

TRADE UNION CND

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AGM 1989

March 4th.

ANNUAL REPORT 1988-89

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This is a fuller report than the annual report and is intended to help EC members report to their own union organisations.

The range of activity that trade union CND is involved in is quite wide. The level of activity we have been able to sustain during the last year has been very impressive when considered against the resources we have available and the type of pressures brought to bear against us. With the type of work we are involved in it is very difficult to quantify success. However I think that on the whole we are being successful. I also think it would be a mistake to forget that we appear now to be working against the tide of opinion on this issue within the Labour Movement.

Ours is a crucial role on a crucial issue for the Labour Movement. I feel that if we do not prevail then the level of demoralisation in the labour movement will be so great that a Labour Government will remain hypothetical for almost a decade.

In the past year some of our affiliated unions have been supportive, while others haven't. Some, like the NUS have been concentrating their efforts on particular struggles relating to their industries in which we have been as supportive as we could.

Below is an itemised report covering the different aspects of our work as it has been carried out this year and giving a brief analysis of what we hope to achieve in the coming year.

1) TUCND's EC:-

This year's EC consists of regional reps, of nominees from some national unions and of people who were elected from the AGM. Most have played a full and active part in the work. We tend to depend on our EC members to carry out the bulk of our work. Some of the National Union nominees find it difficult to participate because of other commitments but nevertheless play a valuable role in putting our point of view in the discussion within the organisations they represent.

The officers are - Chair - John Geleit NGA. Vice chairs are John Chowcatt and Allan Milburn both in MSF and the treasurer is Peter Tuck T&GWU.

The EC consists of:-

Elsie Broad FTAT, M Broomfield NGA, A Clarke NUPE, B Didsbury T&GWU, S Evans NUM, P Haggart T&GWU, K Hopkins NALGO, L Humphrey T&GWU, R Linch APEX, M Malina T&GWU, A Morgan MSF, H Newsom ACTT, A Reed UCW, T Rowlands T&GWU, R Rushton AEU, P Skyte MSF, G Stratton MSF, G Squires NALGO, P West IRSF, G Wilson T&GWU, S Wilkins NAPO, S Young NALGO,

2) The general organisation of TUCND's work:-

In the middle of this year the EC decided to begin the process of trying to spread the workload as far as possible amongst the EC

members. It has been clear that there is no possibility of being allocated more resources by CND to carry out this work, that our work is expanding and that TUCND's existing full time worker - Jim Barnes - is not in a position to take any more work on. Later on in the year we have been able to call on the voluntary support of John Arnold, a retired ACTT member which is proving invaluable in developing our work.

A set of working groups was set up some of which are now functioning well. The groups are - 'Trade group organisations' dealing with organisations such as Printers for peace etc. Hugh Newsom, Paul West and John Arnold have responsibility for this area; 'International Work' for which George Stratton is responsible; 'Regional development' with E Broad, G Stratton, S Evans, L Humphrey and B Didsbury; 'Women' - this group is made up of five of the women on the EC plus Kait Duerdon MSF who was coopted on to this group to act as secretary; 'TUCND News' consisting of Gail Squires and Richard Linch; 'Trade union education' - this group is made up of Sally Wilkins, Peter Tuck and John Arnold; 'Union conferences' for which E Broad, S Evans, P Skyte, G stratton, R Rushton, B Didsbury, M Malina, A Reed and Mick Broomfield are responsible; 'Conversion' is dealt with by John Chowcatt and A Milburn. Proposals for updating TUCND's constitution are also under discussion.

3 Education:-

This item covers trying to encourage Trade Unions to run courses on peace and disarmament and to include the issue in their standard shop stewards courses. Some time ago we circulated a pack designed to help people setting up day schools to Trade Union Education officers but with little or no response. Some regional union education officers used the material as the basis for courses but little else happened. We did not have the resources at the time to follow this up.

In the middle of 1988 we wrote to five Unions asking them to approach the TUC education service to run courses on Peace and Disarmament. This got a sympathetic response from the general secretaries and a number did raise it with the TUC, but again only a small amount of actual educational activity resulted.

We have since revised the education pack and delegated John Arnold to approach education officers on an individual basis. We have also had some success in initiating work with regional education officers. This area of work is now expanding gradually and steadily. The significant change has been delegating the work to John.

4 Regional Work

In the early 1980's a large number of TUCND regional organisations were established some of which sustained themselves but most disappeared. In the past three years TUCND has built up its campaigning profile and regional organisations play a much greater role in our activity.

The regional organisations follow the same geographical areas as the regional TUC's, with the exception of Merseyside which has a separate organisation established before the rest of TUCND. They are on the whole funded by a kickback of 50% of the affiliation fee for unions that affiliate in their area.

We decided recently to channel reafiliation through the regional bodies of TUCND where possible in order to develop a closer link between our affiliates and the affiliates locally. This means a renewal notice should have a local address as well as TUCND's National office address.

Below is a breakdown of the condition of our regional organisations:-

Scotland

We began the process of rebuilding the organisation in the beginning of this year and it has been slowly developing since then. There was a conference in the Autumn to establish a working committee which is now meeting regularly. One problem has been resourcing this group because all of the affiliation fee for Branches in Scotland goes to Scottish CND.

Northern

This has functioned well since 1982. It now has a quite dynamic organisation which has taken a number of local initiatives such as a local leaflet on Welfare not Warfare. It also organised a well attended conference in the autumn.

Yorkshire & Humberside

For some reason we have never had a substantial organisation in this area. We have taken steps to remedy this and we have the beginnings at least of a working group.

North West

A major meeting was organised in November this year with a number of speakers. The contacts that were made through this meeting will form the basis for a working organisation in the area. A number of people have agreed to take responsibility for the organisation in this area and so all the signs are promising.

Merseyside

This group has done steady sterling work for 8 years now. The delegates from this region have always had a high profile inside TUCND's EC. Their, for instance, AGM this year attracted 50 people. In the past year they also have developed a number of regional initiatives.

Wales

Similar problems exist in Wales as they do in Scotland in that we have never really been able to get a working group in that area off the ground. Although on the whole we have reasonably good relations with the CND organisation in Wales, a bone of contention has been our mailing to affiliates in Wales. Nevertheless we will continue to make direct postal contact.

West Midlands

We have not had anything in this area since the early 1980's. We do now have a couple of contacts in that area and are building on them. A meeting with Ron Todd as the speaker has been called for February and we hope to get a working group out of the people we get along to that organisation.

East Midlands

The group in this area has been functioning well for quite a number of years. It is going through a bad patch at the moment but is expected to pull through.

East Anglia

Despite a number of attempts to make contact in that area we have not been able to establish a working group.

South East

The organisation in this area has had a number of false starts. It was first set up in 1986 and worked well for a short period but faltered relatively quickly. An AGM is planned for January and a series of meetings planned during the year following that. John Arnold has taken some responsibility for this area.

South West

Traditionally we have had difficulty organising in this region. There is a very active organisation working on Conversion in the area but no TUCND regional organisation.

Northern Ireland

There was a very effective organisation in this region until a couple of years ago. It has since faltered. This area also suffers from being isolated physically as well as from the quite specific political difficulties of forming political organisations there. There are however still people active and thus there remains a base on which to build.

5 CND Campaigns and bodies.

I think it is accurate to say that the relationship between TUCND and the rest of the campaign has not been as smooth as one would hope. There was for instance a proposal at the end of 87 to give both TUCND and Christian CND what was described as a zero budget. One of the arguments used was that we were expendable in a time of crisis and that this was a time of crisis. The crisis however turned out not to be quite as dramatic as originally posed and fortunatley the advocates of zeroing our budget fell from grace.

In the past year we have contributed to a number of CND initiatives such as the Aldermaston demonstration, the anti-Trident leaflet and the demonstration at three air bases in the autumn. However it is not easy to mobilise through the Trade Union movement for the type of campaigning that forms what would be regarded as the mainstream of CND's major events. A Non Violent Direct Action event at an out-of-the-way American airforce base is not the type of thing we could persuade most

trade unionist to participate in, or for that matter the type of event we could persuade most union bodies to provide resources for. This is not to denigrate such actions or to diminish their significance politically and for the peace movement.

A part of our role in trying to ensure that the peace movement and the labour movement work in unison rather than against each other can be filled by making sure Trade Unionists have an effective voice inside the peace movement. This isn't as easy as it may sound. For trade unionists used to well organised agenda and diciplined meetings participating in the democratic process within CND can often be a bazarre and unsettling experience. Added to this the sort of people we would wish to represent the trade union point of view at CND's national bodies would be those with an already substantial commitment within the Trade Union movement. For all of those reasons it has proven very difficult to get trade unionists to fill the positions on the National bodies of CND. I should add that we have had bad experiences in the past wher people have volunteered for these positions and neither kept us informed nor refered to us for guidance with regard to their input into discussion.

Our current CND EC rep is Elsie Broad and Lyn Humphrey is our CND National Council rep. Dr Adriene Morgan was elected to CND's National Coucil by the National Conference.

6 Treatment or Trident

We recently produced a broadsheet with this title which has proved remarkably successfull. 45,000 were produced of which 40,000 were earmarked for distribution before it was printed. We will probably reprint about 20,000 copies if further orders come in.

7 TUCND News

TUCND weren't allocated a budget for TUCND News, and that meant that we had to find the money to pay for copies sent free to our regional organisations. We are currently trying to put its funding on to a sound footing. At the moment it is funded in a rather ad hoc way from a number of sources. In its current format any increase in the print run will make it cheaper per copy. However, we are still charged the same per copy by CND and that is one of the things we are trying to regularise.

The current print run is 13,000 of which about 6,500 are bulk orders from unions, about 5,000 go to regional organisation of TUCND, 1200 are distributed to our affiliates and the rest are used for general distribution.

A much greater proportion of the paper is written by EC members in addition to the Secretary's contribution. All of the feedback we get is positive. However, there is a great deal more that we could do to improve the content and to extend its distribution.

8 TUCND Contact List

At the moment we have roughly 700 branches affiliated to CND. These are mailed 6 times a year with TUCND News and with other campaign material. In addition we mail the same material to a list of about 500 contacts. This is one very effective way to keep people in touch with what we are doing and of encouraging participation in our activity.

9 Labour Party organisation

Clearly the Labour Party is of great political significance to the Trade Union movement. The last year has seen some very worrying developments inside the Labour Party, all the more worrying because they appear to have been pretty badly mishandled by the Labour Party national office. The Trade Union vote at the Labour Party conference was obviously key to the decision in favour of maintaining a commitment to Nuclear Disarmament. The motion which was being supported by the Labour Party leadership, moved by the UCW with an amendment to it by the GMB, was not over disturbing in terms of its wording, although the context in which it was put it was clearly intended as symbolic of a considerable move away from a commitment to Nuclear Disarmament. That is why it was such a great relief that Ron Todd was so forceful in his support for the current policy. He is not isolated in this commitment, most General Secretaries would agree with his standpoint.

On TUCND's initiative CND are producing a document to go out to CLP's with a request that they ask for speakers from CND to their ward and constituency organisations. We have also produced supplementary material which will accompany the broadsheet when it is sent to CND Groups to inform them of what is happening. We are working as closely as we can with Labour CND and CND's Parliamentary organisation to make sure this work goes well.

Clearly lots of our activity is focussed on the content of the debate as it has been raised in the Labour Party and it will be a focal point of our activity in the coming year.

10 SDI

Early this year the USA Congress Office of Technology Assessment produced a damning report on the progress and the feasibility of SDI. At one time Dukakis looked almost certain to win especially given the stories linking Bush to organised crime and drug trafficking, Dukakis was on record as saying that SDI is a fantasy and a fraud. But Dukakis, as they say, blew it and the Bush administration are not seeking the same sort of public profile for the SDI Programme that its predecessor sought. Also there is the fact that the American budget system means that when a budget has been allocated it remains there regardless of any delay in spending the money. As a result the SDI programme has a substantial backlog of cash which could provide it with funds for a considerable period of time.

So the programme has dropped from the public eye but is carrying on regardless of the political opposition to it in the United

States. It also remains a considerable obstacle to the progress of the arms reduction negotiations being promoted by the Soviet Union. It is therefore an issue which TUCND will continue to campaign upon.

In the last year we organised a very successful conference on SDI which attracted a large number of delegates from a wide range of trade unions. As we arranged the conference, however, we became increasingly aware of the developing difficulty in organising around the issue. Many within the peace movement and the Trade Union movement appear to think that the issue is now dead. This has a bearing on the type of work we organise around this issue. In the future it will be essentially informative, educative work linked to other aspects of our campaign. We will keep a close eye on the issue so that if the opportunity arises we will give it a higher public profile.

11 Affiliation drive

Some time ago we produced a special leaflet for general distribution urging people to raise affiliation to CND in their union branches. This was sent to all Trades Councils and to a wide range of other bodies. Some organisations within the AEU were mailed with a special broadsheet urging them to affiliate.

Several trade unions distributed copies of this leaflet and a number of new affiliations were gained this way.

All new members of CND and everyone who renews their membership receive a leaflet urging them to make sure their union branch is affiliated to CND.

In addition to trying to gain new affiliates we have made considerable efforts to make sure that those branches affiliated to us in the past, re-affiliate. To this end we have started to include a regional contact name on the letters sent to union branches asking them to renew their affiliation to CND.

We have therefore been able to maintain the level of our affiliations fairly well. The level of affiliations is not growing, but we are not shrinking either.

12 Union Conferences

Last year we covered a number of Union conferences with fringe meetings and with stalls etc. For this we drew on the services of our EC Members and of local CND groups.

A set of guidelines was produced to help those EC members responsible for particular unions.

This coming year we hope to be better organised with better quality material and a more thorough coverage of the event. There were a number of other conferences we covered in addition to Union conferences, such as the TCJCC, the Womens TUC, the Labour Party and the TUC itself.

13 Conversion

TUCND are a part of an organisation called the National Trade Union Defence Conversion Committee. We have slowly been building our profile on the issue and have had some success in involving a number of major unions. However the situation in the Defence Industries is now moving quite rapidly with the ROF's being quite nakedly asset-stripped and serious inroads being made into fundamental aspects of our defence procurement by the United States. In addition the effect of the greater drain on the procurement budget in the current phase of development on Trident will mean that a large number of jobs in the defence industries will go during the next few years.

So although we have made some gains we have not kept pace with what is happening to the issue. In addition a number of organisations that were active on conversion have ceased to function. These are the BAEC in Barrow, the AESG in Dumbarton and the GLCC in London. All had workers funded, in the main, through local authorities but have not had their funding renewed.

In addition a number of conversion projects which were established such as Alterplan 87 at the RNSD in South Wales, did not produce any significant number of jobs or any significant alternative to large scale job losses. Alterplan did, however, succeed in convincing the MOD that they were wrong to close the RNSD.

There are a number of reasons for this failure. One has to be lack of a substantial enough response from the unions involved. But what is more important is that the issue has been tackled on a plant by plant basis rather than as a national political campaign. For instance, it is now clear that the only real future for an aerospace industry in Britain is under public ownership. A civilian aerospace project needs 15 year of support before it produces returns and no private company would contemplate such a venture. But for that support to be forth coming it needs a political campaign with political objectives. That isn't happening. The principal obstacle to that happening will be the political vacillation within the Labour Party which in turn will encourage some Union leaders to support economic measures aimed at shoring up the current deteriorating situation rather than to argue for a radical change in policies.

In the near future we hope to produce a pamphlet, a broadsheet for more general distribution and a leaflet. these will be for the use of CND groups as well as for use within the Trade Union movement.

14 Women's Working group

We have had a working group for a number of years but it has had difficulty establishing a clearly defined role. It now appears to have worked this out and is functioning well. The group have produced a 'Charter' of demands which they will be approaching Union women's committees asking them for support.

15 International work

This is something which we have really only begun to touch on. It is clearly a very important area since one of the only ways we can erode the idea that Britain is threatened with invasion is by establishing international relations.

We have slowly been building up a mailing list of people abroad to receive our material and I do get some positive feedback from that.

We are now close to establishing a working relationship with some of the French trade unions. Despite a visit to Germany in the spring, however, we have not yet been able to establish an effective rapport with them although we have achieved some contact with the German trade union based peace movement which would appear to be as close a parallel to TUCND as possible. We also now have a number of contacts in the United States and Japan.

There has been some discussion about helping to develop the 'Dublin Committee' of which Campbell Christie is the Chairman. This has not yet materialised.

There has also been a growing interest within CND in the liberation struggles in the third world. So what is happening in places such as South Africa and the Philippines is more and more regarded as relevant to CND. Although this is something which has been generally accepted within TUCND for some time, it has not been within the mainstream of CND.

TUCND are organising, together with the WDC, an international conference in the Autumn of 1989. This is a very ambitious, and probably expensive, project for us and will require a great deal of work. If it comes off it should be of tremendous benefit in developing our international work.

16 Civil Defence & NFZ Work

In one of its less sensible moods CND's EC decided to cut this area of work, despite our efforts to dissuade them from doing so. One of the problems that we now face in trying to re-establish some of this work is that the people who were active in the NFZ Steering Group became demoralised in their attempts to keep their work going because of what they felt was some shabby manoeuvring within CND. This means that at the moment there is not a basis for doing this work. TUCND have always felt that the NFZ's would have been key to our work around Civil Defence. We have therefore decided to attempt to support the relaunching of the NFZ Bulletin in the new year.

We have had a broadsheet in preparation for some time on Civil Defence particularly related to the current regulations requiring local Authority provision of such things as planning for burying large numbers of dead people in the event of a Nuclear War. The production of this has been delayed pending a clearer picture of what would happen to the NFZ Steering Committee. That picture is

now clear, in that the committee has folded, and we shall therefore be producing the broadsheet for general distribution in the early new year.

17 Poverty

This is an issue which TUCND has produced material on in the past. This material has largely concentrated on the link between poverty in Britain and the cost of the Arms Race. The EC have decided to produce a range of material for general use in 1989 but to have a much greater emphasis on the link between poverty in the third world and the arms race.

18 Research & Development

Britain spends a greater proportion of her available research and development facilities on military purposes than any of our industrial competitors. As we move toward the 1990's the technological base of any manufacturing country will be crucial to its ability to compete as a producer. Britain is alone within the developed world in not increasing the money available for civilian research and development. We may be alone in the world.

The argument that this country should devote more to civilian R & D has been one that we have been pressing in much of our material. The EC have decided that this also will be the basis of a specific campaign in 1989 and material is now being prepared for it.

19 Financial Report

This will be available at the AGM