelve key policies from the Action programme - ranging from public investment to creating work opportunities, ecological issues, restructuring of the tax system, a Bill of Rights, through to housing and transport strategies and strategies to increase consumption of fresh, nutritious food. There was just one point on an enforceable code of conduct on international arms sales and incorporating a ban on the manufacture, stock piling, export and use of anti-personal mines - no mention of banning Trident.

Members of the audience were allowed one question on one of the twelve points, plus a supplementary question. By this means the meeting was able to cover quite a bit of the ground, although audience frustration was evident more than once when people were not allowed to challenge some of the speaker's more outrageous statements.

On CND's behalf I asked the panel what they thought the code of conduct on international arms sales should incorporate, and were members of the panel in favour of a total land mines ban?

The Liberal Democrat said yes, he was in favour of a complete land-mines ban. But on arms sales he felt it was important to understand the domestic situation in the country wanting the arms and to be sure that we were not fuelling internal conflict but at the same time we must not hamper our own arms industry and put people's jobs at risk.

The Tory said that he also was in favour of a ban on land-mines but we still want arms for defence - quoting Irac as a example - and he too waived the bogey of unemployment of arms workers.

Labour attacked the others for using the excuse 'if we refuse to sell arms then someone else will' as a reason for being less than forthright over banning arms sales and said that we should be setting the pace on seeking arms reduction, and that Labour would set up a Ministerial post for arms conversion. He also was in favour of a complete ban on land-mines.

For our supplementary question Doreen asked the panel if they were in favour of cancelling the 'Trident programme' pointing out the number of times during the meeting the lack of money and resources for reform had been mentioned, and the billions of pounds that would be released if Trident were cancelled.

The Tory claimed that our nuclear 'defence' had kept us secure all these years; the threat from rogue states, including the former Soviet states, still existed and that he thought that money spent on nuclear defence was money well spent and that Trident was defending our shores.

The Liberal Democrat replied in similar vein also saying that the money had already been spent so cancelling now would give no financial benefit...it (the nuclear issue) was just water under the bridge.

Labour's Nick Palmer in some ways gave the worst answer of all. He recalled that Labour had only recently changed its attitude on Trident and said that they had to think about it carefully and be aware of what people are willing to accept. Labour has lost the last three elections and they need a policy which will reassure voters who have doubts. Most persons want us to keep Trident.

It seems quite clear that the questions of Trident and nuclear arms is only to be kept on the election agenda if CND make sure that it does. Because CND were present at this meeting it not only made sure Trident was discussed, but enabled another member of the audience to refer to this issue.

In the final summing up the Tory candidate was very patronizing by saying that their had been a good variety of questions and that he had not expected to hear such intelligent questions.....does our case rest?

Marguerite Oldham.

TRIDENT:

Of the 4 Trident submarines, Vanguard and Victorious are already patrolling, Vigilant will conduct missile tests this summer and Vengeance becomes sea-borne and the end of the year.

One Trident submarine is to be at sea at all times and the Commanders are ordered to:

remain undected:

keep in constant communications:

be at 15 minutes notice to fire.

the MoD has refused to disclose the cost of the Trident refit docks in Devonport, but it is thought to be \$360 million - about £60 million over the original budget. Meanwhile the husks of nuclear submarines rot in the Firth of Forth. Originally they were to be cut into pieces and stored in the Nirex dump in Cumbria....but now what?

Transport of Nuclear Material;

The protestors at Gorleben, site of a nuclear repository in Germany, has successfully thrust the matter of the transport of nuclear material into the public conscience, but what did our media tell of 'Operation Braveheart' in which 50 Nukewatchers near Newcastle delayed for 90 minutes a 1 warhead convoy bound for Coulport? It received local coverage, but nothing nationally. Many of the protestors were Scots demanding a nuclear-free Scotland. Protestors chained themselves to vehicles and climbed over the cabs.

A train with nuclear material runs through Birmingham on Thursday, coming through Cheltenham, Bromsgrove, Kings Norton, Moseley, Small Heath and Sutton Park to Bescot sidings.

Plutonium is transported to and from Wick and Carlisle airports, neither of which has radar. It is alarming to read that new packaging 'shall be so designed that it is unlikely to release its radioactive contents ; lose its shielding integrity in accident conditions of transport, including those associated with the air mode'



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ALMONDS and RAISINS:

The bitter almond is hearing that Barbara Lacey, one of our earliest and most supportive members, has had a severe illness. She is now recovering at home. We all hope that Barbara will be completely well again soon.

and the Raisins -

welcome to Danial - another son for Hilary and Pete Strauss and a brother to Holly and Albert Jaboc

and to Sam - another son for Janet & John Mitchell and a brother to Ben.

some babies choose wise parents don't they?

crisis

Anne Mitchell who has been in charge of the stall for some time is having to take a prolonged rest on Doctor's orders and this is putting a greater strain on already overstretched personnel.

Please can anybody take over help with the stall....or on any other front.

Anne has worked hard and long and obtained a few extra contacts for the purchase of goods for sale. The stall is our lone public face.....can't someone give it a facelift? please.....

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25 February 1997

To: The Parliamentary Candidate, General Election, 1997

STATEMENT ON THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS SIGNED BY 62 TOP LEVEL OFFICERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF 16 COUNTRIES

I send you the attachment as it is important that you should be aware of its contents.

This Statement by former top level officers of the Armed Forces on the elimination of nuclear weapons is unprecedented and immensely important. It has been signed by 62 officers from 16 countries, including three former Supreme Allied Commanders Europe - Generals Andrew Goodpastor, John Galvin and Bernard Rogers - General Lee Butler, former Commander in Chief, US Strategic Command, and by General Lebed, until recently Secretary of Russia's Security Council.

The Generals and Admirals who signed the Statement call for the elimination of nuclear weapons on the grounds that their continued existence constitutes an ever present peril to global peace and security and to the safety and survival of the human race.

In formulating their opinion they say that while ultimate nuclear disarmament may be some years away, there are immediate steps which can be undertaken now with progressive steps to follow. They set these out in three phases.

In conclusion, they state "We have been presented with a challenge of the highest possible historic importance: the creation of a nuclear weapon-free world."

I urge you to read this Statement carefully and take particular note of those who signed it - not just their names and ranks, but the appointments they held on their retirement from their national armed forces.

This Statement is going to all the parliamentary candidates of the three main political parties and other national parties so that there may be a comprehensive knowledge of its contents throughout the Membership of the next House of Commons.

Thank you.

Michael Harbottle