

YOUTH CND

DEMAND

NUCLEAR

DISARMAMENT



ASSEMBLE • 12 NOON • CLAPHAM COMMON SW4 • nearest tube CLAPHAM COMMON

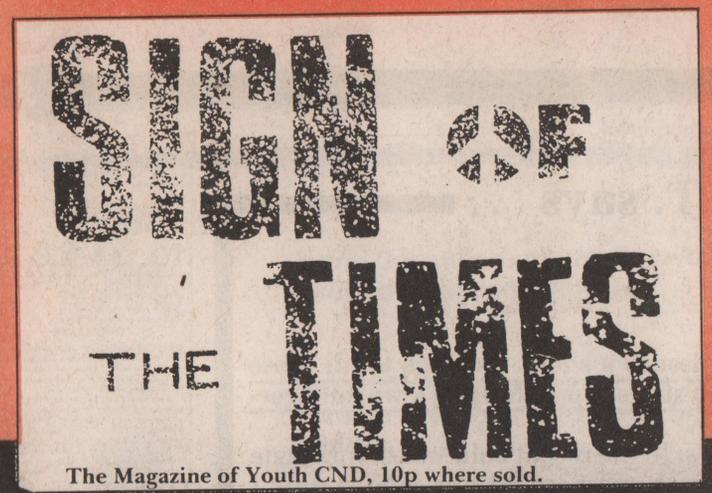
MARCH TO • KENNINGTON PARK • nearest tube OVAL

LONDON

SATURDAY



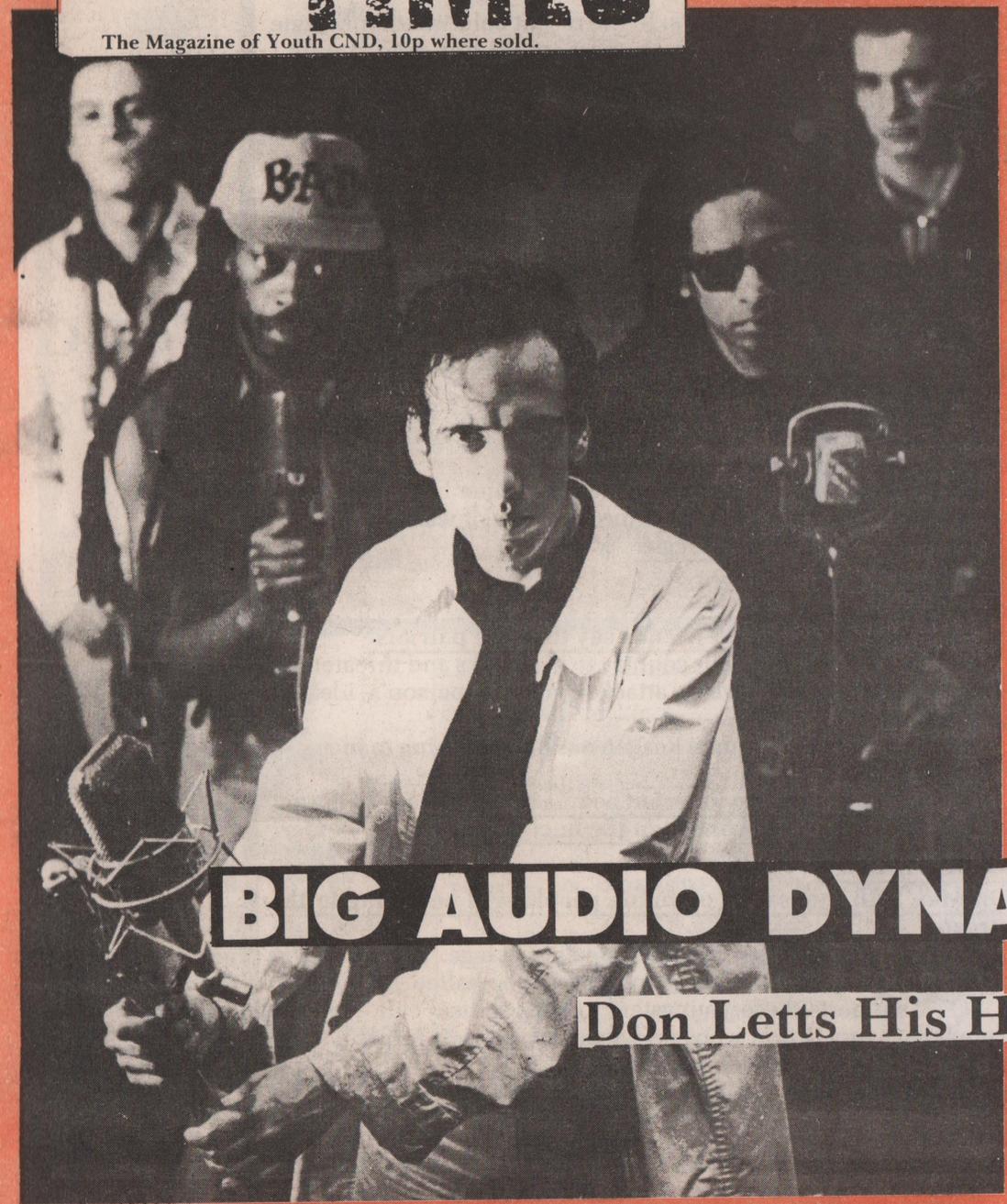
MAY 30th



The Magazine of Youth CND, 10p where sold.

March to the Park May 30th

FALL IN AGAINST FALL OUT



BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE

Don Letts His Hair Down

Billy Bragg: Stonewalled into Snowball..... Losing cruise on Salisbury Plain.....Out in the Cold in Newcastle..... Nevada Testing: Ending the Superpowers' game..... Trident under fire More competitions, more prizes.....

AMBIUSH!

MILITARY chiefs yesterday ordered a top-level inquiry after peace protesters ambushed a Cruise missile convoy.

Nuclear summit talks in deadloc

would have been shot before they reach for their paint sprays. Our liberal democracy, they allowed to stage an ambush of a convoy worthy of Lee. Mr Irregular in the Dirty Dozen standards, though, it was an audacious coup for CND as they beat Americans and RAF at their own game.



The red 'Stay 61' WHEN it comes on White Poppie I will wear my wh of the dead and we

and the box, which has with white paint as a United id coloured locks on top. States mechanic treated the damaged brakes before the about the same site as a

Outmanoeuvred S.O.T.T. says ...

Out in the Cold

TODAY, Sign of the Times issues a shock message to all those young people in Britain who still support Maggie's warmongering nuclear policies.

You can't have it both ways. In the recent cold weather Maggie generously handed out a measly fiver to old folk who couldn't afford to keep warm. And with the other hand continued pumping billions into nuclear weapons, billions Britain's peace-loving people simply cannot afford.

Maggie's mega-death weapons help keep the jobless figures at record levels. And essential services like hospitals and buses suffer as a result.

She's supposed to be caring. She isn't.

War

THE Tories try to silence us. They claim a nuke-free Britain would be a defenceless Britain.

But we know better. We know that only by ridding our small island of these terrible weapons can we be properly defended.

We know that it can only be a matter of time before Maggie's so-called weapons of peace become weapons of war.

You're not fooling us, Maggie.

Patriotism

Maggie and her extremist friends say they are patriots.

We ask: Is mortgaging our country to the Yanks and threatening to commit suicide if we're attacked a sane person's idea of patriotism?

Maggie's side-kick Rambo Reagan has done nothing to increase our confidence.

His mad dog attack on innocent people in Libya was not the act of a man fit to have his finger on the nuclear button.

Demonstrate

On May 30th thousands of young people will be taking to the streets.

They will be pressing home an urgent message. The spiralling arms race has gone on for too long. It must be halted.

SOTT supports these youngsters in their radical call. And we know that every Briton who cares about the world's future will be in London for that demonstration.

We say to Britain's young: Keep up the protest — you're doing a fine job!

Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 22/24 Underwood Street, London, N1 7JG. Tel: (01) 250 4010

lacked on the A303 at re border. She removed from one of the centres at the rear of the convoy. She added: "Any determined terrorists could have got it. They ran with the box to a command car at the front of the convoy and handed it to the commander, who sat with it on his lap. That is no joke. A nuclear deterrent is nothing if it is not credible. So the American and British personnel responsible for security at the Greenham base had better take this very seriously indeed. Their act

Troops threat to peace protest

By TONY CLARK
BRITISH military authorities will crack down hard on peace protesters in times of international tension, a Tory minister threatened yesterday. After yesterday morning's successful direct action against a convoy in Wiltshire, Armed Forces Minister John Stanley praised police and army that he added a sinister rider during Commons' defence questions. In very different international circumstances we would have a very different attitude toward protection of nuclear weapons, he said. "Shoot to kill," shouted back concerned Labour MPs. Later, a defence ministry spokesman said that in times of tension, real nuclear warheads are carried on convoys. Then "a whole range of measures" and "new regulations" would be introduced. "There would be stricter measures," he said, "anyone who interfered with that (nuclear convoys) would do so at his own risk," he threatened.

Peace crum war

By PETER HITCHENS and RO
HOPES of another super pow meeting yesterday dissolved i cold war of words. Two meetings between Soviet an Foreign Ministers failed to find a of common ground on nuclear dis Moscow's Eduard Shevardnadze ins Americans must kill off their Star W nuclear de

COCK MRS. T

Mrs Thatcher to aring of white abrance Day as

judge 'ol insults, The Sta takes some beatin ite poppy with pride ounded, the widows

ercises round the English le. but what was for real was the impressive Intelligence of CND and the dozy lack of it displayed by those supposed to be our most awesome defandiers

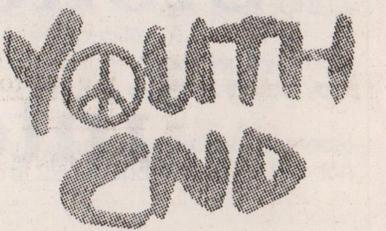
Competition

Answer the following three simple questions and win more prizes — music souvenirs, posters, a year's free subscription to 'Sanity' magazine and much, much more!

1. In which year was CND founded?
 2. Who is the shady character pictured below?
 3. Who said, "The bombing of Russia begins in five minutes"?
- Send your answers to Youth CND Competition, 22/24 Underwood Street, London, N1 7JG. State your name, age and address and make sure your answers reach us by May 30th.



The contributors to this issue of Sign of the Times include: Margo Sweeney, Youth CND worker; Paul Mann, a computer operator who writes for Sanity magazine; Wil Quick, Youth CND National Committee member; Andy Oppenheimer, a science editor specialising in nuclear issues who writes for Sanity magazine; Jenny Carruthers, East Anglia Youth CND organiser; and Loraine Sweeney, Youth CND Committee member.



Thanks to: John Sauven, Paul Mann, Robin Harskin, Phil Woodford, Andrew Chapman.

Design: T.J. Bussell.

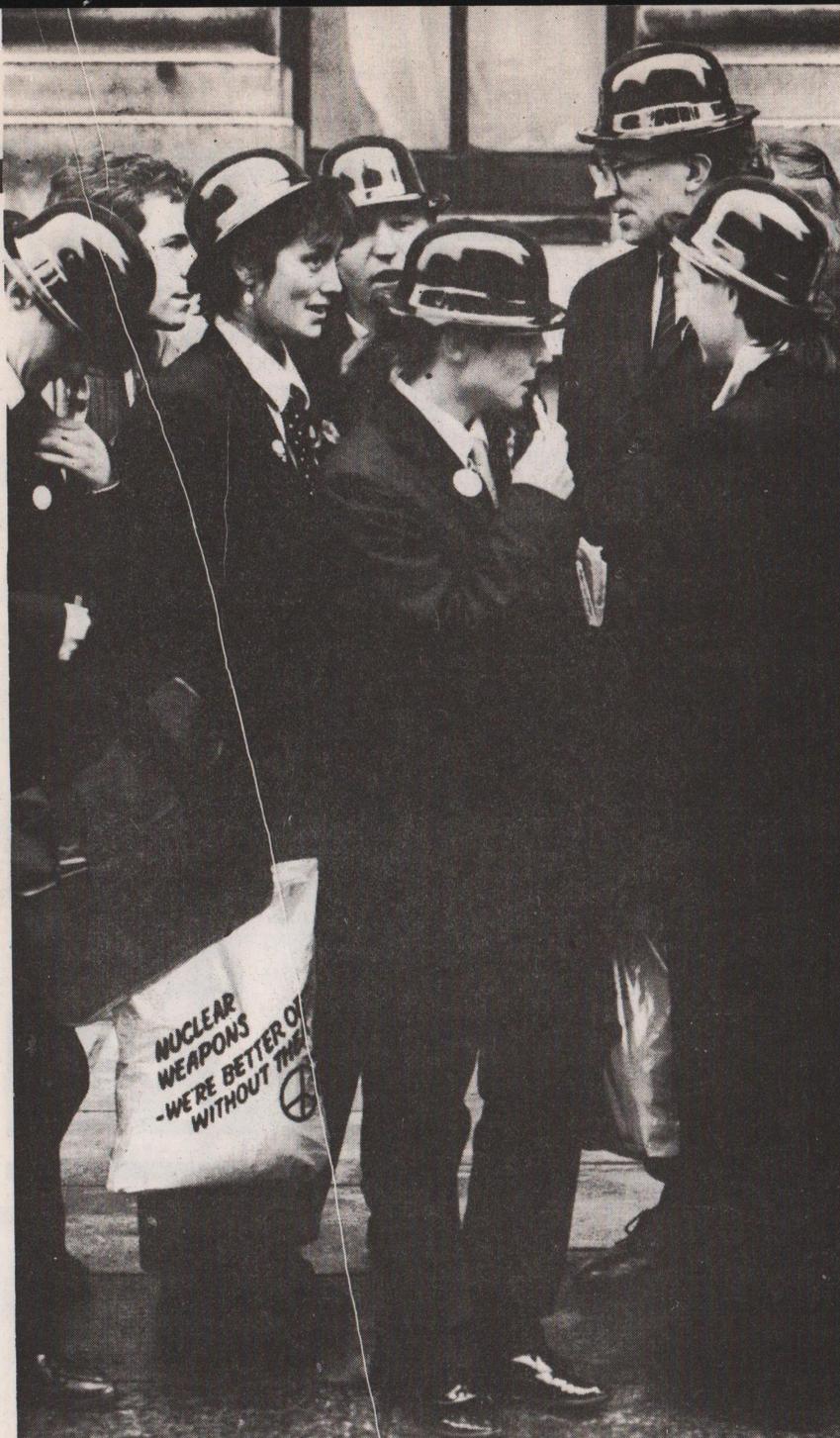
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With this issue of Sign of the Times you will find a demo leaflet for CND's major demonstration in London on April 25th.

Thousands of people will march through London giving the clear message: 'No more Chernobyls' and 'No more Nuclear Weapons'. CND supporters will be joined by supporters of Friends of the Earth. This event will be CND's biggest national event of 1987. Contact your local CND group and book your seat on a coach, now. It will be excellent practice for Youth CND's demonstration on May 30th as well! See you there.



'Ladies and Gentlemen' gather outside the Ministry of Defence for a Snowball in January this year.

Stonewalled into the Snowball

If you're thinking that going on demos isn't enough, there's something more you can do. The Snowball is a non-violent campaign that has been drawing attention to the arms race for more than two years.

Here, Felix, one of its organisers, explains how the Government is breaking the law.

We are all of us waiting to see whether nuclear war will or will not happen, but no time limit has been set. All we can be sure of is that it grows closer every day, with the increase in numbers of nuclear arms around the world, and the decrease of stability in world politics. The nuclear powers are prepared to sit around and wait, talking multilateral disarmament while they unilaterally arm. But the cancer of nuclear weapons which eats into our state can be removed if our government would take just one step towards disarmament, by complying with one of the Snowball Campaign's requests:

That Britain

- 1) starts voting in the United Nations in favour of multilateral disarmament regardless of how the USA votes,
- 2) Publicly encourages the Nuclear Freeze proposals, or
- 3) Takes some unilateral or independent step towards a freeze or reduction in the numbers of nuclear weapons we hold.

To get advance publicity for last November's cut, Tigger and I interviewed Billy Bragg for CND's *Sanity* magazine about why he had decided to take part.

"So, Billy, tell *Sanity* why you're taking part in the Snowball," asked Tigger.

"Cos you asked me to. If I didn't, you'd have kept pestering me," said Bragg the wag.

Well, I guess that's one reason for cutting, and after a while we got him to admit that "Going on demos isn't enough", a slightly better motive. I can't say it's true, though; the Snowball isn't quite like any other

area of the peace movement.

I got involved with the Snowball through another campaign: International Law Against War. In November 1985, the Norwich group laid information in the Magistrates Court against Margaret Thatcher, Michael Heseltine and Sir Geoffrey Howe for breaking international, national and military laws through Britain's possession of nuclear weapons. One of the basic laws common to all the legislation we were quoting is that a distinction must be made between a civilian and a combatant during an attack: to kill a civilian is murder. This is a distinction a nuclear weapon cannot, by its nature, make. Stonewalled by the courts and the police, I took part in the Snowball in British law. I spoke for one-and-a-half hours to three blank-faced magistrates, a bored clerk and a distinctly smarmy prosecutor, and was fined £121 for the pleasure. Needless to say, I haven't paid (and don't intend to).

Let some Snowballers speak for themselves: *This act of civil disobedience which I commit represents my refusal to acquiesce in the preparation for nuclear war ... As other forms of protest have had no effect, this action of cutting the wire is necessary to bring to public attention the Government's hypocrisy in claiming to wish for peace and disarmament, whilst stockpiling nuclear weapons and preparing for genocide. This action gives the Government a chance to prove whether or not its aim is truly peace.*

In this statement, Alison Dore, a 21-year-old student, brings up three of the most common Snowball themes; firstly that Snowball is a last resort for those who have found that "going on demos isn't enough", secondly, that it's a challenge to the Government for them to show us that they really do want disarmament, in deed as well as word, and third, the very gut feeling of rejecting the nuclear state with an act of defiance against its propagators.

"I cannot accept that nuclear weapons have any place within my society and future. I cannot and will



Photo by Alan Stephen

not sit back and allow them to govern our future." (Annajoy David, 23, political campaigns organiser, Red Wedge.)

Billy Bragg, taking part in the same action, wrote: *"To fail to take action would be to give my consent. I do not consent. I object."*

Monsignor Bruce Kent, who took part in the Snowball in January 1986, said: *"If I am charged with a crime I shall plead 'Not guilty'. If it is no crime to prevent a thief from robbing a bank, it can be no crime to try to stop even a government*

pursuing illegal policies."

And a Snowball statement in its simplest form reads: *"I cut the fence/Due to the money that's spent/On nuclear arms and defence/Sizewell is part of this pretence/Producing plutonium for defence/So I cut the fence."* (Nick Buck, chemistry student, 1986.)

If you'd like to get involved in the Snowball Campaign, or find out more, contact Felix at: Greenhouse, 48 Bethel St, Norwich, NR2 1NR. Phone (0603) 631007.

CND SALES

1987 CND Sales catalogue

Our mail order sales operation is an essential part of the campaign. It generates crucial funds, provides an easy and pleasant way for our supporters to contribute and, most importantly, it helps pass CND's message on by making us visible to the general public.

Please buy as much as you can from the catalogue — and also try to help by taking extra copies to pass to your friends or to spread around your workplace/school/college/club etc.

If you would like copies, or want information on behalf of your local CND group on sales, please contact Elaine at 22-24 Underwood St. London N1 7JG. 01 250 4010.



Youth CND is beginning 1987 with plenty to be optimistic about. New Youth CND groups are forming all over the country, the national conference elected a new committee and sent them away with ideas for an important campaigning year ahead, and young people nationwide are mobilising already in preparation for what promises to be Youth CND's most effective protest for years.

Margo Sweeney, Youth CND's worker, looks forward to the most important date in our diaries in 1987 ... May 30th, Demand Nuclear Disarmament.

Demand Nuclear Disarmament

May 30th

London

It is almost a year since the Youth CND national conference decided that our next national event should be a major demonstration in London.

May 30th is the date when we will show the people of Britain that we are totally opposed to the ever-increasing unemployment figures, education and National Health Service cuts, while billions of pounds are being wasted on an insane and suicidal nuclear arms race.

We will be making our message clear to the young people who have not yet joined Youth CND, or who are not yet aware of the clear links between the government's spending on nuclear weapons and a future they face with few prospects.

The demonstration will begin with a march through the centre of London and will culminate in a massive rally at Kennington Park where lots of bands will play.

Let's look at Youth CND's present strength — a record number of groups have formed



over the last twelve months. In fact, during that period the number of groups has increased by three times. Still, there are places where there is no Youth CND activity. If May 30th is to achieve its utmost potential, every single one of us must start mobilising now! As important as the day itself is the work we put in

now to build for a successful demonstration.

This is Youth CND's first major national event for over a year — the work we do in our local areas over the coming months could make May 30th our biggest and best demonstration yet.

These are critical times for Youth CND. At last month's Youth CND conference in Leeds Bruce Kent said, *"the most important thing is what happens on the doorstep, and in your own places or work, where you study, where you talk to people, where you get letters to the press. We have seen so many changes that to lose hope now would be totally absurd and unrealistic, instead we have got to take heart from the great people of the past who have seen change happen."*

Let that be our rallying cry. Together we can make May 30th a very special day for Youth CND.

Play your part for Youth CND

in London on May 30th and Demand Nuclear Disarmament.

For a free factsheet, 'Preparing for May 30th', and further details write to: Youth CND Demo, 22/24, Underwood Street, London, N1 7JG or telephone (01) 250 4010.

Transport is being arranged for the May 30th demonstration. The area contacts are below.

Scotland and North West

England — Kenny, tel: (041) 332 5750.

North East — Lionel, tel: (0385) 69893.

Yorkshire — Nic, tel: (0742) 554298.

West Midlands — Andrew, tel: (0203) 450530.

Wales — Cath, tel: (0766)

831771.

London — Claire, tel: (01) 607 7134.

East Anglia — Clare, tel: (0223) 246751.

West — Wil, tel: (04536) 4553.

South Midlands — Sarah, tel: (0582) 452967.

South — Phoebe, tel: (0865) 9183300.

Demo T-Shirt Offer!

Extra, extra large demo T-shirts will be available soon. They are 50% cotton, 50% polyester material with the demo slogan 'Demand Nuclear

Disarmament'. Essential wear for all marchers on May 30th. Order yours now. Price: £3.95 plus 60p postage. Total: £4.55 from the Youth CND

office, 22/24 Underwood Street, London N1 7JG.

Sign Away Trident

The government's latest escalation of the nuclear arms race is the Trident nuclear missile system. According to the government this is Britain's new independent nuclear deterrent. However, Trident will rely on American servicing and maintenance, as well as being guided to its targets by American satellites.

Trident will be a first strike weapon. It could be used first in a nuclear war to destroy 'hard' targets such as missile silos and command centres. Almost half the cost of Trident, totalling at least £10 billion, will be spent on American imports. Many of the jobs created for highly skilled engineers and scientists will divert much-needed expertise from socially useful projects.

A recent US survey shows that for

every thousand million dollars spent 75,000 jobs could be created in defence, or 112,000 jobs in consumer industries, or 138,000 jobs in health or 187,000 jobs in education. The money spent on Trident and destruction could be used to create a better health service, decent education and more jobs for young people.

With this in mind, Youth CND recently launched its 'Sign Away Trident' campaign at Downing Street where several hundred young people were the first signatories to a new anti-Trident petition. Since the beginning of the campaign local YCND groups have collected hundreds of signatures and at the same time have put the nuclear issue at the forefront of many people's minds. People are beginning to realise that government spending on nuclear weapons

is directly affecting their lives.

To have maximum impact YCND members as well as groups will have to collect signatures. A petition form has been included with this issue of *Sign of the Times*. Ask your family to sign it. Take it to your neighbours and your friends. You will be surprised how many signatures you can get if you try. Collecting signatures gives you the opportunity to discuss the issues with potential new members — members who could strengthen your group or help you to set up a new one.

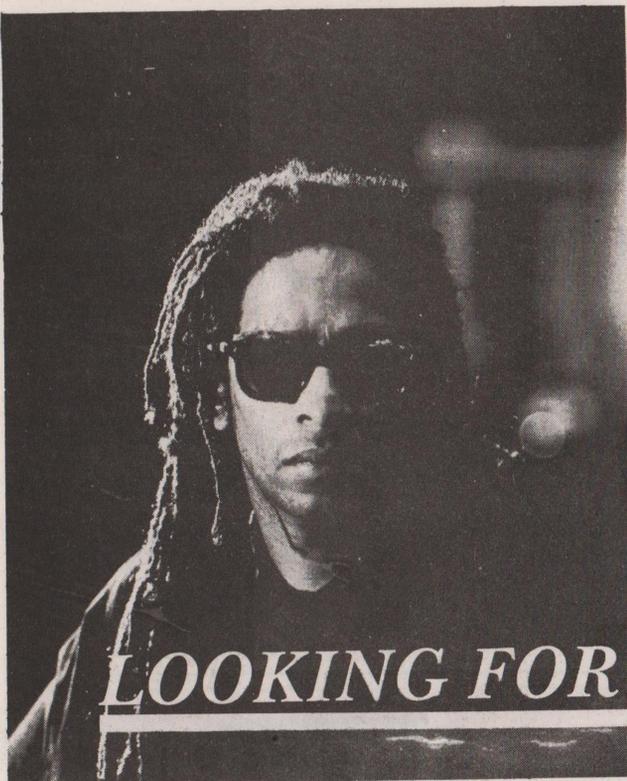
The petition will be handed in in early April in Scotland. Between now and then we need thousands of signatures in order to convince the government that young people of Britain are opposed to Trident.

Lorraine Sweeney.



Petition launch outside Downing Street

Photo by Justin



LOOKING FOR A GREY STATION

DON LETTS, once behind the camera making videos, is now very firmly in front of it, as part of BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE. He tells PAUL MANN that things aren't black and white any more, but is it an optical illusion?

Mostly, I think of myself as young, but I'm old enough to remember the summer of 1977, and sometimes that makes me feel very old indeed. In that year of the Queen's Golden Jubilee punk became a regular feature of the charts, and groups with provocative names appeared on *Top Of The Pops* every week. At the time, the vital, raw idealism and healthy disillusionment of groups like the Sex Pistols, The Clash, The Jam and The Stranglers seemed as if it might wipe the likes of Eric Clapton and Elton John off the face of the planet altogether.

Mick Jones, now leading Big Audio Dynamite, used to play guitar with The Clash (who I don't think ever did appear on *Top Of The Pops*). Don Letts, whom I visited

today at his flat in Ladbrooke Grove, West London, made a name for himself by filming punk's early moments crudely but memorably on a small Super 8 camera. He later went on to make videos for Public Image Limited and The Clash among others.

"I gave up in 1982," he says. "Things were changing, punk was over and the music industry was on top again. When I made a video a band began to ask, 'What should I do now?' and 'How should I act in this bit?' It isn't my job to tell an artist how to perform! The great thing about The Clash was that they just did their stuff, they were real; they were very exciting."

Things have come full circle, and the kind of empty nonsense that ruled the charts before punk came along like a dose of Domestos to clear out the system is once more firmly entrenched. Eric Clapton, Elton John and their ilk are back, fatter and even more conceited than ever. Thankfully, Mick Jones is back too, and Big Audio Dynamite are in the charts and — Heavens above! — saying something! The new single is 'V Thirteen'. "It's about how tough things are," Don told Capital Radio, "And the fact that

you have to get up with a smile in the morning 'cos the key word is optimism."

When I was younger — I'm 30 now, things seemed very black and white, and as you get older you see more grey. Things are supposed to get clearer as you grow up. I get more uncertain about things every day. I see more grey areas. But you can end up just intellectualising it all and doing nothing. Which do *you* choose? Youthful naivety or intellectualising?" Don looks sideways at me, suddenly addressing me and not my tape recorder.

"Youthful naivety," I say.

"Yeah, so do I. That's the way I try to live."

Don's parents are Jamaican, but he was born here, and went to a grammar school where he was the only black pupils. "Being black meant I was aware of politics earlier than if I'd been white — because I had to be."

BAD's songs are written by Don with Mick Jones, and on the current second LP 'No. 10 Upping Street' with Mick's old partner from The

Clash, Joe Strummer, who is supposed to have arrived at the studio where BAD were recording and said something like, "There aren't any songs here. You need me."

"It's great to work with the real McCoy," says Don of Joe. "My song writing is still a bit like bricklaying. Joe's a poet."

BAD represent the mixing of cultures in Britain's cities, from their multi-racial line-up to the collision of white rock 'n' roll and black hip-hop in their rough-hewn music. The

hard work. Things you hear on telly, like milk going up 5p a pint — that affects them. You don't see pop stars up in arms about that, 'cos it doesn't affect them ... Who am I? I'm just Don Letts."

So when I ask him if he thinks, generally, that young people are interested in politics, he's up off the sofa again — he's been up and down since I arrived — wringing his hands and caught between one response — "I think they're more interested now than they were,



Mick Jones, once of The Clash, now fronts BAD.

recurring message of their lyrics is that black and white can and must live together, and detail Britain's empire spirit gone bad: '*St George used his sword on the immigrant poor/Cos he can't kill no dragon.*' ('Beyond The Pale') '*The Bulldog crew don't need no provocation/Got a strange idea about the country's liberation.*' ('C'Mon Every Beat-box').

But Don doesn't want his every thought and word hung on to as if delivered by Moses from the Mount, and certainly doesn't want to encourage the "fan mentality".

"I was like that for a little while, during punk — buying all the records, desperate for the next one. But it's not healthy. What a pop singer has to say is just another point of view. It's not the same as people out there in the real world."

"The real world?"

"Well, people like my parents. They're 60, they have to go out to work, get up at 7.30 or whatever, you know. I can't say what I do is

because it's tougher now" — and his anxiety not to sound like Don Letts on the Mount — "I can't say what 'ver kids' are into, 'cos I don't hang around with them, you know?" — and finally deciding upon "I think young people should look after their interests, 'cos no one else is going to."

I can remember lying in bed when I was at school, really scared thinking about war and nuclear weapons. I can remember that clearly.

Whilst supporting CND, Don is by no means alone in wondering whether the old style CND marches and demos are any longer effective. "I makes it too easy for the government," he says. "They just get a few extra police in ... No problem." You out there in Youth CND could lead the rest of the campaign, by finding new ways to make our point.

We're talking to a chap who clearly knows a thing or two about

presentation. Apart from his work in videos, Don is a member of a group with a very coherent and effective image. We get talking about CND's image, and Don is apologetically critical.

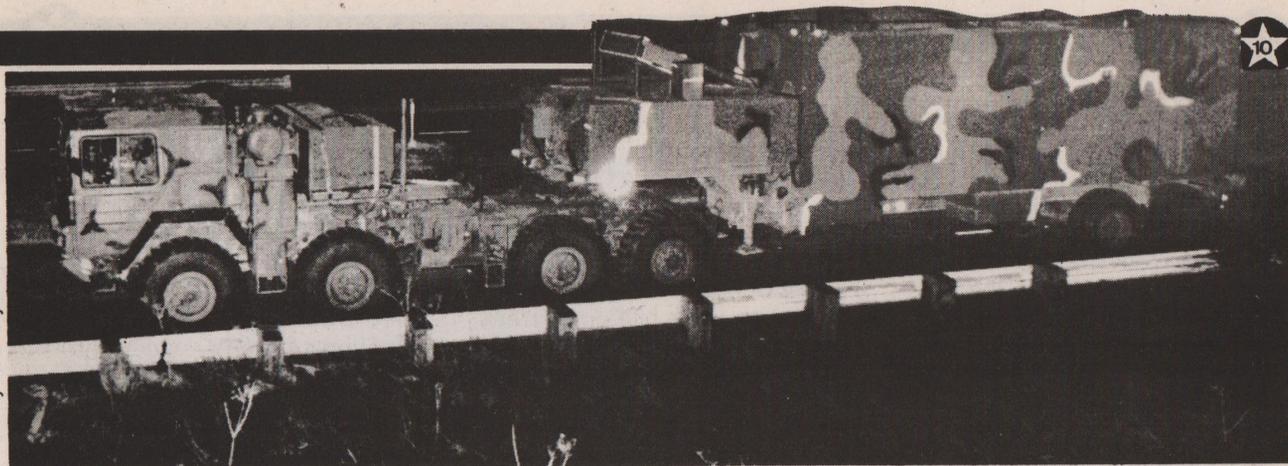
"Why is it that the right wing can sell such awful things with glamour and excitement, and the left looks so dowdy? The left should learn from that. You have to say things in a way that people want to hear them."

When I met Don, BAD were gearing up for the next bout in the constant round of recording and touring; rehearsing for some English dates, and another trip to America. The release of a single means interviews, most of which Don considers with distaste. "Most of them are so boring!" he says, then adds, kindly, "This one hasn't been, though." *Record Mirror* asked him to answer a questionnaire for a regular feature they do entitled 'Bunking Up: A consumer's guide to nuclear survival' in which every week some pop person or other lists the things they'd take with them into a hypothetical bunker if nuclear war was imminent. "Luxury edibles," runs one segment, another, "Interior decor". I'm pleased to find Don's up off the sofa again, animating his disapproval. "I just handed it right back to her. I said, 'What would you put?' I'm not interested in trivialising it."

In America — which BAD will soon visit — unlike here, you can't be successful without radio play, and the radio stations are even more safe and homogenised than Radio One, and are divided quite rigidly by the style of music they play.

"The black radio stations say we're too white, and the white radio stations say we're too black," says Don, despairing at the silliness of it.

"We're looking for a grey station."



A cruise missile launch control vehicle

Blot on the Landscape

About once a month huge convoys of cruise missiles leave the United States Air Force base at Greenham Common to be deployed at 'secret' locations in southern England. Once deployed the convoys 'melt into the countryside' confusing the 'enemy'. That's the theory. In practice things have not turned out so easily for the U.S.A.F. Since the first deployment in March 1984 operations have been hampered by an organisation called 'Cruisewatch', in co-operation with the Greenham women. By sitting on road sides and watching key junctions each convoy has been tracked successfully.

Wil Quick, a regular Cruisewatcher, gives us the low-down....

In early November, **Cruisewatch** and the Greenham women hit the headlines when hundreds of protesters, using non-violent direct action, stopped a cruise missile convoy for over one and a half hours. The action showed just how much ordinary people can do about increasing nuclear madness. For ninety minutes, somewhere in the Hampshire countryside, the arms race was halted — literally. Media attention may have given the impression that this was a one-off event. It is not. Every convoy to date (and there have been over thirty) has been tracked and stopped, often two or three times, and many have been painted.

Since November 1984 (dispersal no. 8) the movement of cruise convoys has been restricted to Salisbury Plain and the United States Air Force has been forced to

manoeuvre under cover of the darkness of night.

In 1986 Cruisewatch and the Greenham women stepped up their frontline actions against cruise. During one dispersal beacons were lit up and down the country warning the public of the dangers on the roads; there has been a telephone blockage of Tarmac, the main contractors at USAF Molesworth, the next site for cruise; a mass picnic has been held on Salisbury

'Does the "enemy" know that these are just exercises?'

Plain while cruise was stationed there; actions have taken place at all 167 US bases in Britain. All these have added strength to the many demonstrations that happen in and on the sides of the roads while

cruise is moving. People take non-violent action, bear witness to the convoy of death, stop and paint it.

In the early days of Cruisewatch just a few dozen people, including the women camped at Greenham, were involved. Now, three years on, over a thousand people line the route and numbers are growing. On November 4th 1986 a convoy was stopped five times while returning to Greenham Common. Later in the same month fifty people sat in the road in front of it forcing it to stop. Despite a change in police tactics, changes in the law which threaten civil liberties and the U.S. administration's unnerving ability to time its dispersals to coincide with times of international tension, the tracking of cruise continues.

The timing of the convoys movements should be of particular concern to us all. While Reagan and Gorbachev discussed arms control at the November summit, two cruise missile launchers left their hangars at Greenham for Salisbury Plain. Is it any wonder that more and more people are doubting Reagan's sin-

cerity when it comes to arms negotiations? Perhaps even more worrying was the dispersal in April 1986 at the same time as American F-111 bombers were attacking Libya. This time four launchers were

on exercise and the Prime Minister was forced to admit for the first time that missiles had left Greenham. Do the 'enemy' know that these are just exercises?

Far from 'melting into the countryside' American cruise missile convoys have been highlighted and exposed along every mile of their journeys along Britain's roads.

The anti-cruise message is reaching right across the country. Tracking convoys is just the beginning and for many people involved in Cruisewatch (especially young people) lack of transport, parental disapproval and travelling makes tracking convoys a difficult task. Nevertheless, support work is strong. Despite a media view that each convoy is no longer newsworthy, publicising the dispersals goes on. 'Cruise is loose' posters are put up in windows, vigils are held in High Streets and town centres, leafleting and street theatre all help to push the message home to the general public. The MoD and US Embassy also receive plenty of telephone calls letting them know what we all think of their exercises in genocide. These are all things we can do locally to highlight the fact that US nuclear weapons are preparing for war on our roads.

Tracking a cruise convoy is never a 'typical' experience. Each outing differs from any other (although this hasn't stopped them being followed every step of the way!) In July 1986 a convoy returned from Blackball Firs on Salisbury Plain. The following account is one Cruisewatcher's record of that never-to-be-forgotten event.

We picked up a friend near Devizes and drove to the Bustard Hotel on the south side of Salisbury Plain. Here a group of about twenty had gathered and tried to persuade the British troops on duty to let us wander over to the Americans. Permission not granted — surprise, surprise! We wandered along a public road to within a

What is a cruise convoy?

Four 58-tonne Transporter-Erector-Launchers (TELs). Each launcher carries four cruise missiles and is equivalent to 15 Hiroshimas. Each convoy carries the equivalent of over 200 Hiroshimas.

Two launch control centres.

Dodge personnel carriers and Reo trucks for carrying equipment. Numbers of these vary depending on the size of the convoy. Many often leave the base before the main convoy as support convoys. They can number anything between 16 and 40 in any one convoy.

Cruise wrecker. This is usually a spare cab of a cruise launcher vehicle and is used if a launcher is damaged, gets stuck in mud, etc.

Travelling with the American convoy is a large convoy of British police. It can include up to twenty transit vans full of police (depending on the number of Cruisewatchers), motorcycle outriders, several cars, marked and unmarked, and a communications van to oversee operations and to jam Cruisewatchers' CB radios.

A police tow-truck has also been present in all recent convoys.

quarter of a mile of where cruise was failing to hide. We began to blow horns and beat drums, a medieval custom for driving evil spirits away from an area.

'Later we drove on and came

roadsides. A message came through on the CB radio to say that the cruise convoy had left Salisbury Plain via the Bustard Hotel. Once again about one hundred people had gathered and were being con-



Cruisewatch's strength lies in the hundreds of local supporters who line the route each time a convoy is out.

across three riot vans at the first junction we came to. Police had also blanketed the area covering three miles of the road. At Amesbury roundabout about one hundred people had gathered, losing a night's sleep to show the Americans

tained by about sixty police officers. In a few minutes the police presence had doubled and the main road from Southampton to the Midlands and North had been closed.

'These are always nervous moments and there was quiet except

'A police officer asked me to step back. "These American drivers are a bit crazy," he confided.'

what they felt about cruise.

'As we drove to Bullington Cross we saw police gathered on every bridge and others searching the

for the crackle of a CB and the distant rumble of the convoy as it left the Plain. A long line of headlights came into view. A police officer

continued...

continued...

asked me to step back.

"These American drivers are a bit crazy," he confided. The glare of the lights momentarily blinded me, four motor-bikes sped past, then six transit vans full of police supposedly protecting our freedom but actually helping to strip it away. At last, the first convoy vehicle! It is a command dodge carrying the personnel who would give the instructions to let loose millions of tonnes of mega-death onto "the enemy". The missile launchers and control centre vehicles rolled past, huge and covered in paint (courtesy of the British public!) and engines roaring deafeningly. Reos and Dodge vehicles were interspersed between the larger vehicles. The final American vehicle is followed by another stream of British police cars. The convoy has passed us in a flash.

A cry from further up the hill. A Reo has run into the back of a Dodge and the convoy has been stopped. We rush up the hill but our way is blocked by a line of police. Slowly it pulls away again. The police push us back but we manage to see it come to a halt again. This time several people further up the road have stepped out in front of the lead vehicle. Finally, it speeds away into the night.

We attempted to follow the convoy back to Newbury but the police illegally blocked the road. On the CB we have heard a message saying that the convoy has been painted again at the Swan roundabout near Newbury and all the vehicles have been painted by the time the convoy enters Greenham.

We begin to make our way home but get a message saying that a support convoy is on its way to Newbury. We turned round and managed to catch it and watch it go past at a Newbury roundabout. We jumped back into our car and overtook the convoy, cutting in after two vehicles. We slowed up and the convoy of support vehicles split in two, the back half stuck behind a slow moving Morris Minor! We drove closer to Orange Gate of Greenham before being surrounded by several angry police officers who bounced the car off the road. Twenty vehicles passed us and went into the base.

A group of women at Orange Gate told us that a dodge and trailer had crashed at Kingsclere, six miles south of Greenham. When we reached the incident another Cruisewatcher told us that the vehicle had accelerated too quickly away from a roundabout and flipped over, almost injuring him. This had held up the convoy for some time and had provided an excellent opportunity for some more painting.

I asked an American serviceman about his views on nuclear weapons but a policeman threatened to arrest me before he could answer. I moved to the other side of the road in preference to visiting Basingstoke police station!

Finally, a pick-up truck arrived from Greenham and towed the crashed dodge back to the base. The night's activity over, we returned home exhausted.

On Tuesday, February 3rd, the United States exploded a nuclear bomb beneath the desert at Mercury, Nevada. It was at least the twentieth time the Las Vegas gambling tables had shaken since the self-imposed Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing was called on Hiroshima Day 18 months ago. And it occurred two days earlier than peace protesters gathering at the site had expected: 'We shoot when we are ready', commented US officials. Several people from Greenpeace were arrested, as were renowned US astronomer Carl Sagan and actor Martin Sheen.

Bad timing

Following their predictably angry response, Soviet officials were expected to announce an immediate end to their moratorium. This has, in fact, not yet happened — although they may resume testing if US tests start coming thick and fast this year, future Summits aside. And the February test coincided with deadlock at recent Geneva sessions between the superpowers on testing, particular on verification — establishing ways of checking accurately that the other side isn't cheating once a ban is on. Not only that: the US announcement to push ahead with early deployment of the Strategic Defense initiative (SDI) followed hot on the heels of the test. Therein lies the prime reason for

Next Stop Nevada

US resistance to any restrictions on testing, along with their renewed attempts to dismantle the 1974 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty — the agreement that prevents testing weapons in space. The real impetus behind US testing is undoubtedly SDI; US tests have increased notably since the research programme began to gather momentum. Other reasons for blasting the desert strata 20 times a year range from checking whether weapons in the stockpile still work, to testing new designs and the effects of radiation on military equipment. Since 1945 the US has conducted 700 nuclear detonations, the USSR at least 500.

May the force be against you

A lot of people may be queuing up to make a fast buck out of Star Wars, but opposition to the Reagan obsession is likely to intensify now that there are Democratic majorities in both Congress and the Senate. In August 1986

Volunteers Needed

Youth CND's national office in London badly needs volunteers to help with day-to-day office administration, organising demonstrations and dayschools and assisting the YCND staff. If you can spare some time, even just one day a week or fortnight, it would greatly help to reduce the burden on the office in the run-up to the May demonstration and beyond.

Any offers considered, contact: Margo Sweeney, YCND, 22/24, Underwood Street, London, N1 7JG.

Wanted!

Young women in the Strathclyde area are hoping to set up a women's peace group in order to encourage women to become more involved in the peace movement by attending conferences, demonstrations and peace camps. It will also be an opportunity to become more informed about women's issues and

peace issues. By working with other local YCND groups it is hoped that local activity will become stronger and more effective. We would also like to hear from young women's groups who may have some information and ideas that could help us. Please write to: Jan Andrew, 28 Durban Avenue, Dalmuir West, Clydebank, G81 4JH or the Scottish YCND office, 420, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2. If there is a favourable response we shall be setting up a meeting in the near future.

Congress voted in favour of withholding funds for further nuclear tests above a one-kiloton yield and is likely to press for a low-threshold ban. This would be more than just a compromise and is a practicable

itor all nuclear tests of military significance — that is, down to one kiloton, in 90 per cent of cases, even if the other side cheats (the Hiroshima bomb was 12.5kt). The US simply wants to continue testing, and uses arguments about verifica-

increased American awareness has come from Denmark, where a nationwide campaign to send young people to Nevada in April is underway. Called 'Next Stop Nevada', the campaign emerged from the Danish Youth for Peace movement. Recent bus tours through Denmark set the ball rolling to rally support and now the group is working for widespread link-up with American peace organisations, and to involve as many people, including celebrities, from other countries as possible. The group already has links with Youth CND in Northern Ireland, who have an extensive campaign planned to publicise the Nevada visit, including a test-ban petition and culminating in a seven-day fast outside the US Consulate in Belfast. A similar action is planned by Republic of Ireland groups at the US Embassy in Dublin.

Photo: Associated Press.



Singer Kris Kristofferson and actor Martin Sheen, kneeling (centre) before being arrested for trespass at the Nevada test site in February.

possibility for the near future: it would prevent the testing of highly refined warheads for precise targeting, and would stunt the growth of a truly workable SDI, dependent as it is on higher-yield tests for weapons other than the X-ray laser. Obviously a comprehensive test ban is our desired goal, but a low threshold agreement would be a vital step. Furthermore, such an agreement can now be verified by local monitoring, despite the US insistence on 'improved' procedures. It is now possible for seismologists to mon-

tion, among other things, as an excuse to push ahead.

The Danish initiative

With growing public demand in the US for a test ban and increased opposition to Star Wars, the time is ripe to put the pressure on. There has been a flourishing civil disobedience campaign in the US centred on recent tests, with 150 people arrested at the test site and tried in January.

Meanwhile, an initiative to combine European protest with this

Next Stop Nevada

The first major event is the Nevada Peace Watch in April, with a possible further action in the autumn.

The visit is to last a month, starting in New York (visiting the UN and meeting peace groups), then crossing the United States by bus in two contingents and meeting up for the demonstration in Nevada.

For information about the Nevada visit and the Danish youth peace movement in general, contact 'Next Stop Nevada' / Unge for Fred, Vesterbrogade 29, 1620 Kobenhavn V, Denmark, Tel: 01 23 42 83, and Youth CND N. Ireland, 45-47, Donegal Street, Belfast 1, N.I.

Andy Oppenheimer

His Mum thinks Hitler is brilliant. His headmaster threatened to expel him for putting up School Against the Bomb posters. Newcastle Youth CND's larger-than-life secretary, Peter Clarke, reveals all to Paul Mann ...

I'm sitting shivering in Newcastle city centre in mid-January, during some of the coldest weather on record: colder, even by what seems to a soppy Southerner, than Newcastle's normal semi-arctic conditions. One hand holds my coat collar to my chin, the other tries to stop *The Observer* from blowing under a bus.

Enter Peter Clarke in a sleeveless denim jacket (open), white shirt and black tie.

"It's so cold!" I gasp.

"Cold?" he repeats, savouring the word's unfamiliar sound. "Nah!" Regular visits to Newcastle have convinced me that no one born there knows what the word 'cold' means.

Peter Clarke, 17, departing secretary of Newcastle Youth CND (of which, more later), was born 30 miles north, in Alnwick, Northumberland, of "working-class Tory parents". Alnwick's main claim to fame is playing host to a huge early-warning radar base, RAF Bomber.

"My mum hasn't spoken to me for three years," he exaggerates with a grin. "My mum thinks Hitler was brilliant! My mum's loony, you know.

"I was just a typical son of a couple of Conservatives ... Labour Party, CND etc: you just don't talk about them. CND had a demo in Alnwick. I didn't know who they were. There were all these people in our market place in fall-out suits. I said, 'What's all this?'"

Peter, telling me all this in unabashed, effusive tones, found the reply to that question to his liking, and impressed further by a visiting Bruce Kent, started Alnwick Youth CND. He was 14. "We only had

Out in the Cold

about 20 people in the group, but it's a very small town, so we were very chuffed!"

When he left school two years later, where the headmaster had implied Peter might find himself expelled if he put up any more Schools Against the Bomb posters, he moved to London's Earls Court. Hating it, he returned to the north-east, found a flat in Newcastle, and sought out Newcastle Youth CND. "The secretary had moved away. I found the treasurer and discovered we had £10."

Apparently not one to stand idly by on the sidelines, Peter took on the job of secretary, funding the printing of 20,000 leaflets from his own small wage, which were then delivered by the group to local houses. From this a relaunch meeting came about and Newcastle Youth CND seemed set for a positive future. Now, though, things don't look so bright. Peter talks repeatedly of apathy, and "people not turning up"

And, feeling that he has done as much in Newcastle as he can, Peter now intends to leave the area. It's not a pretty story, the events that have encouraged his decision.

Peter is gay. He works for the Tyneside Lesbian and Gay Youth Club, and helps out on the regional AIDS advice switchboard, Newcastle Friend. It may or may not have come to your notice that being a gay man is not always the easiest thing

to be. In fact, fear of what they don't understand from the 'straight' population, fuelled by increasing anxiety and misdirected anger because of AIDS, means *Queer-bashing* is very much in season.

For all its good points, Newcastle — where the National Front recently moved its HQ to, presumably scenting fertile territory — is apparently one of the more difficult places to be a gay man. Walking along the riverside recently with his boyfriend, Peter was met by some policemen.

"They tried to pick a fight with us. We didn't feel like putting up with their taunts so we answered back. That gave them an excuse to start pushing us. We knew unless we did something we were going to get beaten up. Me and my boyfriend teach judo ..." Peter hadn't dared go home since this incident, fearing reprisals.

We've wandered a little from where we started. Peter and I are saying goodbye on a frozen street in Fenham, away from the city centre. Despite what he's told me, Peter's still grinning, still irrepressibly cheerful, black tie swinging in front of his thin cotton shirt.

"Aren't you cold, Peter?" I ask, hopefully.

"Cold? Nah!"

And then he walks away between the parked cars and I watch him getting further off, gripping my coat collar tighter.



London

Finchley and Barnet — Clare Howarth 9, Clifford Road, New Barnet, EN5 5DG. Tel: (01) 440 5079.

Brent — John Russell, 43, Streatley Road, Kilburn, London, NW6. Tel: (01) 624 4788.

Camden — Clare Melamed, 5, Dalmeny Road, London, N7. Tel: (01) 607 7134.

Enfield — Danielle Harvey, 33, Hurlington Road, Enfield, Middx: (01) 363 6755.

Fulham — Anthony Reid, 7, Fulham Park Road, London, SW6. Tel: (01) 736 3277.

Golders Green and Hendon — Tom Abu, 24, Willifield Way, London, NW11. Tel: (01) 458 2283.

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Hornsey — Kate and Libby Hazell, 11, Berkeley Road, London, N8. Tel: (01) 348 0605.

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Salisbury — Terence O'Keefe, 'Fonbadet', Costock, Salisbury, SP5. Tel: (0722) 332083.

Christchurch — Claudia Bermudez, Flat 1, Cheviot Road, Dorset Road, Someford, BH23 3DL. Tel: 482275.

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Bristol — Anna Malos, 11, Waverley Road, Redlands, Bristol. Tel: (0272) 733783.

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Stroud — Will Quick, The Old Rectory, Walkley Hill, Stroud, GL5.

Swindon — Andrew Gray, 34, St. Ambrose Close, Covingham, Swindon. Tel: (0793) 486078.

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Whitchurch — Christina Hatdon, 89, Mile Walk, BS14.

Marlborough — Esther Bradbury, The Limes Oake, Marlborough.

Malmesbury — The White House, Tetbury Hill, Malmesbury.

Trowbridge — Richard Smith, 13, Avenue Road, Trowbridge.

Taunton — Carey Saunders, 17, Badgers Close, Bishops Hill, Taunton.

Chippenham — Ian Mills, 1, Chestnut Road, Chippenham, Wilts.

East Anglia

Bury St. Edmunds — Tom Franklin, The Cot, Golden Lane, Lawshall, Bury St. Edmunds, IP29.

Colchester — Jacob Nell, 30, Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex.

Norwich — Felix, 14, Cecil Road, Norwich, NR1.

Cambridge — Clare Shepherd, 1, Edendale Close, off Hills Avenue, Cambridge, CB1. Tel: (0223) 246751.

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Bedford — Alida Campbell, 3, St. Minver St, Bedford. Tel: Bedford 214368.

St. Albans — Jo Wall, 7, Batchwood Gardens, AL3.

Hemel Hempstead — Zoe Banks, 58, Cramery Drive, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Stevenage — John Dean, 82, Lingfield Road, Martin Woods, Stevenage.

Berkhamsted and Tring — Neil Gilbert, 43, Cedar Road, Berkhamsted.

North West

Cheadle Area — C. Pease, 33, The Circuit, Cheadle Hulme, SK8. Tel: (061) 485 2295.

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Marple — Andrew Papageorgiou, 86, Gibb Lane, Mellor, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6. Tel: Stockport 427 4426.

Sale and Altrincham — P. Begley, 27, Westwood Avenue, Timperley, Altrincham, WA15. Tel: (061) 980 4730.

Wigan — K. Hendry, 28, First Avenue, Springfield, Wigan, WN6. Tel: (0942) 39635.

Chester — K. James, Thistleton House, 46, Merton Drive, Chester. Tel: (0244) 680805.

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Inverclyde — A. McIntyre, 18, Cawder Crescent, Greenock. Tel: (0475) 33912.

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Falkirk — Calum Fisher, 9, Majors Loan, Falkirk.

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Aberdeen — Sharon Trewin, 26, Airghall Avenue, Aberdeen, AB1.

Dumbarton — John McKenzie, 15/10, McCall Avenue, Hardgate, G83.

Kirkcaldy Peace Action — Brian Loan, 9, Bowling Green Terrace, Coalton of Wemyss, Fife.

Dunoon — Hilary Taylor, Arran Bank, Hunters Quay, Dunoon.

Kirkintilloch — Andrew Long, 14, Hillhead Road, G66.

Lanark — Drew Wingate, 11, Howacre, Lanark Mill, Lanark.

Orkney — John Fowles, Braeside, Holm Road, Kirkwall, Orkney.

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