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No 49

Peter Nias 20642

CHAIN REACTION



NEWS LETTER OF TELFORD ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUP

No N-Weapons East or West.

In the December edition of Chain Reaction we enclosed a leaflet about Molesworth a large disused airbase on the Cambridge-shire/Northamptonshire border. It is planned to house 64 American controlled Cruise missiles which should become operational by the end of 1986.

Three years ago a peace camp was set up which drew new awareness and activity into stopping the deployment of Cruise missiles. In August 1984 the peace camp held a harvest/green gathering which attracted over 2500 people and led to over 100 people making Molesworth their home living in tipis, benders, buses and trucks. What was originally called the the "Green village" was renamed the Rainbow Fields to reflect the varying 'shades' of people wanting to form an alternative community; people of differing ideals, but all united in the struggle against Cruise.

CND has launched a MOLESWORTH PLEDGE scheme, in which people pledge to come to Molesworth for specific periods of time should work begin on the perimeter fence. TANG feels that resistance to the deployment of Cruise and support for the peace camps at Molesworth is important now and as such is organising regular visits to the site.

The first will take place on February 2nd any one interested in going should contact JOHN, TEL 587947

The camp is badly in need of certain materials such as paint, nails, plastic sheeting, pipe lagging, educational books and material, cassette player, blankets and old carpet, building tools and musical instruments. If you have any of these that you would like to give to the camp or any thing which you feel would be of use please contact John or one of your local contacts.

Wednesday 23rd January - One for justice & peace meeting. Meeting House. Telford Town centre. 7.30pm.

Tuesday 22nd January - Chain Reaction meeting, Dawley Information centre, 7.30pm

Sadly I feel I must put my thoughts in writing concerning the recent conference failure to adequately deal with the motion of campaigning against Russian N-weapons.

The media had a field day in reporting this small event within the entire conference period, painting a picture of a pro-Russian - anti American conference and hence tarring CND as a whole. My parents to a degree sympathetic had their suspicions 'proven' by their action. I believe many other people will think similarly and the peace movement is now set back several years. All or most of the credibility painstakingly built up has been lost.

The peace movement must criticise and praise everyone & anyone who deserves it and show no favour. The Americans are not the sole cause of the worlds problems - a fact we must not lose sight of.

I ask for a full explanation of the relevant events at conference. This must not be swept under the carpet.

Robert Saunders

Dates

Saturday 2nd February - Visit to Molesworth for information see newsletter.

Thursday 7th February - 'South Africa' Charles Worth of Christian Aid will be discussing his recent trip to South Africa and Namibia. Malinslee House 7.30pm.

Saturday 9th February - Chain Reaction 50th edition party. 16, Linley Drive, Stirchley, Telford. £1.00 waged, 50p unwaged
8.00pm
Please bring along food to share.

Tuesday 12th February - TANG meeting at Dawley Information Centre. 7.30
all welcome

Tuesday 26th February - 'Civil disobedience and Molesworth' a talk by Richard Hunt. All welcome
Dawley Information centre. 7.30pm.
more details in next newsletter.

Dear TANG

Not many - if any - members of TANG will disagree with Dave Smith (Chain Reaction 48) that the miners deserve support; that they are in the right morally, that the policy of successive governments to turn to nuclear-powered rather than coal-fired electricity generators is motivated chiefly by a desire to facilitate reprocessing plutonium for nuclear warheads, so that the miners' resistance to this is relevant to CND; that government policy is basically evil & that the miners have put up heroic resistance to it, which has dwarfed other struggles.

I would suspect that most, if not all, TANG (& indeed national CND) members contribute to &/or collect for the various miners' relief funds, regularly. Though Dave resigned from TANG's secretaryship because he did not think the rest of us were supporting the miners sufficiently in the way he wanted, I do not think there has been an issue of Chain Reaction, which has not, (on at least one point,) - perhaps as an aside in an article on another matter - made an obviously supporting reference to the miners' cause.

The issue that in fact separates us, both when Dave resigned & at our AGM, is that for Dave supporting the miners would effectively amount to dropping everything else, i.e. that TANG would cease to exist as an ND group. The remaining TANG members not only think that opposition to nuclear weapons is too important to be postponed until after the strike, but also think it would not be an effective way of helping the miners in their struggle.

The group to which Dave now belongs thinks that getting people onto the picket line is the be-all & end-all of struggle; has to all intents & purposes given up arguing an overall case for political changes. But the miners themselves want the struggle widened. - The last thing they want to see is other opponents of the government calling off their disparate struggles at this moment.

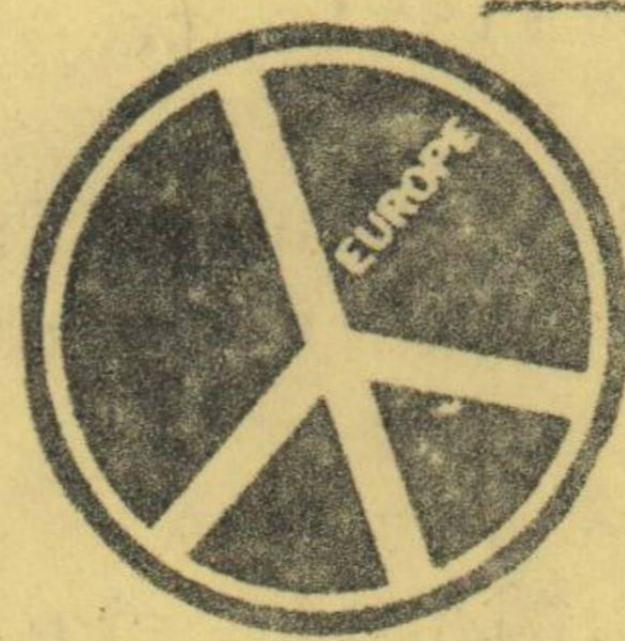
Recently the group which Dave now supports has fundamentally changed its position. It now supports the call for a General Strike, - which earlier in the strike it dismissed as a middle class Utopian slogan, - (its change came almost a fortnight before parliamentarians like Tony Benn adopted the slogan,) - & it now advocates joint demonstrations supporting the miners, but mobilizing other protest groups with their own demands. Earlier this year, the Trades' Council set up a joint May Day committee (on which TANG was represented) for precisely this purpose for the Wrekin area. The group to which Dave now adheres refused to join that planning committee, refused to contribute in any way to the costs of organizing the joint action, & refused to work for it; and when May Day

came (as they had done on previous occasions) they set out to wreck the demo. They attempted - in an elitist manner - to assume the leadership of a demonstration, to which they had not contributed, denounced everyone else, (in many cases for sound reasons, but this was not a time to air differences, & it was only done for sectarian advantage,) & caused the meeting that followed the March to break up in bad feeling.

Subsequently Dave has said that the miners' struggle is now so important that he does not think that a future joint action would be ruined in this way. Presumably he - or rather his new allies, for Dave is more honest than they - did not think the miners' struggle mattered so much back in May; we did.

The miners' cause will only prosper to the extent that the general climate of opinion rejects the values of grab-it society, & the evils Dave so rightly lists; TANG's work illustrates a part of the evil & that part is necessary to the miners. We should not abandon our work. Moreover this miners' strike has been distinguished from all previous ones by the magnificent role played by miners' wives. Time & again these wives - at support committee meetings - have said that they were inspired by the Greenham Common women. So that even if there were no other reason, this means that support for Greenham Common (& Molesworth) activists is important to the miners. Given that Dave's new friends have always denigrated the Greenham Common women (in the past to Dave's annoyance) they are not prepared to acknowledge the importance of their inspiration.

Laurens



Churches Registrar

The European Nuclear Disarmament Churches Registrar is a magazine of the END Churches lateral committee, which aims to bring together church members and other Christians in Europe and the USA who share a common concern about nuclear weapons and the arms race, and wish to promote nuclear disarmament as a first step towards a peaceful and more Christian world.

The annual subscription rate is £5, from The register, 4, The Square, Clun, Craven Arms, Shropshire TY7 8JA.

TANG receives five copies of the Quarterly magazine anyone wishing to purchase a copy please contact Maria Wakely 15 Fellows Close, Little Dawley, Telford.