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ASK FOR THE EARTH



**September 1st 1990
Roundhay Park, Leeds.**

**August - September 90
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At CND's national conference last year we passed a 'green' resolution. This called on us, amongst other things, to hold a major peace and environmental festival.



'Ask for the Earth' is that festival. It will be held in Roundhay Park, Leeds, on September 1st from 11am to 7pm. Organised chiefly by Yorkshire and Humberside CND it has the backing of a wide variety of organisations, and should be the largest CND-initiated event ever held in the North.

Events you probably missed!

The new two monthly format has caught the diary compilers out recently. We failed to give you notice of, among other things, Shrewsbury Peace Group's exhibition in connection with the U.S. Peace Ribbon. The ribbon was started in 1982 as a attempt to produce a two mile hand-made ribbon depicting what would be missed most if there was a nuclear war. By the target date there were 15 miles of ribbon. It is hoped to hold a demonstration in 1993 when the ribbon should be large enough to wrap around the earth. Panels from the ribbon were on show in Shrewsbury library, the Abbey, the Pride Hill shopping centre, Crabapple and several other places. There was a workshop on making panels on July 14th. A video was shown then, and also at Shrewsbury Peace Group's July meeting. A book illustrated with coloured photographs was on sale at Shrewsbury Library. For further details of future plans for making panels contact Anne on Shrewsbury 59950.

Mandela & the Six Counties

It cannot be doubted by anyone with the capacity to think that the problems of Northern Ireland can only be solved when all parties are prepared to talk without preconditions. Nor can it be doubted that in almost 70 years since the Treaty that partitioned both Ireland & the ancient province of Ulster to create the "Ulster" state far more members of the Catholic minority have been annually killed by Protestant para-militaries, by the security forces of the Six County state, & by those of the United Kingdom than have ever been killed by the IRA.

But we are expected to believe that of these the IRA are uniquely evil, in that they are alleged to have brought violence into politics and to defy democratic norms. So when Mandela says what everyone must know to be true, that Britain must one day talk to the IRA, there is a scream of horror from the British Media and the House of Commons. It is perhaps not surprising that Kinnock should rush to join in this; it is a little more worrying that Mandela has felt it necessary to qualify his statement.

Laurens Otter

Greenhouse v radio-active waste

Once more the argument is raised that the only way to lessen carbon-dioxide emissions is to build yet more nuclear power stations. The argument, that nuclear power is green, is made by people who in no other way show any desire to preserve the planet.

Readers of Chain Reaction will hardly need to know the contrary arguments, & this is only important to this journal in that it shows just how central the nuclear issue is. Many people have argued in the past that we could get somewhere further if we lowered our sights, concentrated on winnable Green issues rather than the impossible anti-nuclear one.

But the fact that governments will attempt to don the clothes of their critics if they think they could win votes that way, shows the dangers of such a policy. In today's conditions, & perhaps even more tomorrow's, arguing a Green case must involve arguing an anti-nuclear one, (& there can be no argument against peaceful nuclear power which does not by implication argue - yet more strongly - against its military use.)

Hilda Murrell Memorial Day

Once more there was an Hilda Murrell memorial day of study on Green issues, last month, this time at Church Stretton. It was well attended and informative. The pattern this year as last was a morning of lectures, with an afternoon spent on walks looking at wild-life, geology, or other matters of ecological interest. Rob Green is considering organizing it next year here in Telford. He'll be looking for an hall suitable for about 150 people, conveniently placed for setting out on such walks, & for a number of speakers on ways of using energy more efficiently, or other ecological topics. Anyone with any suggestions should contact him. (TANG will be glad to forward any such letters.)

The day of the Hilda Murrell study-day (23rd June) the Independent carried a gallup-type poll on attitudes on Green Issues. They are asked questions on six points of major debate on ecological issues; and they analysed the replies of supporters of each party on these; curiously the response of members of the Green Party was only very slightly "greener" than those of supporters of other parties.

WORDS OF WAR

At the June TANG meeting, we discussed the use of military words, expressions and metaphors in everyday language. We had all been "collecting" these for some weeks and in doing so had realised just how much they pervade the language.

We felt that it was the unconscious rather than deliberate use of them that could perhaps be dangerous. The question we posed was whether the use of such expressions as coming under attack, fighting one's corner, frontal assault and gunning for you could be affecting the level of aggression in society. Just as the use of racist and sexist expressions can affect attitudes, perhaps fighting terms could be subconsciously influencing behaviour and/or attitudes.

We found many words and metaphors that derived from the 1st World War, eg. entrenched, over the top, get dug in. Others were much older: holding the fort, dragoon, drum up support, man the barricades.

Pressure groups such as CND use many military expressions themselves. Campaign, be on the watch, battle on, armed with the facts, banner, are all of military origin. Whether this has any significance is another matter. Meanings of words have changed, eg. the word volunteer no longer has any military connotation despite its origins. Similarly backtrack and up front are unlikely to suggest even subconsciously a military meaning.

What we found interesting was that many of the military terms which have infiltrated the language could be quite explicitly violent: blaze away, goes like a bomb, cuts both ways/double-edged sword, cut and thrust, in the firing line,

rifle through, shoot down in flames. In more recent times the military and governments in trying to make defence policies more acceptable, have deliberately tried to give cosy, harmless terms to the most horrific weapons. Fat boy, Peacemaker and Cruise sound totally unthreatening. When they talk about the effects of these weapons, they do so in such anodyne terms that they can seem almost innocuous. We felt this to be much more dangerous than the more graphically violent terms.

We would welcome the views of Chain Reaction readers on this subject. Do expressions such as triggered off by, shell-shocked, setting your sights on and bang on have any detrimental effects? Do they influence our attitudes to the military? Do they affect our mentality and make us more aggressive? Are we aware of them at all? And does it matter? Send us your views and your own lists of words/expressions. The debate will go on.

TANG members, Viv, Carol with her children, Laurens and Peter presented Wrekin's MP, Bruce Grocott, with an outside letter at his constituency surgery in Oakengates (13th July). The letter said:

"Dear Bruce Grocott,

We are horrified that there are proposals to replace the Cruise missiles leaving Greenham Common by new Cruise missiles on planes in Britain. This makes a mockery of the historic I.N.F. treaty and would actually increase the number of nuclear weapons in Britain at the very moment the Cold War has ended.

We call upon you as our M.P. to oppose new Cruise missiles in Britain.

Signed Telford Anti-Nuclear Group

P.S. Opinion Polls show that the majority of voters oppose new nuclear weapons."

Letter to the editors:

ANY FUTURE FOR CHAIN REACTION?

You put that question in the last issue. I know the problems, but I would be sorry to see the newsletter disappear. CND are struggling to put across the issues, but what about poor old Peace Through Nato - before long people will say 'Peace through who?' Very soon it will mean No Armies To Organise.

But we won't be very happy if there is no peace movement to organise either. (Shrewsbury's ? ed) Meetings just now, are as inspiring as a discussion on the Dead Sea Scrolls. They are hardly worth calling.

A short newsletter every couple of months advertises that we are still around. It can also remind people that whatever talk there is about 'peace dividends' we still have a government committed to high military spending.

There has been a well-publicised cut of 33 Tornado Aircraft. It saves £600 million. The cut merely brings the defence expenditure into line with the estimates for 1990/91: £21.2 billion.

If we break that £21.2 billion down into a daily total it is about £55 million a day! That's worth thinking about for a moment. Who are we being defended from?

The spending for one hour is about £2.3 million.

Did you know that the military bands alone cost the taxpayer £62 million a year?

If you keep an eye on the papers you will find items like the one in the Observer on 13th May: 'Cash-starved centre to turn away cancer children.'

Children with bone cancer are the latest victims of cuts by health authorities desperate to balance their budgets. Patients are to be turned away from the centre for bone tumours at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, Middlesex unless the Department of Health or the patient's health authority pays for treatment.

More than 200 bone tumour patients a year are seen at an average cost of £12,000.

One minute's military spending is about £40,000. It would do three of those operations.

Bloomsbury Health Authority runs the hospital. It faces a deficit of £7 million. 3 hours military spending. 'Beds not Bombs' still applies. Education, social welfare, research into drug abuse, they all lose out to the military machine.

A newsletter can make these points. It can encourage people to pass them on. They may even base a letter to the press on them.

It keeps the door open. That may be worth doing.

Bill Westall

Detente

With a great fanfare of trumpets German unity is achieved. The Tories crowing over the fact that they haven't backed down over their insistence that the united Germany should be in Nato, & should still have Nato nuclear weapons on its soil. No explanation is given as to what purpose Nato is now supposed to serve.

With Gorbachov trying unsuccessfully to walk a tight rope between the Ligachev neo-stalinists and the Yeltsin populists, no Nato (nuclear weapons') apologist is able ever to suggest a role for their organization other than to resort to circular reasoning & say: "it is obvious to everyone that we need to keep Nato/nuclear weapons".

If they at least had the honesty to say: "I have a job to lose," "I have shares in the arms' industry," or even "we might risk running into a slump, if we cut back on arms production too fast," one might be able to respect the Nato spokespeople, but as it is they have told us for years that Nato is necessary because without it the soviets would occupy the West; if they believed that when they said it, they plainly cannot now, & so they cannot believe it now has that role.

We argued, & would still argue, that the Bomb (and the military Pact which enshrined it) was never a defence; that it palpably didn't deter aggression on many occasions (either by East or West;) that the claim that the Pact was formed because of the threat from the East ignores the fact that when it was formed only America had nuclear weapons, and that the Soviet imposition of Stalinism on the countries of Eastern Europe was agreed at Yalta.

Some of us added that the Cold War propped up the two exploitative systems in the East & West; and hostility was deliberately engendered for this purpose. This was repudiated by Nato apologists (& indeed those for the Warsaw Pact) as absurd dogmatism. Our case can only be proved by the fact that those who pretended to believe in a defensive/deterrent role for the Bomb & Nato, still want to keep it when they cannot believe such a role is necessary.

Laurens Otter

DIARY

- Mon Aug 6th &
Thur Aug 9th
T.A.N.G. Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days
Phone Laurens (641852) for details of
activities planned.
- Tue Aug 14th
8 pm
F.O.E. Video and discussion on the Ecology Building
Society. Fletcher Memorial Hall, Madeley,
details Hilary Betts, 505547.
- Fri Aug 17th
F.O.E. F.O.E. Bar-b-que at Hilary Betts in
Little Wenlock (Tel: 505547)
- Wed Aug 29th
7.30 pm
T.A.N.G. Discussion of CND conference resolutions
Delegates needed, please come if interested.
16 Linley Drive, Stirchley Park.
- Sat Sept 1st
11 am - 7pm
C.N.D. *Ask for the Earth*
Roundhay Park. Leeds. Peace and
environmental festival.
- Wed Sept 5th
7.30 pm, TANG Chain Reaction Meeting.
6, Myford Cottages, Horsehay
- Sat Sept 8th
F.O.E. Wrekin Chairman's Sponsored Bike Ride.
15 miles starting from Wellington.
Contact Hilary as above.
- Tue Sept 11th
7.30 pm
F.O.E. The lifestyle movement- Robert Saunders
plus Telford F.O.E. AGM.
Fletcher Memorial Hall, Madeley
- Wed Sept 26th
7.30 pm, TANG T.A.N.G. Meeting
16 Linley Drive, Stirchley Park.
- Nov 9th-11th
C.N.D. Remembering War- Working for Peace
CND Annual Conference, Coventry.

CHAIN REACTION CONTRIBUTIONS

Please send or give your letters or articles, in whatever form, to any of the following:

Tot Dawes, 6 Myford Cottages, Horsehay. Tel: 507040
Peter Nias, 48 Victoria Road, Madeley. Tel: 587532
Laurens Otter, College Farm House, Mill Lane,
Wellington. Tel: 641852