

# Civilian TANG Peace Action

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SEPTEMBER '83 NEWSLETTER OF THE TELFORD ANTI NUCLEAR GROUPS

## C.O.D. Donnington fire enquiry

In the absence of any adequate account of the fire at the Army Depot in June which exposed 50 000 people and hundreds of acres of crops to deadly asbestos fallout, TANG has started to contact people in the areas affected with the hope of making their private concern over the fire the basis of some effective grassroots action.

During the last week of August members of TANG interviewed over 120 householders in the areas affected by the asbestos cloud to get an idea of the level of concern and gain contacts who will want to take the matter further.

Preliminary results from the survey show that 80% of people in the area affected are concerned about the danger to health of asbestos. 24% of people said that the fire had changed their attitude towards the Depot. 49% said that the Depot was insufficiently accountable in an area of civilian population - being over-secretive and not providing the Local Authority with enough information to act in such an accident. However, the majority of people thought the clear up operation was satisfactory once the nature of the material had been revealed.

39% of people said their attitude towards the Depot was affected by the knowledge that radioactive materials are stored there and 59% said that they did not believe the public could feel confident of its safety in the event of a similar accident happening there in the future.

More than a third of all the people interviewed left their name and address for further contact.

The findings of the survey confirm the need for a public inquiry to reveal the true nature of the health hazard caused to the community and the level of accountability we can expect from the Army.

No one but ourselves will organize this. We have been offered the expert advice of Alan Dalton of the Labour Research Dept., author of "Asbestos, Killer Dust" and he will be the main expert witness at a Community Public Inquiry on Saturday 24th of September. The venue has yet to be confirmed.

## Donnington peace camp

Members of the T.A.N.G. staged a four day fast and vigil outside the Army Ordinance depot at Donnington, from the 4th - 9th August to mark the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and in support of a fast until death being undertaken by eleven people across the world. About twelve people took part in the Donnington fast for all or part of the four days, but were supported by many more group members who joined for the vigil.

There can be no doubt that the action gained much good publicity with a report by Beacon Radio and photographs and articles in local papers. The group managed to leaflet workers entering the depot, and surrounding housing estates. Although public reaction to the peace camp was mixed we did gain new contacts within Donnington.

## Diary of events

Tuesday 13th September 7.30 p.m.  
TANG business meeting - Dawley Info. Centre.

Tuesday 20th September 7.30 p.m.  
Christian Peace Forum - New St. Methodist Church, Wellington.

Wednesday 21st September 7.30 p.m.  
Dawley Anti Nuclear Group meeting.  
23 Telford Rd., Dawley.

Saturday 24th September 2.30 Community enquiry into the fire at Donnington - New St. Methodist Church, Wellington.

Friday 23rd - Sunday 25th September  
West Midlands CND strategy conference.

Thursday 29th September 'Stop the City' demonstration London.

Friday 30th September 6.30 p.m.  
TANG Jumble Sale, Fletcher Methodist Church. Madeley Centre.

The September TANG meeting will include an analysis of what should be done locally on peace education, both in schools and also youth clubs and other organisations. We will be hearing from teachers on what is needed and will be planning our education for peace strategy.

### Letter - Freeze debate continues

Last month's Chain Reaction included a letter from Dennis Mason urging us to call for a nuclear freeze as a first step to disarmament. This position has gained more support since the election and this year's CND national demo will call for a nuclear freeze. This is a terrible mistake.

The freeze campaign calls upon governments to cease building new missiles and to start serious negotiations to reduce them. It is therefore based on the naive assumption that the world's military leaders can solve the problems that they have created. Governments East and West use the threat of a foreign enemy to justify their own violence. They have a clear interest in maintaining the arms race and so a multilateral nuclear freeze is unachievable.

In fact our own government has always said that not only would it like to freeze the arms race, it would like to disarm. However, by using statistics (lies, damned lies), they are always able to show the military superiority of the other side, justifying further unilateral arms escalations. By saying that they want to reach agreements for multilateral disarmament, the government has already made the freeze campaign obsolete.

Up to now our position has been clear. With the policy of unconditional unilateral nuclear disarmament, CND has grown from almost nothing into a massive political force in the last four years, uniting people with many different political, religious and moral beliefs. If we retreat to the freeze position, we will lose all momentum and the campaign will be likely to just fade away after the installation of Cruise.

CND is a unilateralist campaign or it is nothing. If multilateralists want to argue for a freeze, that is up to them, but we need to point out to them that the only way to stop the arms race is by the sort of change in society that will bring about unilateral disarmament.

There is no sense at all in retreating to the freeze position. Ordinary people have nothing to fear from unilateral disarmament, if it is explained clearly.

We should stop this retreat and reaffirm more strongly than ever our commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. Otherwise our movement will be doomed to failure.

### CND stamps on youth

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) executive, has closed down the Youth CND National Committee. Members of the dissolved YCND National Committee reject the idea that YCND has been "temporarily wound up after allegations of infiltrations by Trotskyist groups", and have said in a statement "the only reasons that were given for the dissolution of the committee were that membership cards and ages were inadequately checked. Many YCND members do not in fact possess membership cards, due to administrative difficulties. However, we do not see how this means the conference was invalid - delegates were registered in advance and their names were checked against a computer print-out of members before delegate cards were issued".

As yet there has been no inquiry announced by National CND and no new elections have been called. In default of an enquiry it appears that this is a disturbing over-reaction against YCND. If the executive's claim of infiltration is true, this should be dealt with by argument, not organisational means. Meanwhile YCND intends to lobby the annual conferences of the T.U.C. and the Labour Party to emphasise "the need for the Labour movement to move beyond existing paper policies of unilateralism and to start organising mass action against the missiles". Anybody interested in taking part, contact

### TANG local contacts

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### CIVIL DEFENCE AND THE WREKIN

TANG is going to produce a booklet on civil defence for the Wrekin area as a response to new government measures due to be introduced early in 1984 to force local councils to co-operate. This booklet will go to councillors and be available for public distribution. A wall display