

CHAIN

NOVEMBER

87

REACTION



TELFORD ANTI NUCLEAR GROUP

TANG

NEWSLETTER

Diary

Wed. Nov. 4th. TANG AGM 8.00 P.M.
Dawley Christian Centre,

Wed. Nov. 11th Vietnam, the aftermath & potential
cause of war,
David Askins has recently visited
the country & is attempting to
raise money to help a Vietnamese
hospital, 7.30 P.M.
Wellington YMCA.

Wed. Nov. 18th. Chain Reaction meeting,
College Fm. Ho., Mill Lane,
Wellington, 7.30 P.M.

Wed. Dec. 2nd. TANG business meeting, 7.30 P.M.
16 Linley Dr., Stirchley.

Thurs. Dec. 10th. The ordained campaigner;
Fr Alf. Willetts describing the
way opponents of the campaign
feel threatened by dog collars
amongst peaceniks, & their
reactions. 7.30 P.M.
Dawley Christian Centre

Nov. 6th. Friday evening, Nov. 6th. Friday evening,
TANG bonfire party, 8.00 P.M., TANG bonfire party,
hosted by Robert Saunders, 23 Saxon Court, Leegomery,
Adults £1-00, children 50p., please bring either
feed or fireworks.

AGM Secretary's Report

We have to start on a despondent note. Mark Stokes, who has for a long time been responsible for producing Chain Reaction, is almost certainly leaving us for a year. He has felt for a long time that too much concentration on ND has prevented him doing other necessary things, & he has arranged to join a social work commune in London.

He has left for a two months trial period, & when that is finished he will join them for at least an year.

He has - over the last few years - done a disproportionately large share of TANG's work. (Largely because most CND supporters in this area only notice the address from which the news-sheet is published, much of the work that should have come to me, has gone to him; & Chain Reaction editing is of itself a more arduous task than the group secretaryship.)

We have not got a replacement, so producing CR will fall on the few other active members, none of us have direct experience of producing this particular paper, & all do other work for TANG & similar local causes. I must apologize, therefore in advance for the brevity, & any other shortcomings, of this issue (the AGM issue) of the paper; and I must warn that for the immediate future Chain Reaction is liable to get worse not better.

... ..

Mark's going illustrates the context for my report. CND in many areas has had a difficult time of late. Many members, like Mark, have felt that the demands of the campaign have been such that they have neglected other issues which they see as being part & parcel of the same broader movement.

In consequence in many parts of the country groups have found their regular attendance at meetings declining, & some such are rumoured to have considered putting themselves on ice.

Fortunately TANG - though our regular attendance at meetings was less in this last year than the one before -

has not been so badly hit, so far.

Of course in large measure, for all the campaign, concern with the Election has diverted attention from strictly unilateralist campaigning; then in the months since the election, despondency over the result, (not in any way relieved by the subsequent rush on the part of many Labour Leaders to drop unilateralism,) has militated against renewed campaigning.

Locally this has had the effect that though some 5,000 CND leaflets have been distributed by TANG activists in the year, this is a drop in leaflet-distribution. (No doubt TANG members distributed several thousand other leaflets during the year.)

In this context it is important to report that locally we have seen a virulently hostile M.P. replaced by an Unilateralist, (one who so far at least has not supported the aim of abandoning unilateralism from Labour Party policy.) TANG is naturally very glad to have an M.P. whom we can support in this, very glad to welcome Bruce Grocott.

Given that the Wrekin has since 1945 always until now been held by an M.P. of the Government party; given that Donnington is one of the largest employers in the area; & given that after the last General Election, members of the Labour Party previously sympathetic to us, said that Unilateralism (& specifically our actions in distributing Unilateralist leaflets during the election,) had lost them the Election; Bruce's election was a remarkable achievement.

This year, as previously, the Tery Candidate was not prepared to speak at a meeting of all three candidates that we would have hosted; so for the second time TANG did not host such a meeting.

Quite fortuitously - since it was arranged several months before - a week before the Election we had an open meeting with Bruce Kent in Dawley Town Hall. A lot of people who might otherwise have come were canvassing; the same night the N.U.T. had a meeting hosting the three candidates; and this too diverted people from attending; so we did well to attract a large audience for a lively

meeting.

However we have not had the same successful spread of meetings that we had last year, attracting people every couple of months to an open meeting with a sizable audience. In part this has been due to the concentration of campaigners on the pre-election period. In part that two of the specialist sections for whom we hoped to host meetings are evidently reorganizing, & too busy.

That has not prevented us from continuing our involvement in related issues; as usual we were represented on the May Day Committee, which had - at TANG's suggestion - Tam Dalyell up to speak for the march; the former Peace Pledge Union Film Van, now no longer linked exclusively to the PPU, which we have invited most years, came to Shropshire jointly hosted by ourselves & Shrewsbury Peace Group for the Shropshire Green Week. For this latter, - the first such' - we also organized a meeting in conjunction with the Lightmoor Project. Earlier in the year we'd had a small but interesting meeting addressed by Greenpeace (London).

Very early in the year we were contacted by Artists Support Peace & warned that United Technology Corporation was sponsoring an exhibition at the Elton Gallery, Coalbrookdale. (Telford it appears, in order to keep the gallery open outside the tourist season, look for any exhibitor prepared to cover costs.) U.T.C. has connections with South Africa, with the nuclear-military complex, is engaged in ecologically damaging & humanly-exploitative work in the Third World. We decided to protest through the media rather than organize a picket, largely because the gallery was unlikely to be over-full out of season, and both the radio & local paper carried our protests.

Reporting the group's year, to end on an high note, one has to end as the report began with Mark; for Mark, being committed to prison for non-payment of a fine after cutting the wire at Capenhurst was the most significant event in the group's year.

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Turning briefly to the future:

first I must emphasize that Mark's going will make it a struggle to keep going,

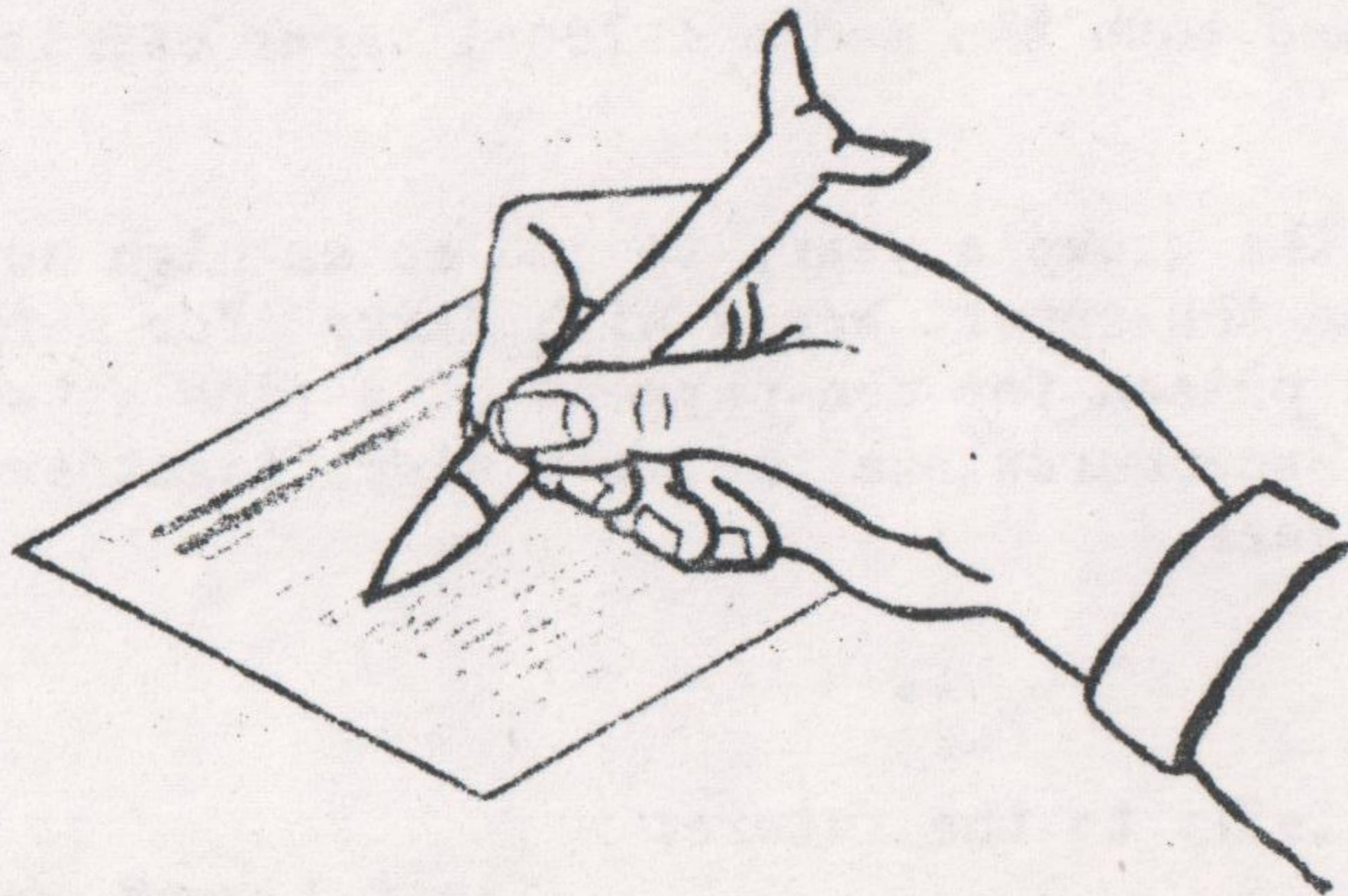
secondly, I think ~~we can~~ reasonably hope for the campaign nationally, the faint signs that we have turned the corner, & just as CND activists feel that they have too long neglected other issues, so others are beginning to turn to working for CND,

thirdly to the extent that Labour is moving away from unilateralism, these CND members who for the last six years have felt that they can work for nuclear disarmament, by confining themselves to working for the Labour Party, ought to be moving back to CND.

Starting from a very low number of people prepared to do the essential day to day work of the group, it will be hard to make the most of the opportunities that next year should bring; but hard though it may be, I believe there will be promising chances, and it is essential that these are taken.

L.O.

P.S. The Treasurer's report will be circulated at the AGM, he tells me that we have at least £50 in cash in the bank, and about the same amount of litt. either in hand or ordered (and paid for).



CAMPAIGN '88

At TANG's annual general meeting on Wednesday 4th November at Dawley Christian Centre there will also be a discussion on campaigning priorities for the next 12 months.

Come with your own thoughts. In the meantime here are a few suggestions :

- IF it is agreed, to celebrate the planned withdrawal of Cruise missiles with a bonfire of TANG's large cardboard replica of Cruise.

What other ways are there? Possibly church bell ringing across Telford. Would anyone like to volunteer their local parish church for this?

- To lobby the Wrekin's M.P., Bruce Grocott, to make sure that he keeps to his unilateralist views. (invite Joan Ruddock?).

- Because the Chain Reaction co-ordinator, Mark Stokes, is now living in London TANG will have fewer people to do the basic tasks of running a group. To maintain this newsletter will require another person to help (not necessarily to write or to edit, but to produce in readiness for copying).

- Plan the run-up to next Easter's demo at Aldermaston (where Trident nuclear weapons are being developed).

- We have often been accused of ignoring the development of chemical weapons. With the possible discussions between the superpowers on these, we could help to inform people about these.

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