

CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKERS

May 1984

Thoughts from a Pilgrimage.

NEWSLETTER OF TELFORD ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUP.

Throughout Easter week, I joined a group of about 80 Christians from all denominations, on a peace pilgrimage, that visited several Major U.S.A.F. & R.A.F. bases that play a part in the construction and deployment of nuclear weapons.

At each base we prayed and held witness, to the peace and message of Christ's Gospel of love and reconciliation.

It was with great sadness that as we visited the bases, we began to realise the extent of influence that militarism and violence held upon us. Behind what must have been hundreds of miles of fencing and barbed wire, lay the instruments that might bring about the destruction of life on earth. An undoing of the days of creation, and what amounts to complete blasphemy against the Creator.

What we are witnessing, is Christ himself being crucified anew by the arms race, by the fear and suspicion, by the divisions it creates amongst humankind and by the massive misuse of the earth's resources, whilst millions die of starvation and poverty.

We also experienced a sense of great guilt as we realised that the responsibility lies with us all. The Rev. Owen Hardwick said in his speech, "Deterrence and Reconciliation."

"we have not exercised our responsibilities as citizens of our Society we have allowed this to happen, not only through our parliamentary representatives, but the Governments, behind them the military, behind them the scientists, and behind them the academic researchers and behind them the employment situation. Don't blame anyone except ourselves, WE are ultimately responsible, we allowed this to happen."

As Christians, we must accept a major proportion of guilt, by our silence, we have allowed it to happen by our inability to stand firm in the Gospel of Christ, we allowed humanity to come to the brink of un-parrelled disaster. Let us make it clear that this is not the will of God!, as the Evangelist Billy Graham said:-

"The present arms race is a terrifying thing and it is almost impossible to over-estimate it's potential for disaster... Is a nuclear holocaust inevitable? if the arms race is not stopped, frankly the answer is yes.. I cannot see anyway in which nuclear war could be branded as being God's will. Such warfare if it ever happens, will come because of the greed and covetousness of the human heart."

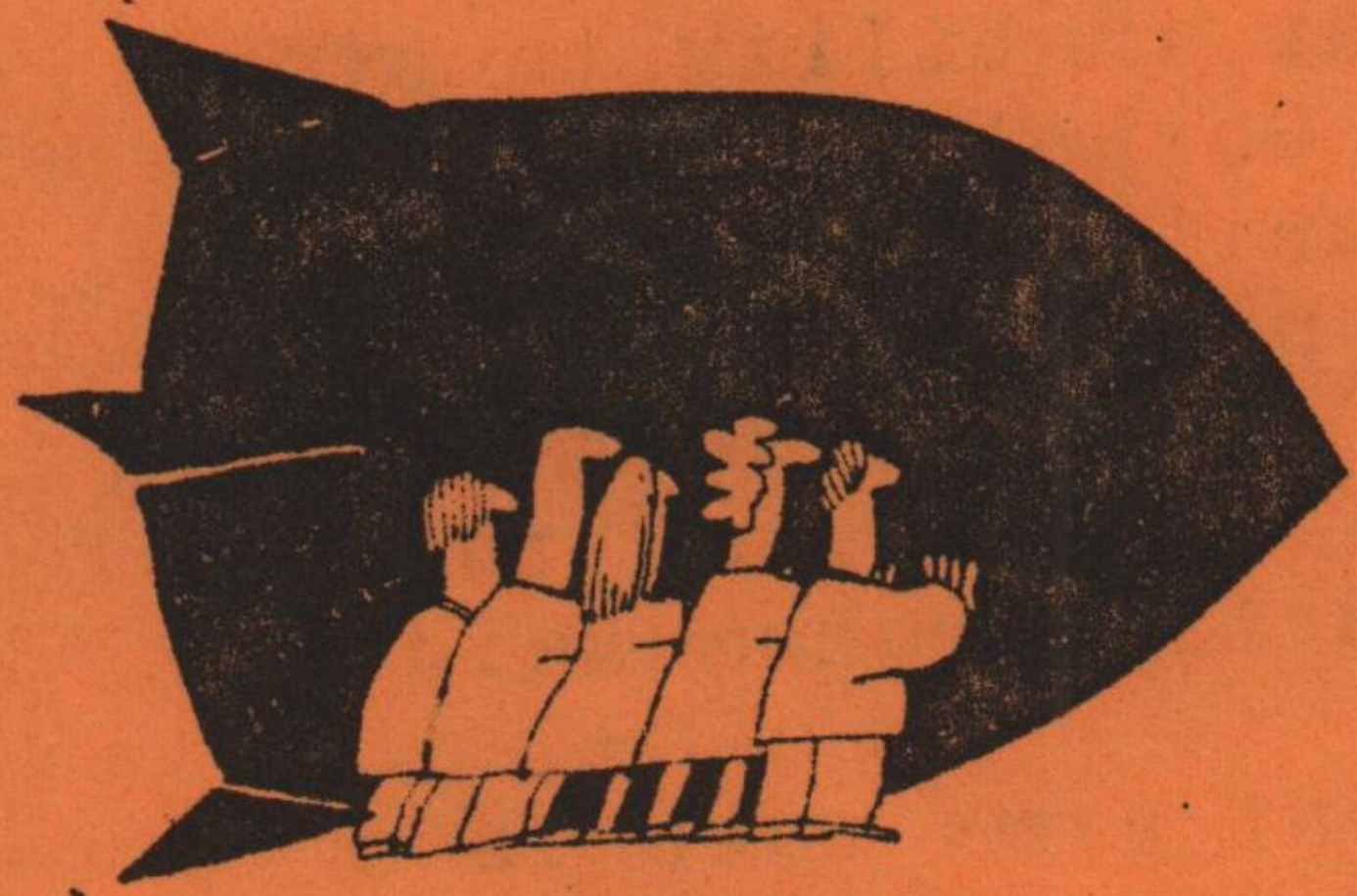
As Christians, our hope lies in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a startling image of the power of love over death. This love is greater than the modern crucifixion, and is the foundation for our hope and our determination, that we shall move from the shadow of Global suicide, into a saner and more loving world. Jesus's Commandment, that we love our enemies, is not an impossible ideal, as Father Zabelka Former, Catholic chaplain to the U.S. air crew, that dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki said:

"The time as come to say: War is totally incompatible with Jesus's teaching and that Christians cannot and will not engage in, or pay for it, from this point on in history. This would have the effect of putting all nations on this planet, on notice that, from now on they are going to have to conduct their mutual slaughter without Christian support, physical, financial or spiritual."

MARK STOKES

peace news

FOR
NONVIOLENT REVOLUTION



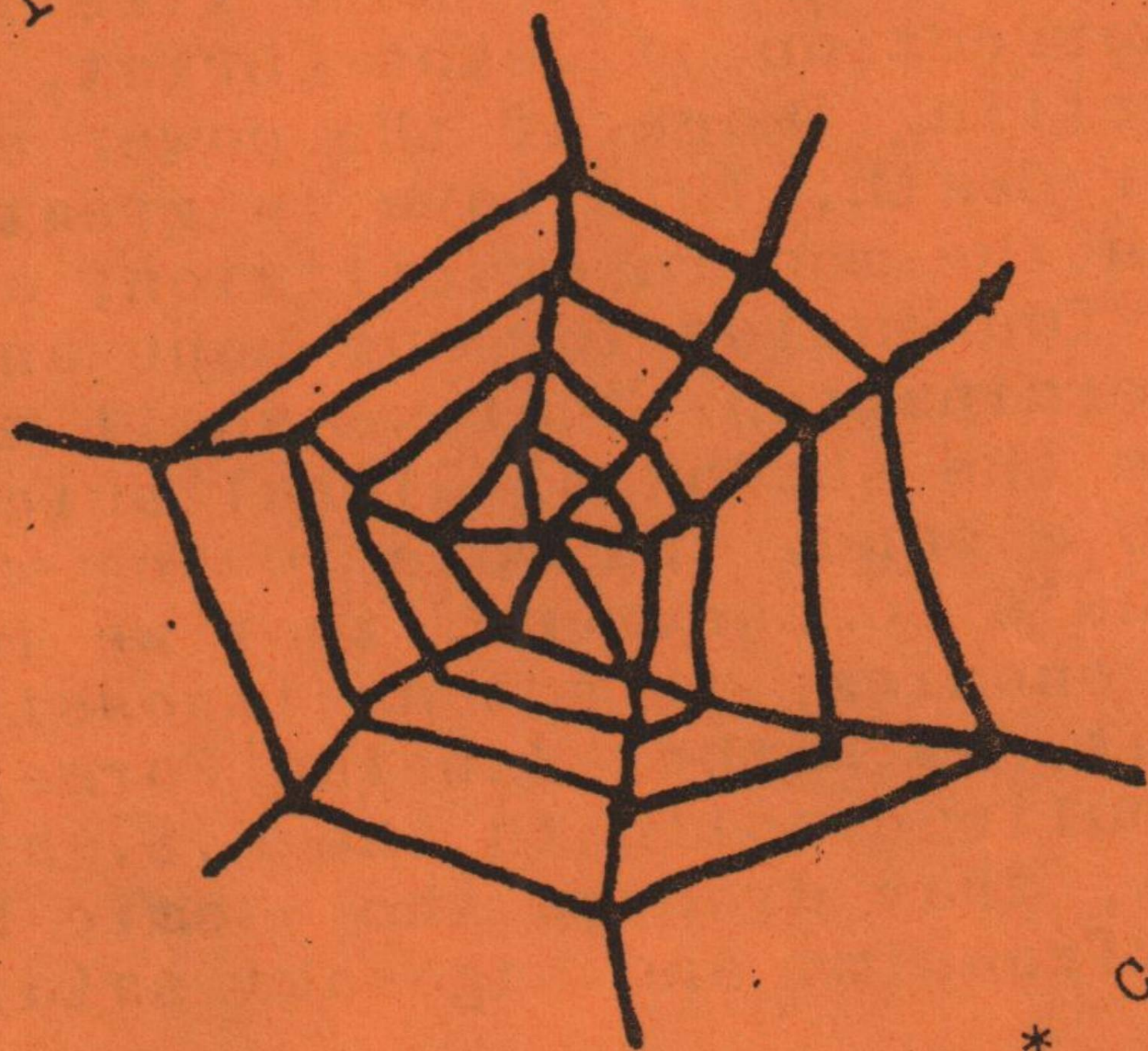
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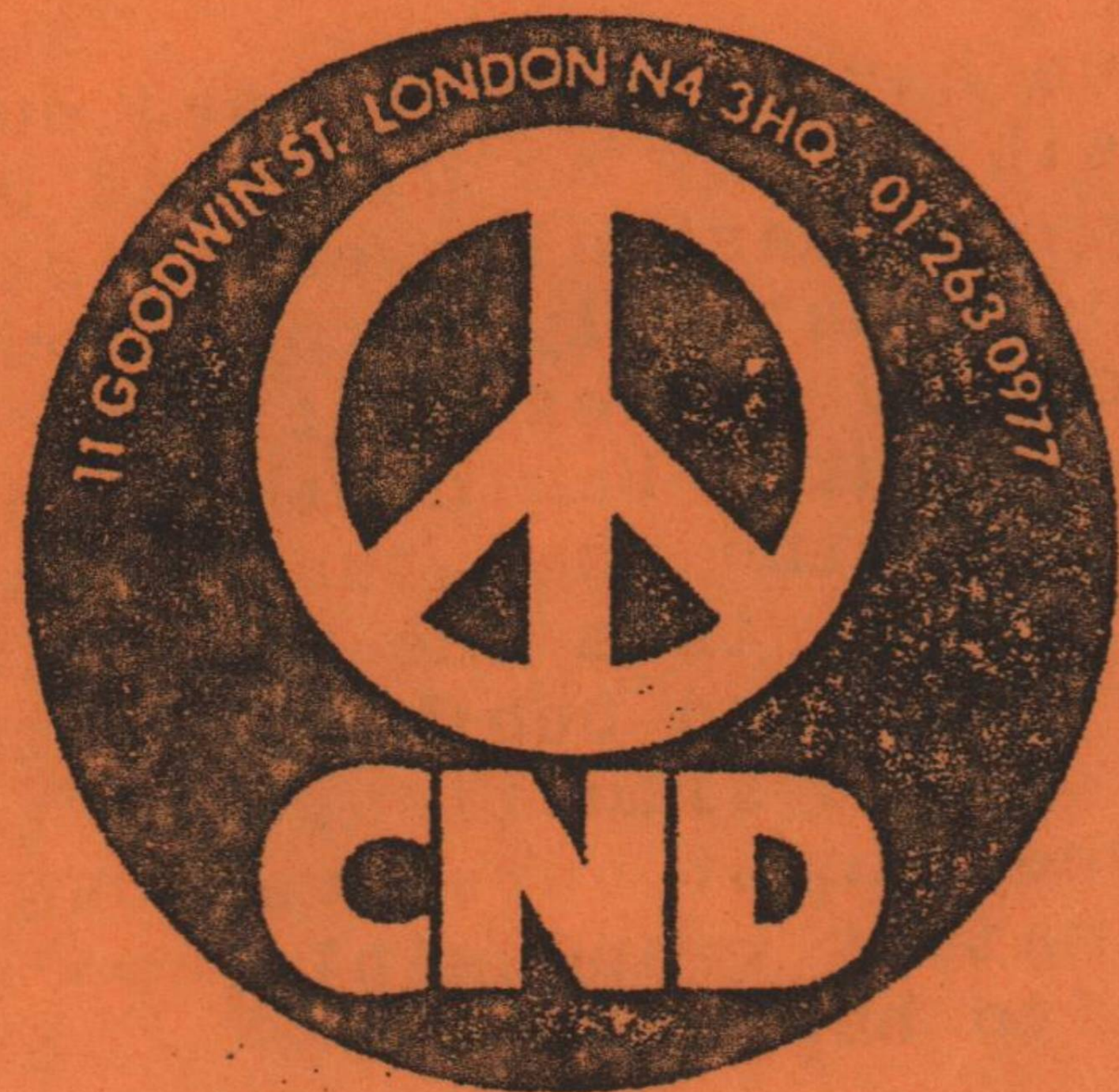
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Christmas Island.

The Ministry of Defence, has for years, denied that the 8,000 Servicemen who took part in nuclear weapons tests on Christmas Island in the Pacific some 25 years ago, suffered any harmful consequences.

Their dependants have been refused compensation or relief from death duties, and the Ministry has always maintained that the tests were 'clean' because they took place at high altitude.

All the indications are that the Ministry of Defence has been engaged in a long standing cover up to hide the fact that Servicemen, who took part in the tests, were irradiated and their lives endangered.

In a normal group of 8,000 men of military age, 17 could expect to die of blood cancers over a 25 year period. In fact, out of 330 Servicemen traced by the B.B.C's nationwide programme 12 months ago, who had been at Christmas Island during the tests 27 had died from the disease. They also found that 10 of the 330 Servicemen had developed cataracts of the eyes, which are normally very rare indeed in this age group.

Professor Joseph Rotblatt, Emeritus Professor of Physics at The University of London, and who worked on the Manhattan Project, which developed the first Atomic bomb, is one of seven leading experts on radiation and disease, who called in letter published 12 months ago in the 'Lancet', for a full and independent inquiry into the medical consequences of the tests.

The Ministry is not unaware of the facts, but they would prove to be politically embarrassing to Defence Secretary, Michael Heseltine who was appointed by Prime Minister Thatcher, to combat the campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and browbeat the population into accepting U.S.

Cruise Missiles in Britain.

The last thing the Tories want is a full exposure of what happened at Christmas Island -- to condition the population for war requires that nuclear weapons be presented as whiter than white.

Aid is not enough

The British Government is "indifferent" to the problems of the worlds poorest people, and has "deliberately exported the worst of the economic effects of the world recession to the Third World", according to a new report on British aid. The group producing the report argue that, in spite of government intentions, most of its aid and trade initiatives are doing more for British firms and British banks than for the poor. The report says Britains position has been fairly consistently hostile to the Third World, and accuses Mrs. Thatchers government of being one of the most restrictive towards exports from the Third World.

But millions of the world's poorest - those who have had the ground cut from under their feet through being uprooted by the powerful, the greedy and the brutal - have been recipients of the one growing form of aid. While in the North most industrialised countries have enjoyed a long era of peace, the mainly poor developing countries of the South have, since 1945, suffered over 160 wars - wars ably assisted and encouraged by the superpowers and their allies. In those wars the industrialised countries have tested their new armaments, tactics and technology - at a safe distance and at the cost of other peoples lives. World economy may be in recession; hunger may blight large areas of the Third World; but the armaments business flourishes.

Coventry May 26th

There will be a rally and march in Coventry on Saturday May 26th.

The speakers at the rally include:-

Joan Ruddock,

E.P. Thompson,

Alan Bleasdale (boys from the Blackstuff)

Ron Todd (TGWU)

A coach will be going from Oswestry

picking up in Shrewsbury and Telford.

Anyone interested please contact:-
Paul 501218
Una 590307

Details of picking up places are yet to be arranged, but the price will be £2.

Burtonwood April 14th

A coach left Telford picking up people from Shrewsbury, Oswestry and the Welsh border before moving on to RAF Burtonwood. There the Shropshire group joined over 6,000 people at the base which is the largest American military store in Europe.

The event required co-ordination between the Shropshire groups which apart from being a valuable exercise provided a practical activity for the Shropshire Peace Alliance.

Diary Dates

Monday May 7th:
Broseley CND Mayday celebration, Hill Top House, Benthall. 1 pm onwards. Food & drink.
Tickets £2 (£5 for a family) from Barbara (882225)

Thursday May 24th:
International Women's Day for Disarmament. Leaflet in Broseley Square 9 - 1. Also, collect for Greenham - food, blankets, polythene, toiletries. Contact Barbara (882225)

~~Monday~~
Thursday May 24th:
Broseley CND. Duke of York - 8 pm.

15th May:
TANG meeting - Dawley Information Centre, High Street, Dawley - 7.30

7th May:
Mayday march & rally - Dawley Town Hall - 11.00 am.

May 26th:
Coventry demo - see Newsletter.

May 24th:
Womens International Day for Disarmament.

May 29th:
Campaign meeting - Dawley Information Centre, Dawley - 7.30

June 22nd;
Folk evening - Forrest Glen - see

June Newsletter

CRUISE REFUSED

The peace movement has had its first real success in relation to cruise missiles. In a little-publicised statement, the British government has refused to take more cruise missiles if the Dutch decline to take their share. Our government has obviously thought that it could not be politically justified to increase our share of the missiles. Not much of a success, you may think, but it is an achievement even to limit the increase in weapons.

BUY YOUR ARMS HERE

The annual round of military sales from Britain to other countries starts on May 14th with the Defence Equipment exhibition. There are four different sales covering army, navy, helicopter and general items. These sales in May, June, July and September bring in substantial orders from overseas. No wonder there has been armed conflict going on somewhere in the world continuously since 1945.

Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) has further details of the sales and the action against them (5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX).

The new TANG secretary is Una Chesters, 14 Hinksay Road, Dawley, 'phone 590307.
Other TANG local contacts - Barbara, BROSELEY 882225, Peter, MADELEY 587532, Maria, DAWLEY 594842, Laurens, WELLINGTON 54728.