

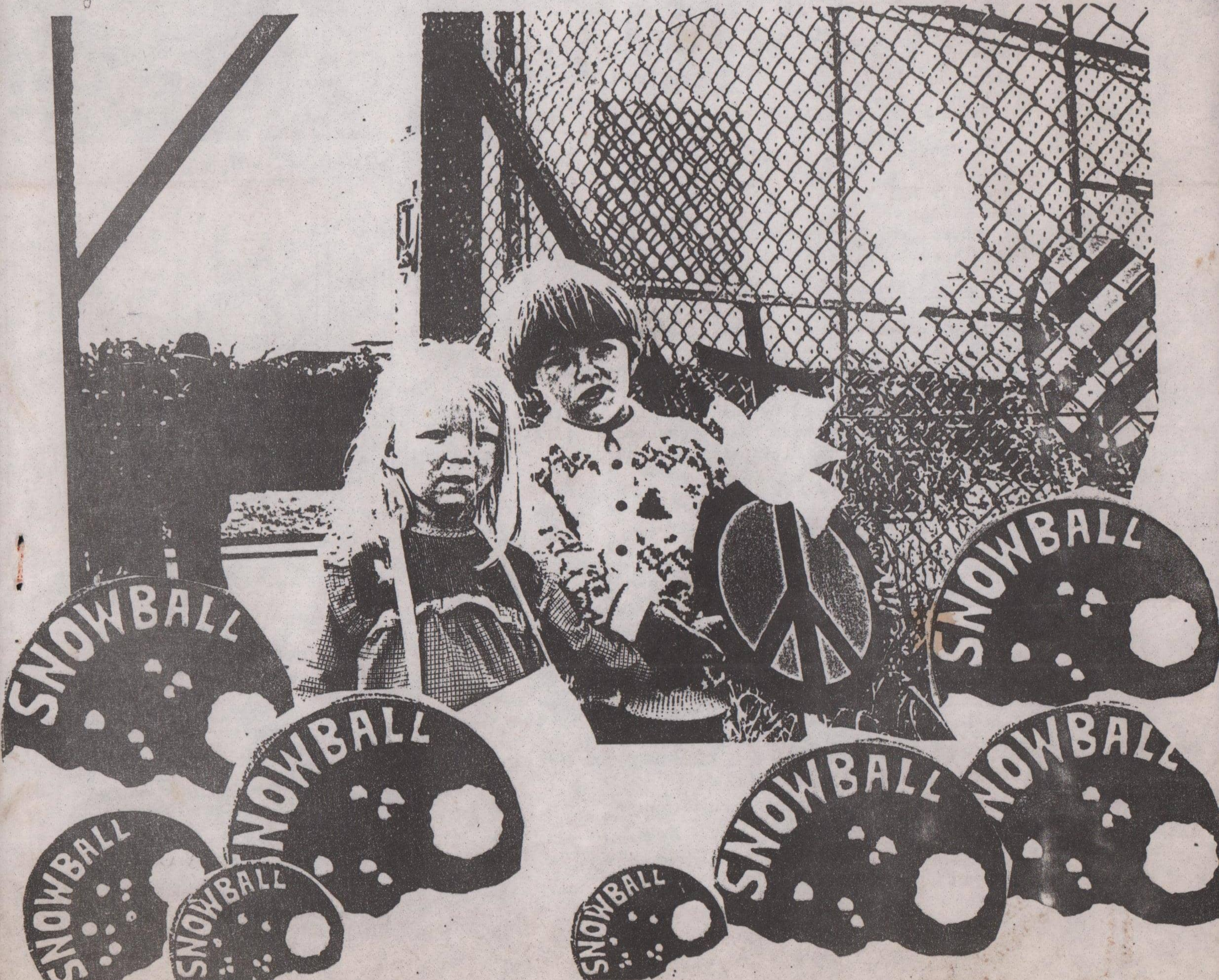
Capenhurst Snowball

NEWSLETTER

No. II



SPECIAL "3 years Campaigning" edition!



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Thanks to everyone who helped to make the 11th Capenhurst Snowball on July 3rd such a success. The weather was perfect. It was good to see so many there, particularly the children. Tables and chairs were set up in the Visitors' Car Park. There were plenty of strawberries and cream, cakes and sandwiches for everyone. While people ate there were readings on Peace issues, then the fence was decorated with banners, slogans and messages.



COURT NEWS

Recent Cases: April Snowball Trials.

6th June; Rowena Thomas	Fine-£100	Costs £45	Comp. £12.28
20th June: Graham Thorne	Fine £100	Costs £50	Comp. £12.28
27th June: Janet Tyrrell	Fine £100	Costs £20	Comp. -
29th June: Jean Oliver	Fine £125	Costs £73	Comp. £12.28
1st July: Sue Coppell	Fine £50	Costs £35	Comp. £12.28
1st July: Patricia Pulham	Fine £100	Costs £35	Comp £12.28

Fines Default.

16th June: Patricia Pulham 30 days imprisonment; served at Risley and Drake Hall. Thanks for letters and cards.

8th July: Ken Worthy Attachment of earnings order made against teacher's pension.

11th July: Julia Gallagher visited by Bailiffs. Refused transfer of property letter, saying this should have been presented at first fines hearing, and threatened to take car. Fine paid under duress. (We need legal guidance on the powers of bailiffs)

A number of other Snowball cases have been heard since the above list was issued and this newsletter going to print, including Rowenna Thomas 29.9.88 Jan Sear 30.9.88 and others.

Support in court, please for:
Patricia Pulham - Wed. Oct. 12
also

Margaret and Bridget ('prisoner in a cage')
Roberts on 3.11.88
all at Chester Magistrates Court.
(please confirm there have been no adjournments before you set out to support)

Grin and Bear It



"If the undecided ever make up their minds, they could rule the world."

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N-plant closure call
CND officials called last night for the closure of the Capenhurst nuclear processing plant, near Chester, after British Nuclear Fuels Ltd had admitted two leaks of highly toxic hydrofluoric acid gas. BNFL said the plant was perfectly safe.

Guardian
16.2.88.

SNOWBALL FUNDS (Loadsamoney!)

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Many, many thanks to all who responded to the appeal for funds in the last issue of the newsletter. Patricia reports that the Peace Lobby fund is now much healthier and that there have been a number of generous anonymous donations as well as some very welcome cheques from, amongst others, Merseyside CND, Oswestry Nuclear Disarmament Group and Shrewsbury Peace Group. Also thanks to Bill and Eileen Westall, Carol Milner and to Judy, whose husband is an ex-employee at BNF Capenhurst.

Your very welcome "dosh" will go towards Snowball expenses - printing, publicity etc; travelling expenses (some Snowballers travel miles to do it - and then have to travel miles again to answer in court)

Whilst most of us pay off fines to the court - or as in some cases just costs - in "easy payment" stages, and whilst others pay nothing at all and choose prison, it is important to have an emergency fund of money for individuals to draw on in a crisis, (ie when for family or health reasons they cannot complete an intended prison sentence) or when they find that their fines are multiplying at such a rate that it is impossible to avoid a prison sentence without paying off a lump sum. No-one in Snowball goes to prison against their wishes - they do so by choice.

There are those who tell us that it is wrong to pay even costs to the court, for in so doing one is contributing to an immoral authority, and therefore, they tell us, the Snowball action can only be valid if everyone taking part goes to prison. Well, the truth is that had prison been a prerequisite for joining in the campaign then it is very doubtful whether the Snowball would ever have got rolling. The Snowball Campaign was never intended to be a beginners guide to martyrdom! Conversely, had not so many snowballers accepted the option of prison, then similarly, the campaign would likely have ground to a halt.

The Snowball keeps rollin' through your support. Thank you.



Whilst the preliminary processing was taking place inside BNF Capenhurst, our answer to Wimbledon - the Snowball Tennis Tournament took place! Picture shows Hope Warner with partner Sabine Fisseler from Germany, Hugh Brown (with hat) umpiring, and snowball children assisting as ball-boys! The game was concluded by a 'balls over the fence' action, with 'hundreds' of message-bearing paper tennis balls being flung over the heads of the police spectators!

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THE SNOWBALLING OF SNOWBALL

By the time you read this newsletter the Capenhurst Snowballers will have celebrated three years of campaigning at BNF's uranium enrichment plant.

The national Snowball Campaign began in October 1984 at Sculthorpe, and since that first snip of the wire which set the Snowball rolling it is estimated that more than 3,000 subsequent "snips" have been made in this non-violent direct action protest which has taken place at nuclear/military establishments all over England, Scotland and Wales.

As a result of the unwillingness of the majority of those who work in the British legal system to acknowledge that part of international and domestic law relating to war (including the UN Charter of 1945, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and the Genocide Act itself (1969)), many snowballers have suffered swingingly harsh fines, the intrusion of bailiffs, and some, very courageously, have even taken their protest to prison with them.

At the September planning meeting snowballers took stock and examined the successes and failures of the Snowball Campaign.

What has Snowball achieved? The first Cruise missiles have left Molesworth, but this Government had nothing to do with the decision to remove them. The "demand" of the Snowball Campaign is that our government should take an independent step towards nuclear disarmament. Instead we find that Government urging for replacement nuclear missiles (sea-launched and air-launched). The NATO Nuclear Planning Group recently reaffirmed its endorsement of development by the US of a new missile "for delivery of theatre nuclear weapons as a follow-on to the new Lance missile, with a view towards an eventual decision on deployment of such a follow-on missile". Clearly Snowball has not yet achieved that first step towards stopping the Arms Race!

If one examines the Snowball Campaign in terms of growth of numbers of people taking part in the actions, then it has to be admitted that the numbers of "cutters" started to diminish some time ago, although the new locations for actions continued to grow. It is acknowledged with sadness that had the numbers continued to grow, then the dream of the non-violent revolution would have come true.

It is now possible to see in which way the Snowball can continue to grow and in which direction it is travelling. The individuals who have taken part in, or who have actively supported the Snowball have grown within themselves. They now have far greater knowledge of the nuclear weapons/power industry. Whilst campaigning for the abolition of nuclear weapons (starting with our own backyard) it has been impossible to ignore what has been observed in the destructive process of the production of these weapons. It is very apparent that the actual use of these weapons in the "theatre of war" is not the only means by which these weapons can destroy us. They are destroying us now. They destroy us a) physically - much new information is being gathered on "safe" doses of radiation which it would seem have been alarmingly overestimated.

b) Morally - the lies and cover-ups in places high and low.

c) Spiritually - how can the human psyche develop in such a physically and morally diseased environment?

Most snowballers, when not actually cutting the wire, have felt compelled to examine one or more of these areas of nuclear destruction for themselves with the result that the clear outline of the Snowball is not now so sharply defined as it was originally. There has been a considerable amount of spontaneous cohesion with other campaigns circling around BNF Capenhurst, for example with the Friday Vigil to name just one. It is obvious that the time has come for some re-grouping, and from information coming in now it would seem that this is what is happening with snowballers nationally.

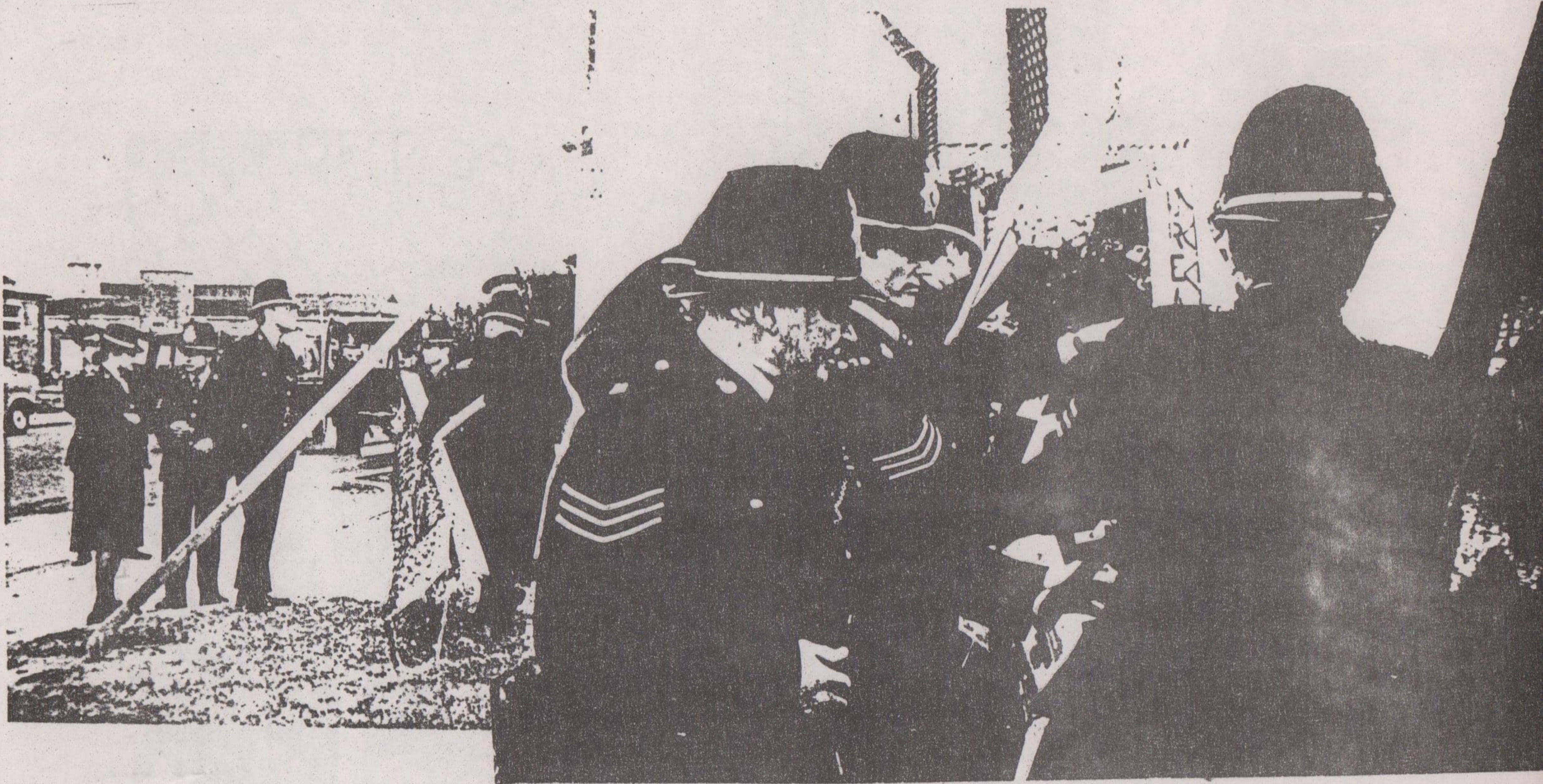
Much snowball "work" is done "behind the scenes" in the important areas of investigation and information. It is in these areas that a whole new network seems to be forming nationally, with Wylfa B, Trawsfynydd, Hinckley C and Capenhurst just four strands in the net.

There are those who as a result of their snowball actions have been shocked by their experiences of the legal system. For them, justice is a sham, and their energies will be directed towards exposing the present perversion of justice in the courts.

The original open witness for peace action, which is the very essence of Snowball, will continue. To "cut and tell" is in itself a very personally empowering action. To take that action to its ultimate conclusion and accept the loss of ones liberty for a period of time is publicly empowering. When that loss of liberty takes up a good part of a lifetime - as with Helen Woodson - then it becomes a gift to humanity.

After the mass protests and gatherings at Greenham, women passed on what they had learned around the wire and "carried Greenham Home". And now, the Snowball will "keep on rollin'".

JULIA



Energy Department Faulted on Dealing With Nuclear Waste

By KEITH SCHNEIDER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 6 — Enormous amounts of radioactive wastes from the Energy Department's plants and laboratories for making nuclear weapons have contaminated burial sites and polluted underground water reservoirs across the country, according to a new study by an environmental group.

The study, "Deadly Defense — Military Radioactive Landfills," was made public today by the group, based in New York City, Radioactive Waste Campaign. Many authorities consider it to be the most thorough compendium of the problems the Department of Energy has encountered in recent years in managing the enormous stockpile of liquid and solid radioactive wastes produced over the last five decades by its 13-state network of weapons plants and laboratories.

"It is one of the great ironies of our age," said the report's authors. "In the name of protecting our national security and well-being, we are poisoning ourselves."

There was no immediate response from the Energy Department.

Problems Known in Past

Officials of the department, which manages the 19 installations that make up the nuclear weapon production network, have previously acknowledged some environmental contamination on the reservations where the plants and laboratories are located.

Earlier this year, Energy Department officials estimated that cleaning up the contamination could cost \$100 billion.

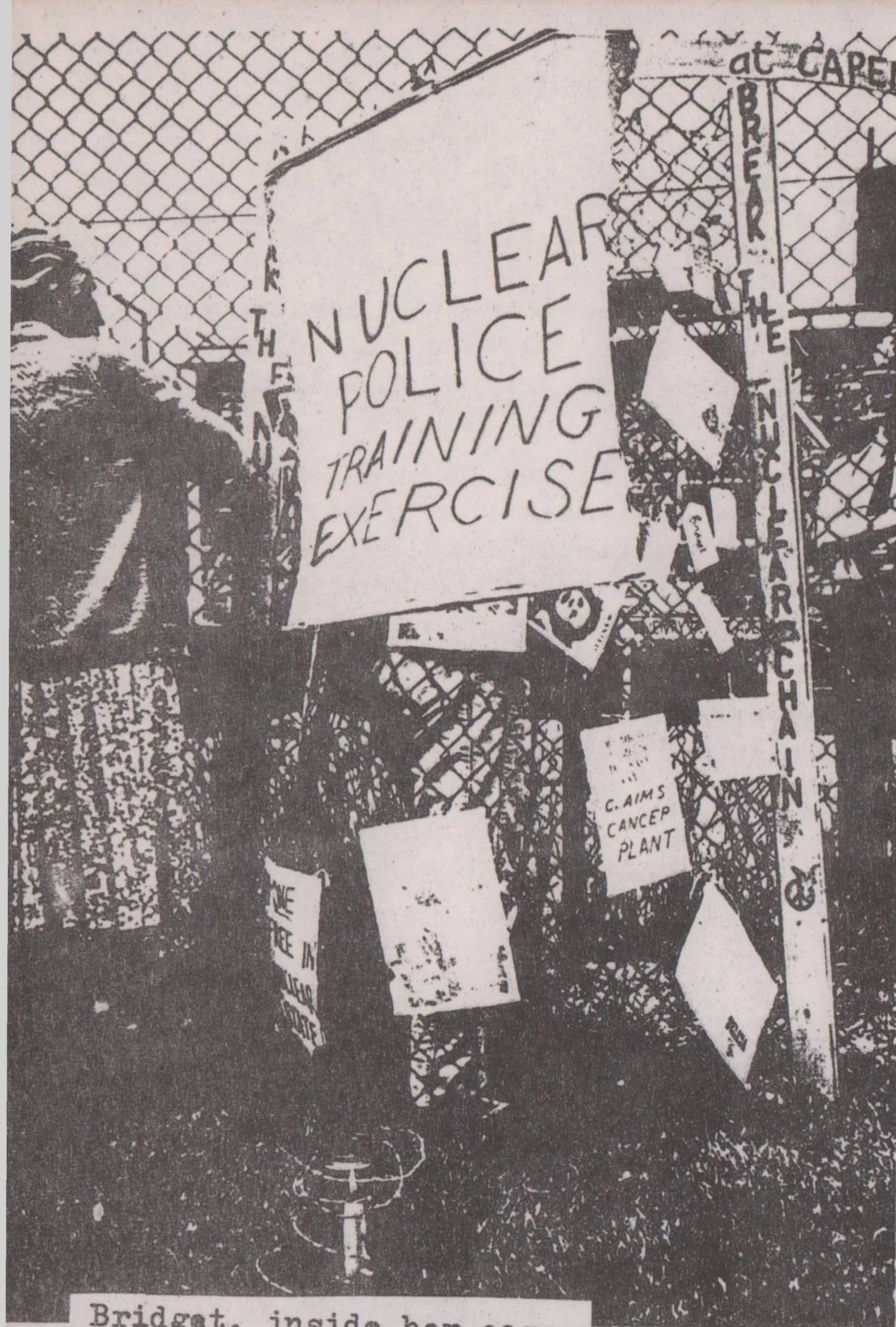
The study by the Radioactive Waste Campaign, though, strongly suggests that the Energy Department not only may have seriously underestimated the extent of the threat from radioactive wastes leaking from burial sites and present in groundwater, but may also have underestimated the cost of cleaning up the contamination.

Photographs in this newsletter courtesy of Ken & Jean Worthy, Alan Dee, and Mike Gallacher. Many thanks.

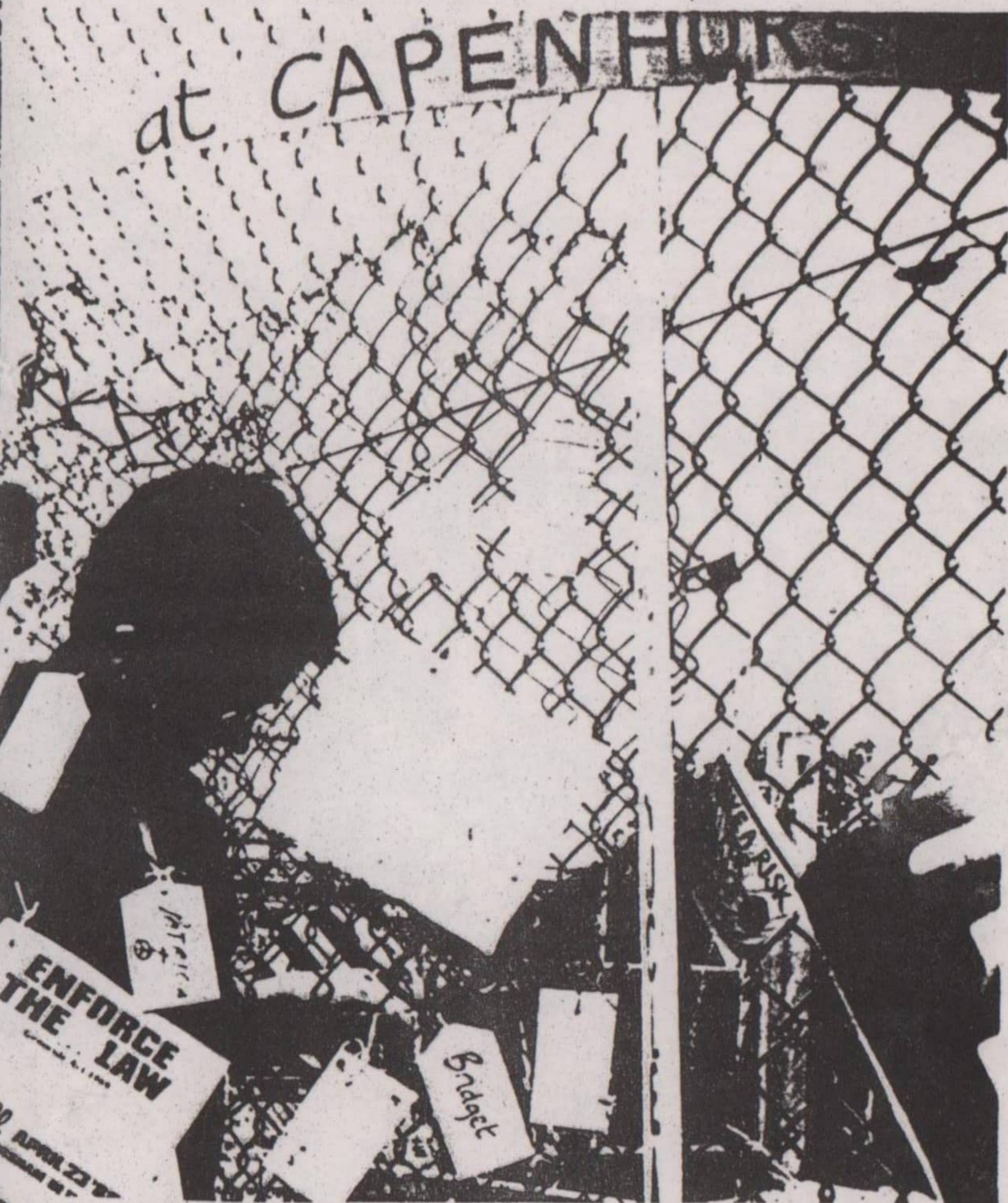
Also belated thanks to Kate and David for photographs in last newsletter!



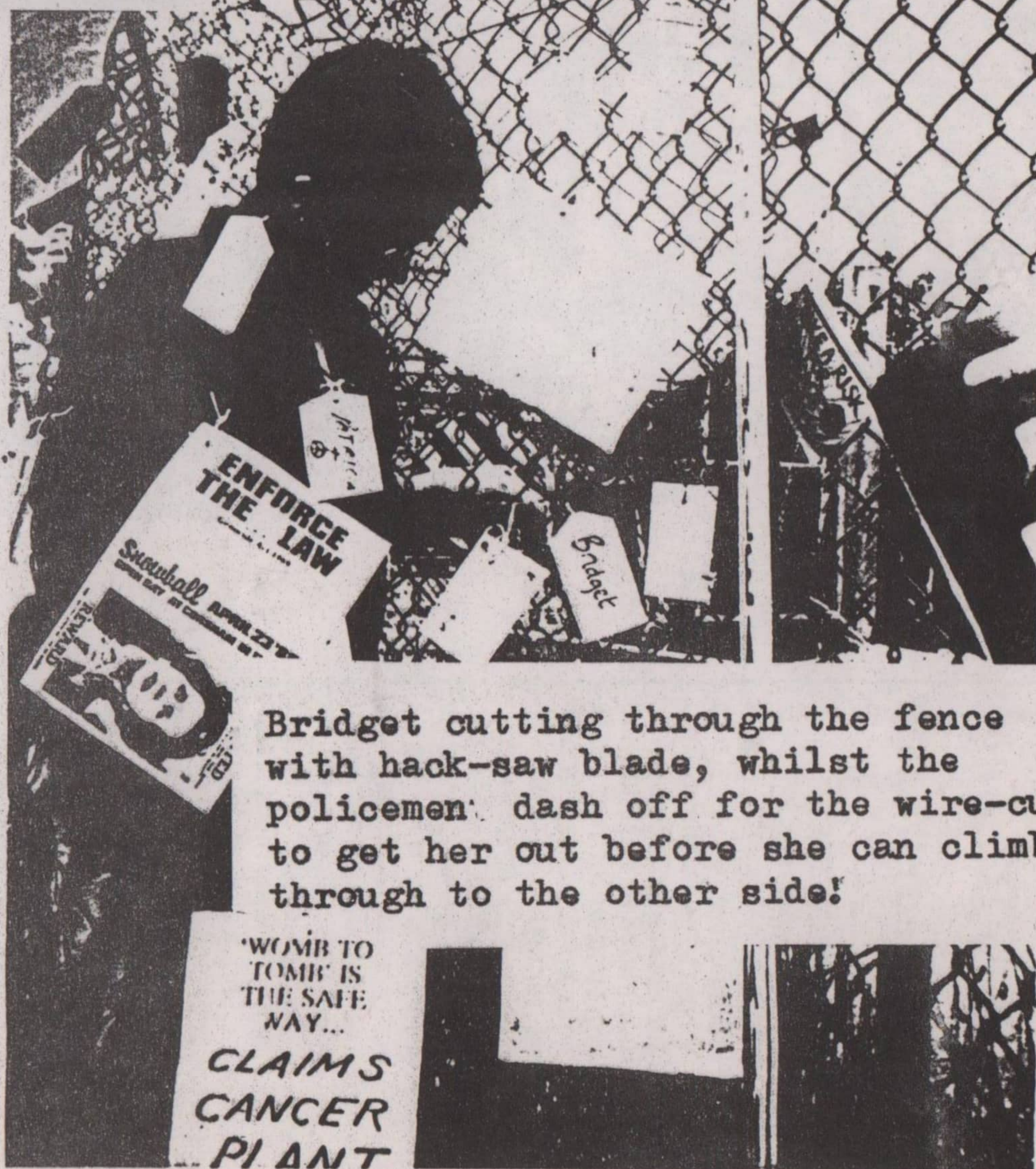
ONE DAY,
THIS COULD BE A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE.



Bridget, inside her cage, locked to the fence!



Bridget cutting through the fence with hack-saw blade, whilst the policemen dash off for the wire-cutters to get her out before she can climb through to the other side!



David Mullins, Gordon Nash, Margaret Roberts, Bridget Roberts, Patricia Pulham were taken off to Neston Police Station. The police refused to arrest Katy McLoughlan. She was told that scratching the plastic covering did not constitute damage! After two attempts, Helen Ellis was arrested and then formally 'de-arrested' by Sgt. Hanson. (Bolt cutters next time!)

I know I've got a hack-saw blade in here somewhere



So that's what you have to do to 'Uphold the Law' !



Well.....
If you can't beat 'em join 'em

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STATEMENT

My actions in symbolically damaging the plastic covering of one strand of wire at Capenhurst in 1987 and 1988 were in support of the Snowball campaign. The triviality of the symbolic damage is shown by the award of £4.49 compensation in 1987 and no compensation in 1988.

The aim of the Snowball campaign is to persuade the government to carry out one of three small requests to begin the process of nuclear disarmament. By our quite open actions we support the law by drawing public attention to the illegal work being done at Capenhurst in making enriched uranium for Trident nuclear submarines which will increase our nuclear submarine warheads at least sixfold.

Nuclear weapons are clearly in breach of moral law, international law and our own Genocide Act of 1969, and it is the responsibility of each individual in any country which possesses such weapons of mass destruction to work and act to halt these threats to the survival of the human race. In particular the NATO principle of possible first use of nuclear weapons further stresses this threat and our responsibility.

These violations of law have been frequently argued by many Snowballers in court but I have never heard the validity of their claims contested by the prosecution.

My failure to pay these fines intends no disrespect of the court but is recognition of my responsibility to oppose these illegal actions and also I claim that we have in fact full lawful excuse for our symbolic cuts under the Criminal Damage Act. Therefore in my belief, payment of the fines would be admission of a wrongful basis for the Snowball campaign.

We are fully aware from experiences throughout the country that in cases of non-payment of Snowball fines the courts can exercise powers which range from complete remission of the fines, through community service orders, up to imprisonment.

In the Guardian of 27 June 1988 I read under separate headings that "The share of Britains national output devoted to overseas aid has fallen to an all-time low", that "The UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament ended when American and Western delegates squared off against most other countries who were calling for arms reductions" and that "Britain is negotiating a weapons sale for Malaysia worth well over £1 billion" This should remind us that the world arms race is killing many people now by war, starvation, and disease, and it is the great responsibility of everyone in this court to respond to these implications.

So I would say that my actions were civil obedience and not civil disobedience. In view of this, with all due respect to the court, although I in fact stand in the dock today, I would put it to you that the Court is also on trial for their response to these questions, many international laws against weapons of mass destruction and our own Genocide Act of 1969.

K. Worthy, 57 St Asaph Rd, Dyserth, Nr Rhyl. July 1988



This is the statement Ken made in Abergele Magistrates Court on 8.7.88. Once again the magistrates chose to make an "attachment" order to Ken's pension. At this rate Ken will be a very old gentleman before his fines are paid! In spite of his multiple criminal record, Ken has recently been called for jury duty. Apparently it is considered quite proper for any criminal to sit on a jury - and this makes good sense in one way - but you may not sit on a jury if you have served a prison sentence - which makes no sense at all!



TALK TO THE POLICE?

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Julia writes "Right now I feel that I will never trust a policeman again" I think that this is the only possible attitude - not because there is no such thing as a member of the police force who is basically good and decent but because every member of the police belongs to an organisation that demands and requires that the individual gives total loyalty to it. This loyalty includes collusion in the covering up of acts perpetrated by colleagues who are by no means good and decent. It is not for us to judge individuals - which of us can say that she would have the courage to challenge colleagues and risk contempt, harrassment - dismissal maybe? But many of us have seen police commit criminal acts of assault and every complaint has met with denial and lies.

Now that the right of silence when arrested is being undermined we have to be well prepared for questioning at the police station. We all have a lot to learn but we can learn from each other, we can teach each other what we have learnt from our own experiences with the police. WE NEED TO DO THIS. We have been altogether too casual in the past.

My most valuable lesson came from Margaret Roberts. In the station I was fortunate to over-hear her say "In order to save time and trouble I will tell you now that I will not be answering any questions" (or words to that effect) Her formula has stood me in good stead ever since. Being prepared in this way gives a lot of self confidence and self confidence is what one most needs in this situation. It is so easy to get confused especially if kept on your own and feeling threatened. Police are 'nicer' to some people than others but they all want to get that piece of paper filled in - if only because it looks as though they have done a good job - they are bureaucrats too!

It seems to me that unless you have good and positive reasons for a different approach we should always refuse to answer any questions at all (except for identity) The most important reason for this is that it is still a right and by upholding this right we are helping in an indirect way those who are not able to choose to be in that situation as we are. Refusing to answer all questions because it is a right makes it less easy to use that silence against a person, as is now being more frequently done in court. Answering even silly questions such as 'what sort of house do you live in?' can enable them to make adverse comment about unanswered questions implying guilt etc.

Another reason for my thinking that total refusal is best is that talking can lead to a lowering of concentration, forgetting that you are in hostile surroundings where it is not unknown for inaccuracies and deliberate distortions to appear in statements, so innocent remarks can be made to appear in quite a different light.

So far most of us have been in situations where we have only been charged with actions we have actually done. This may not remain the case for ever, remember Max's arrest at Corsham. We must cast aside our naivety and be realistic. This realism does not, should not indicate a refusal to see police as members of the human race. To quote Julia again, if we do that "we are in danger of losing our own humanity, and that could place us on the first rung of the ladder of terrorism." We are not responsible for how they behave to us but we are responsible for how we behave to them. It hardly matters what they think of us, whether we are ordinary etc. but it does matter what we think of ourselves. We become less if we show violence. Violence can be verbal or physical, it can also become manifest when it is a reflection of violent hateful feelings.

So how do we 'talk' to the police? Each one of us can work through to an individual response. Starting from an intention to observe at least normal politeness, we can think through what our relationship should be to a person trapped in this institution. a person under very great pressure from peers and from society at large, just an ordinary fallible weak human being beset by the worries of everyday life, who has to appear strong, dependable and always right - and always in control.....

Some thoughts from Doreen

I am waiting in a crowded courtroom. At last the chairman of the Bench arrives, apologising for being late. I am amazed to see that it is Leon Brittain. He is wearing bright blue eye-shadow and a navy-blue dressing-gown. This was what I dreamt the other night. Our court case at Chippenham following the Corsham Snowball in April was, hardly less bizarre!

Trevor, Jean and I were led down long corridors when we arrived and shown into a small waiting room. There were already nine people there who greeted us enthusiastically. Nobody was wearing uniform and we did not immediately recognise them as the prosecution witnesses.

When the time came, each was called in turn; the arresting officer, his superior, the interviewer, the note-taker, the man who cleaned the paint off the road, the man who told him to, the dog-handler, the... (no, not the dog) Our prepared statements were read in full. All who had seen the 'crime' described what we had written. "Your war games will be the death of us all". These words were given great emphasis, each witness putting the stress in a different place. (Try it and see.)

We were given plenty of time for our defence, but had to explain to rather puzzled magistrates why admitting the act is not the same as admitting the crime. Photographs were examined to ascertain whether the bit of road we had painted on was the property of the MOD, the Highway Authority, or British Telecom, as charged. One of the magistrates asked sensibly, "If this area is not the property of the MOD, why do you have MOD policemen guarding it?"

It took a long time and the blue law-books to find us guilty. For each of us there was a list of previous offences: criminal damage, fined £100, criminal damage, fined £150... We waited for our sentences. This time any fines were going to be really big.

"Fined 25 Pounds" — then from the prosecutor, "The costs for those who pleaded guilty have been fixed at £25. I don't see why these defendants should have to pay any more"

All that remained now was for the order for the destruction of the materials and tools used, which was granted,

"Excuse me," said Trevor, "Could I have my gloves back - I am not likely to commit many more crimes wearing them.?"

"All right," said the Magistrate "In fact, I think you can have it all back except the stencil, if you want it."

A brown cardboard box was placed on the table and we rummaged through it.

"Don't you want the brushes?" "No thankyou, they are too hard and we can easily get some more"

"Perhaps British Telecom would like the white spirit to replace what they used on the road." suggested Trevor "That's all right" said the BT man "We've got plenty."

It had become quite a party, and I don't think anyone noticed the three magistrates leaving the room.



Unfortunately the Capenhurst painters did not fare as well as those at Chippenham! Top fines to date received by Hugh Brown and myself totalling £175 each. (At time of writing this, Jan's case not yet heard.) Dave Glass got slightly less, and Eileen who pleaded Guilty to test the theory that it is cheaper to do so - the standard charge for costs being £2 per 5 mins we were told - saved £70 on the day!

I am unable to go into any details of the case as an appeal has been lodged. Suffice it to say that the whole court hearing was an appalling mess. The presiding magistrate was quite hopeless, and so nutty that at one point the prosecuting solicitor felt obliged to intervene on our behalf!

As the five of us (originally) were to be dealt with together as "having a common purpose" the hearing was very complicated - quite unlike the usual Snowball cases in which BNF have had us dealt with seperately. The hearing lasted most of the day which was very exhausting, and at times we were almost cracking with the frustration of fighting to be heard properly.

However, the good thing about the day was the supporters. They were superb. Their good humour and kindness kept us going, and you could almost feel the waves of silent cheering-on coming from the back of the court. Many thanks from all of us.

I could not help noticing how very conventional our supporters looked! All rather "pukka" and "collar and tie" - a wonderful contrast to the Police chief witness who was a young lad with a punk hair-style and an earring!

This young lad - Gary Ray Powell - had reported us to the Police. It is usual for the Police to protect their witnesses from any possible "harrasment," or interference from defendants, by withholding personal details such as place of residence, but in this poor lad's case they rather let him down. By the end of the day we had learned not only his address, but also the address of his girl-friend, that he drove a black ford escort car, and even its registration number! If any one wants to write to Gary Ray Powell and tell him about the dangers of nuclear weapons/power, his address is: Newhay, Capenhurst. It was Gary's Ford Escort that the Magistrate agreed that we "did by a certain misbehaviour, hinder or interrupt the free passage of" thereby costing us a further £20 each on top of our criminal damage fines!

A nice comment at the end of the day came from one of the supporters who said "If you'd painted a cross on the road at Auschwitz, that magistrate would have found you guilty".

JULIA



A Capenhurst resident perhaps?

Your Worships - I want to explain first the way I have chosen to defend myself. Yesterday I completed a sentence at one of Her Majesty's prisons, and this reinforced my belief that, in general, the Law is not being used to protect the poor and powerless as it should be in a truly just society, but it is being used to reinforce the decisions of the rich and powerful.


I met many people whose poverty and oppression outside the prison was magnified by their suffering inside.

All sensitive and compassionate people (and that is probably how you see yourselves as I see myself) realise the shortcomings of the Law that you administer. Once we have realised this we take one of two courses of action. One is to try and work within a bad system and so reduce the harm caused by it. (Perhaps this is what you have chosen to do) The other is to reject that system.

During the last few years I have seen time and time again, the law used to serve the interests of the rich and powerful nuclear industry and not the interests of the poor and powerless people who suffer and die as a result of it.

Your Worships, I reject the system. I no longer have the heart to defend myself in its terms.

This statement was in answer to a charge of criminal damage resulting from Patricia's action in the April Snowball. Patricia is refusing to pay the fine. She is likely to return to prison yet again (she thinks between November and Christmas) for what will be her ninth serving of "peace porridge".



PEACEMAKING - RAMBO-STYLE?

One of the most rewarding things about compiling the newsletter is that all sorts of marvellous letters and bits of information drop into our post-box. (Far more than will fit into the newsletter in fact - but nothing is wasted; relevant items are passed on to people who will make good use of them)

However, last week something arrived which, quite frankly, made my hair stand on end!

It was a photocopy of a leaflet currently being distributed by a campaigning group calling themselves AUTONOMOUS PEACE ACTION. The rather indistinct copy leaflet showed a picture of hundreds of police in riot gear surrounding a lorry with some people with a banner on top (the writing on the banner was too blurred to read). The leaflet was headed "OCTOBER 15 - SMASH UPPER HEYFORD" On turning the page I read:

"On Oct 15 CND is staging another of its carnivals of passivity and powerlessness.....How many of these feeble demonstrations do CND think it will take to end the arms race? Do they feel that planting bulbs and marking the fence are going to convince people of anything apart from the futility of all such methods of 'witnessing and demonstrating'CND is dying on its feetOne sign of hope ...at Aldermaston ... where large sections of the fence were pulled down by anarchists and other militants amid much applause from 'ordinary' CND supporterschance to repeat this and improve upon it at Upper Heyfordpassivity will never bring peace assemble outside main gate at 12.30come equippedbe prepared to resist any copstry and blend in with the CND crowd rainbow scarves are a must! "

At first I thought that this was some sort of government secret service using "agent provocateur" tactics; or perhaps something put out by the terrifying "yellowgate women" - but it sounded even too macho for them! Finally, I consulted with a Shropshire peace campaigning friend who is a bit of a whizz on "alternative politics". Here are some extracts from his reply to me:

"Autonomous Peace Action and other groups who argue in the same way, say that the actions of nuclear disarmers, including civil disobedience, are mere symbolism, and one can accept that a pre-publicised open cutting of a wire at a military base is primarily a symbolic gesture, but so equally is a pre-planned punch-up. (It is asking too much credulity to suppose that a leaflet, that is distributed by post to groups with which the authors have no contacts, will not go to at least one police informer, and that the police will not know that a punch-up is planned.)

"When Greenham Women decided, arising from agreement within a movement that had worked together for years, to bring down the fence, they knew that they were already successfully getting through the media-barrier, and putting over their message. Nevertheless, the distinction between blockading the gates, climbing the fences, and pulling down the fences, could be said to be mere symbolism. The important part of their demo has been their persistence and courage - the actual ways that this is manifest have been secondary.

"That the same means were used at Molesworth, and have been used, however pre-publicised, by the Snowball; or that groups which arrived together at Aldermaston (some as local affinity and some formed on the various converging marches) was again a natural extension of propagandist means. It was not done as a means of disrupting an already-planned demo. The fact that APA feels it necessary to advise supporters to seek disguise as GND members shows the contrast.

"It is obvious that one day the peace movement will need to by-pass governmental measures, and will need to act to dismantle weaponry, and immobilise what cannot be dismantled - the whole being in the context of massive industrial action, and other means to prevent state "security" interfering. That will involve a revolutionary change in government; by definition it can only happen when the majority of the population want disarmament, not merely expressing a preference for it in some gallup poll, but want it and the social changes that must inevitably accompany it.

*I wrote 12
the nature
of govern
ment,*

"It must be equally obvious that we are a long way from achieving that degree of support - we do not even have a majority of unilateral disarmers on a gallup level. This means that at this stage all disarmament activity is propagandist and is aimed at attaining the mass support that is necessary. There are, of course, many influential members of the campaign who do not envisage the sort of mass direct action that is needed. They trust the "normal democratic processes", and believe that one day government will push a Bill through Parliament that says we will disarm, and, oblivious of such precedents as the Curragh Mutiny, they assume that Parliament will be obeyed!

"One can understand that such naivety inspires contempt in the impatient; though the more perceptive will notice that those who think in such terms would like to drop the word "unilateralist", and though they do not wish to change policies to drop the content of that word, their vision is that unilateralists will create a climate of opinion wherein politicians will negotiate more meaningful multi-lateral deals than the INF Treaty.

"There is, however, a much larger body of opinion that accepts that unilateralist policies are unlikely ever to be implemented by politicians; that they can only come about by mass direct action. The fact that it is not attempted here and now does not mean that it is passive - merely that it rejects the vanguardist belief that a self-elected revolutionary "elite" minority can make a revolution with only the uncomprehending support of the majority. (Indeed, since such a vanguard in present circumstances would not even have that much support, intelligent vanguardists might draw back from such adventurism!) That is not to say that there are no times when libertarians should use non-propagandist direct action when in a minority. Obviously if there were a fascist lynch mob about to attack, the fact that it was the majority present would not give it the right to engage in racist assault, and nothing would excuse the failure of any radical to intervene to prevent such attack. There are analogies that can obviously be drawn. Not for nothing was the watch-word of the original Direct Action Committee against nuclear weapons that nuclear weapons are the moral equivalent of concentration camps."

Well! That's food for thought now, isn't it?

(JULIA)

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Here are just a few of the many Snowball press cuttings since July Snowball. The rest are in the Snowball scrap-books held by Patricia.



Ex-teacher defies court in protest

ANTI-NUCLEAR protestor Rowena Thomas (right) may go to jail for the second time in nine months.



The 67-year-old former deputy head of Bwlchgwyn Primary School is determined not to pay a £100 fine handed out to her at Chester Magistrates yesterday, for cutting a single strand of wire during a non-violent protest at BNFL's Capenhurst Plant last April.

Mrs Thomas, of Maesygywn, Bwlchgwyn denied the charge of criminal damage, but was convicted, and ordered to pay £48 costs and £12.28 compensation during the 45 minute hearing yesterday.

Last September she was sent to prison for 21 days for not paying fines following three similar convictions for criminal damage during an anti-nuclear protest.

Following yesterday's hearing a resolute Mrs Thomas, who always pays

the costs and compensation declared: "I have absolutely no intention of paying my fine."

"Yes! I together with several other women did set out deliberately to cut the wire, but compared with the devastation of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Chernobyl, what I did was certainly not criminal."

"I expect I will be sent to prison, I don't like it but hopefully it will bring to the attention of the public the awful threat of the growth of nuclear weapons in Britain," she said.

OPINION THE PRICE OF JUSTICE

LESLEY THALMANN broke the law... of that there is no shadow of doubt.

This 59-year-old grandmother was one of a number of peace campaigners who scrawled charcoal crosses on the wall at the Ministry of Defence headquarters in London.

She was subsequently, and entirely properly, ordered to pay £3.45 in compensation.

Mrs Thalmann, as is often the wont among people who take her moral stance, refused on principle to pay the money. And for that, again quite properly, whatever one feels about the rights and wrongs of her beliefs, some form of punishment had to be employed.

It is the form of that punishment with which we take issue.

For she was sentenced to seven days behind bars.

This would have meant two police officers escorting her to a prison near Wakefield. The cost of their return trip, and the bill for keeping her in jail for a week, would have been measured in hundreds of pounds of taxpayers' money.

Even apart from the financial aspects, we are moved to consider such major current concerns as prison overcrowding and the fact that manpower resources are already so fully stretched in both the prison service and the police force.

In Mrs Thalmann's case, as we report tonight on Page Three, seven Derby policemen staged a whip-round to pay her compensation order.

And their action has been praised by Chief Inspector John Bown, Deputy Sub-divisional Commander for Derby Central, and by Derbyshire Police Federation Secretary PC Geoff Towle.

Chief Inspector Bown says: "It has saved us a lot of time and the country a lot of money." PC Towle says: "You can see the point... it was farcical really."

We feel there simply must be a better system of dealing with cases like Mrs Thalmann's.

GUARDIAN - 18.8.88

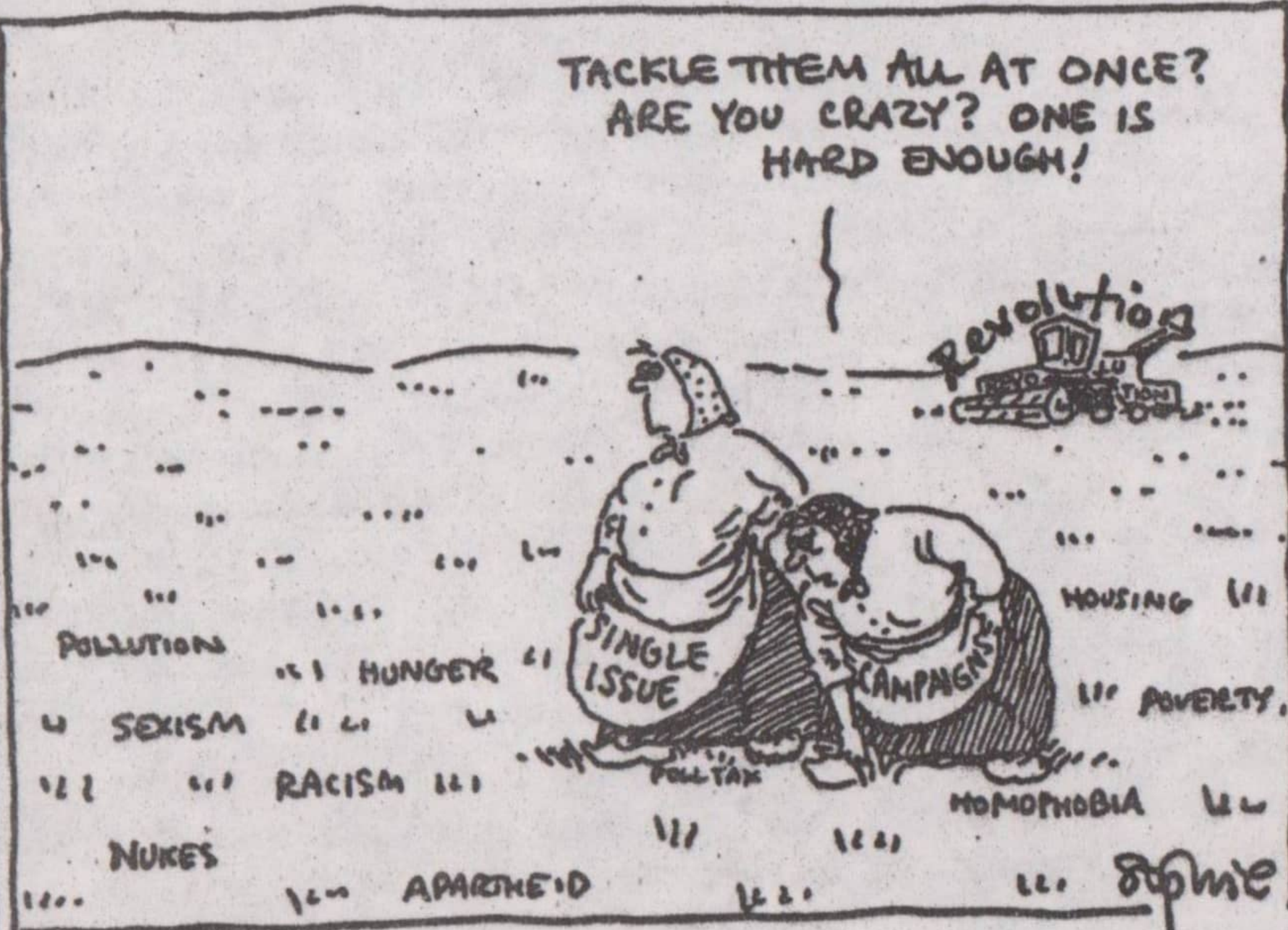
Facing up to the flood

Open Space

HOW I sympathise with Barbara Dryden (Open Space, August 11) and her desperation over floods of mail. Most of my friends similarly involved would feel the same sympathy. But I don't think most of us would come to the same conclusion.

It would be nice and ever so much simpler if we could, as Barbara Dryden suggests, "leave other issues to organisations dedicated to dealing with them and concentrate on a single aim" — viz getting rid of nuclear weapons. I think the problem is that nuclear weaponry — making of, possession of, threatening the use of and testing of — is the ultimate effect of, not the cause of, the state of affairs we find so frightening.

When, a few years ago, that perspicacious character, Anon, said: "You don't know what you don't know if they don't tell you, do you?" he/she said a mouthful. Now, although

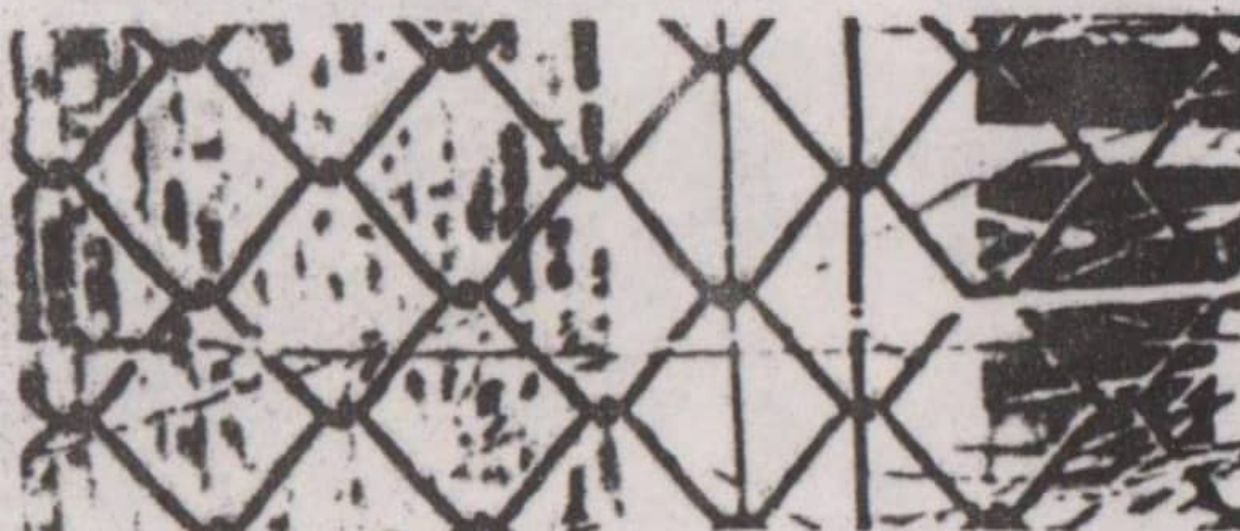


"they" still don't tell us that much, we have learned to find out quite a lot by ourselves. Pandora's box is open and it is probably healthier to examine the contents than to try to cram the lid back down.

It is exhausting trying to cope with even a fraction of the related campaign appeals but I reckon the "depression that gets" Ms Dryden because she

can't do the lot is not half as bad as the type of depression that gets so many people who won't look at any of it or look, are upset and say: "Isn't it awful but, of course, there's nothing one can do about it."

Better wear out than rust out, as they used to say. Elizabeth Rowlands-Hughes Llangollen Clwyd



Extracts from a review in the Sunday Observer of 18.9.88 by Janet Watts.

HILDA MURRELL, an elderly, intelligent English spinster, was brutally murdered near her Shrewsbury home in March 1984. Her killer has not been found and strange details surrounding her death have not been explained.

She was a celebrated rose grower, and a dedicated campaigner against the nuclear industry. At the time of her death she was planning to present a closely researched paper objecting to the proposed Sizewell B nuclear reactor at the public inquiry. Her killer removed the final draft of this paper from her house, after going through the rest of her documents and cutting off her telephone in a way known only to telecommunications experts.

Her murder happened two years after the Falklands war, at a time when the Government was investigating (among other things) the public leak of information about the sinking of the Belgrano. Hilda Murrell's nephew, Commander Rob Green, had been (in his words) 'one of a small number of people who knew about the operation', before he resigned his position as a senior intelligence officer at the Fleet headquarters at Northwood after the war.

It is known that private investigators were hired to monitor objectors to the Sizewell reactor. Peter Hamilton of Zeus Security Consultants, a former military intelligence officer, disclosed that he subcontracted the job to

Barrie Peachman of the Sapphire Investigations Bureau. Barrie Peachman committed suicide three weeks after Hilda Murrell's death. (Before that, he passed the work to Vic Norris of Contingency Services, a satanist and fascist with a criminal record for child sex offences.)

The mysterious death of a peace campaigner inspired Maggie Gee's latest novel, *Grace*, hears JANET WATTS.

All these facts disturbed Maggie Gee, who is a writer of fiction. 'And when a sense of disturbance remains, and I don't know how to deal with it, I start feeling it's something I ought to write about.' In her new novel, *Grace*, we watch another writer, Paula Timms, try to write a novel about Hilda Murrell. But gradually (we read) 'Paula felt it wasn't right, making a puppet from a real person. Especially someone brave and admirable; someone dead, who couldn't answer back.'

Paula fails. But Maggie Gee succeeds, in her separate yet connected endeavour. Her novel is about Grace Stirling, Paula's aunt: an elderly, intelligent English spinster, very fond of flowers. Grace is a dedicated campaigner against nuclear weaponry; Paula's complementary obsession is with nuclear waste.

Maggie Gee has been writing since her childhood; she is now 39. Rhymes first, then poems; a first novel at 19. ('Thank God it wasn't published!') She read English at Oxford, then did a thesis on surrealism and a doctorate on the self-conscious novel: Beckett, Nabokov, Woolf. 'It was great to do the reading, but I found the writing an awful pain'; not having to write like that any more was 'a glorious liberation'.

Grace is a work of fiction, but it includes a number of facts. 'Anything I present as fact is fact': Maggie Gee is a painstaking researcher. 'Fact is necessary to my fiction, because I want to write about what's real, and about the time I'm living in.' Did you know, for instance, that 10 metric tons of nuclear waste from Sizewell, Bradwell and Dungeness travel by overland train to Sellafield through the centre of London every week? And that low-level radiation from them leaks out on to the tracks?

Maggie Gee knows. She lives (with her husband and small daughter) a few yards from a bit of the North London railway line that carries these trains. They have the bottom half of a terraced house; the back garden is embowered with roses and clematis, brilliant with geraniums. In *Grace*, Arthur and Paula inhabit a similar house, actually overlooking the North London railway line.

Rob Green read a draft version of the paper stolen from Hilda Murrell's house to the Sizewell inquiry in September 1984. In it Hilda Murrell warned, Cassandra-like, against 'man's meddling with the very building blocks of the universe'. Maggie Gee agrees. 'I simply see it as such hubris on the part of human beings to break up the most fundamental unit of the universe, a symbol of all that's wrong in the way we live in our world — breaking it up for our own use.'

She herself campaigned more actively against the nuclear industry before her daughter arrived. Now, she does not have time to think so much about the

trains carrying waste so near to her pretty garden. But she hears them: a lighter sound than ordinary trains, and mostly at night.

'Life bombards us with disasters and delights. In everyday life you're living the moment, so you never quite see things whole. A novel gives you a window through which you can see more, and look longer. I suppose writing for me is a way of answering back. It's saying: "This is what being alive means to me."'

'Grace' comes from Heinemann (26 September, £10.95)



The picture shows Rob Green reading his Aunt's 'invocation' at her cairn during this year's memorial walk. Criggion and Capenhurst Snowballers were there, remembering.

Review

SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES:
Nonviolent Direct Action for
Disarmament.

Arthur Laffin and
Anne Montgomery, editors

I am hard to please. "What!" you say. "Oh no, not you!" you say. Well yes, or should I qualify: when it comes to the written word, I am hard to please. After a few dreadful encounters, I ceased granting interviews, became considerably exercised at the proposal of a TV movie and once even threatened to sue Amnesty International if they didn't leave me alone.

All this stems from my fervent belief that if folks are going to address issues, they ought, at the minimum, recognize what those issues are. The issues are not the demeanor of judges, the nature or length of sentences, the recreational proclivities of prisoners, the sweet children at home or Juicy Fruit gum. The issues are the Bomb, personal responsibility and disarmament. We had better hope that these are the issues -- publicly, because it's a matter of life and death; privately, because if not, a whole bunch of us have made some serious and costly mistakes.

And so it is that after 7 years of "Plowshares" disarmament actions, I have finally read something on the subject that pleases me. Anne Montgomery and Art Laffin have studiously avoided sensationalism, the cult of personality and fluff, focusing instead on the truth in a resistance primer which manages, at the same time, to be the final word (my humble opinion).

Need concise information on U. S. first-strike policy? Wonder about the legal basis of resistance? Curious about the diverse spiritual underpinnings of "Plowshares" actions and serious campaigns of nonviolence? Desire a better understanding of the prison witness? Want a list of communities, organizations and

resources to further your inquiry and involvement? It's all here, as are action statements, legal briefs, poetry, reflections and photographs beautifully blended by the skillful editing.

Oh yes, there is a chronology and profile of the 18 "Plowshares" actions and 66 participants (Sept., 1980 - March, 1986; 4 more have occurred since). It's brief and accurate, and after you read it, you won't have the slightest idea what we eat for breakfast. Isn't that wonderful! Notice I have not named the more than 25 contributors who run the gamut from famous to obscure. I would even omit reference to Laffin and Montgomery who, depending upon the circles in which you travel, are famous or obscure, but you couldn't find the book if I did. My point is that if you're attracted chiefly by high visibility, you need to refocus, but if you're interested in a serious reflection on resistance by those living it, this is the book to buy.

I would be happy if no one ever again wrote a word about "Plowshares." Someone undoubtedly will, but I won't ask you to read it. I am asking that you spend a few hours with "Swords into Plowshares." Thanks, Anne and Art! You've pleased the toughest critic.

Helen Dery Woodson
Shakopee Women's Prison
Shakopee, MN

Published by Harper & Row, San Francisco, CA, 1987. \$8.95. Order through Plowshares/New York; 225 Lafayette St.; New York, NY 10012. Or call Harper & Row, toll free 1-800 638-3030.

available from: Catholic Peace Action, 7 Putney Bridge Road, LONDON SW18. Send £7 (includes p + p)



Reminder to Snowballers!

Don't forget the meeting planned for SUNDAY NOVEMBER 6 for the first Capenhurst campaigns co-ordinating group. Further details from: PATRICIA PULHAM, 18 Shavington Avenue, Hoole, Chester. TEL: 0244 350966 or from KEN WORTHY, 57 St Asaph Road, Dyserth, Rhyl, Clwyd. TEL: 0745 571067

FAREWELL AND GOODLUCK TO JULIET

Snowballers send their best wishes and thanks to Juliet of Tilston Print Shop who has printed all eleven Snowball newsletters to date. Juliet is giving up her printing business at Christmas to resume her teaching career. Juliet says that she has very much enjoyed doing the newsletter. My personal thanks for her gentle advice and encouragement which has made the job of compiling the newsletter a pleasure.