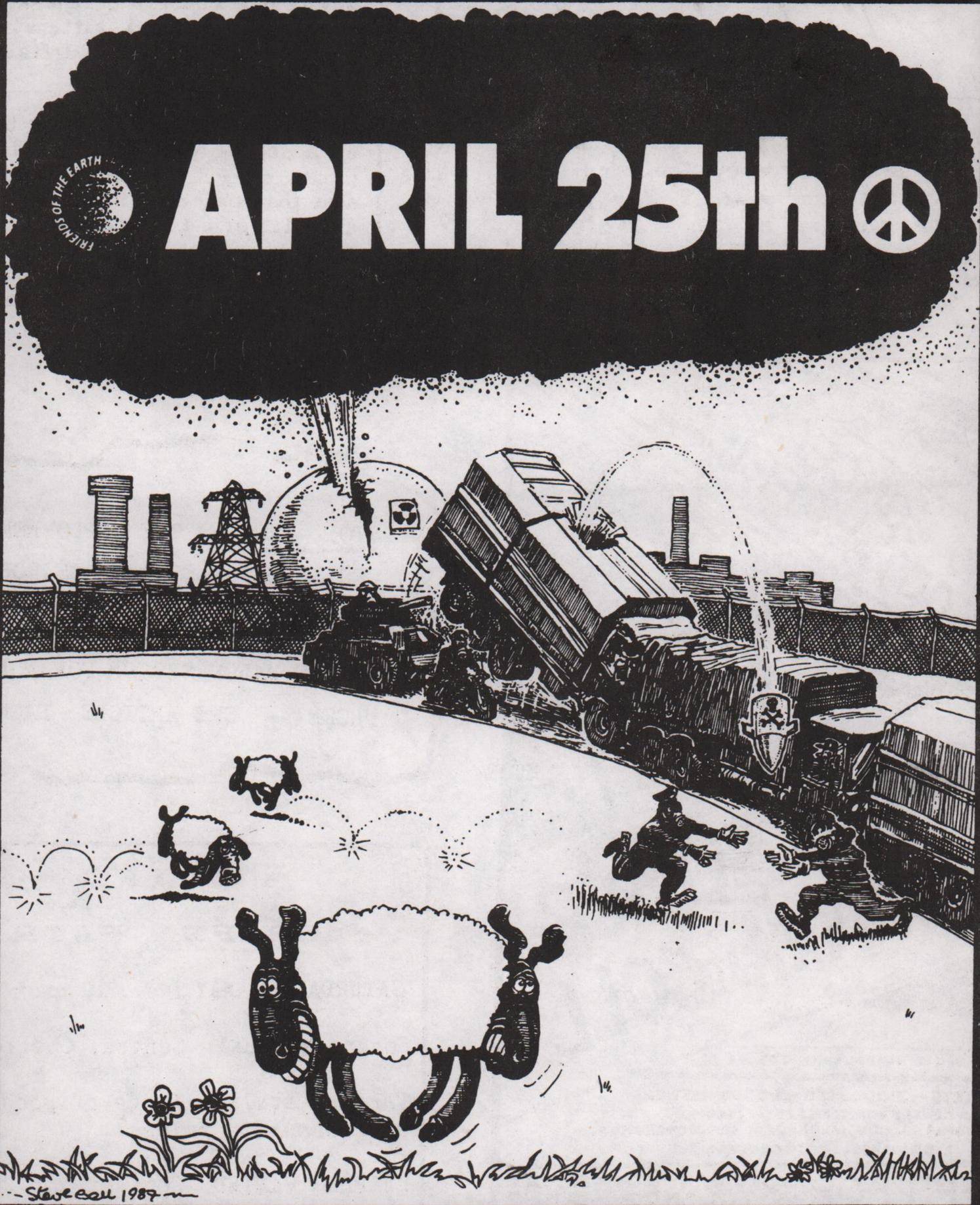


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NOTTINGHAM CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT BULLETIN APRIL 1987 20P.

MARCH FOR A NUCLEAR FREE BRITAIN

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Assemble 11am
Victoria Embankment
LONDON
Rally: 2pm Hyde Park

Coaches from
Nottingham 8am
Details inside

BE THERE

ELECTIONS

MAY 7th.

POLLING DAY for CITY & BOROUGHES

This is an all-important day for our campaign - locally and nationally.

USE YOUR VOTE

POSTAL VOTES. Correction to information in last Bulletin: you can have a postal vote if you are on holiday for any election - not just a parliamentary one. Apply to the Electoral Registration Officer for form RPF9. The form must be returned at least 13 days before the date of the poll excluding Sats, Suns and bank hols.

Noticeboard

.. PARENTS, TEACHERS, SCHOOL GOVERNORS..

NEW M.O.D. FILM ON BRITAIN'S DEFENCE.

The M.O.D. is offering a FREE video of its latest propaganda film to all secondary schools and colleges. The film deals not only with weapons which may be the concern of the M.O.D., but also with political matters including the relationship between Britain and the USSR.

If you hear that the video is to be used at a school you are connected with, please suggest to the appropriate persons that they also invite a CND speaker as well (or a team to take discussion groups), so that both sides can be fairly put.

**FOLK CONCERT
FOR SOUTH AFRICA**

FRIDAY 8.00PM

8 MAY 87

**PEGGY SEEGER
& EWAN MACCOLL**

TRENT POLY STUDENTS UNION, SHAKESPEARE ST.

ADVANCE TICKETS - £2.00 WAGED, £1.50 CONCESSIONS
FROM - VICTORIA CENTRE BOX OFFICE, SELECTADISC,
TRENT POLY STUDENTS UNION, MUSHROOM AND OROBOROS.
OR ON DOOR - £2.50 WAGED, £2.00 CONCESSIONS

**A BENEFIT FOR : ANC OF SOUTH AFRICA &
: NOTTM. ANTI-APARTHEID**

STOP PRESS. THE DEPLOYMENT OF
CRUISE MISSILES AT MOLESWORTH
MAY ALREADY HAVE BEGUN.

CRUISE WATCH SYSTEM FOR MOLESWORTH
URGENT - SEE ARTICLE PAGE 4.

N C N D

CRAFT FAIR

SATURDAY 9 MAY 10 am - 4 pm.

Congregational Centre, Castlegate.

Various stalls - Range of products
at reasonable prices.

HELPERS WANTED. Contact Rob Holland
15 Robinson Rd, Mapperley.
Tel. 604986.

Any gifts of new goods (unwanted
presents, etc.) would be welcome on
the NCND stall.

For further information please contact Mark
Weinstein tel 626298 or Pete Lowenstein tel 603216

MARCH FOR A NUCLEAR FREE BRITAIN

Numbers are all-important on this, our first major London demo for eighteen months. It is timed to mark the anniversary of the terrible accident at Chernobyl that woke so many people up to the danger of all things nuclear. The demo is being organized jointly with Friends of the Earth and brings peace and environment groups together in a common cause. Our peace partners in Europe and further afield will also be marking the day.

The media will be quick to interpret any fall in numbers as evidence of lack of support for our policies. We need a massive turnout as a signal to the next government that huge numbers of people totally reject the Thatcher government's "Defence" policy and its decision, in spite of Chernobyl, to initiate a new generation of nuclear power stations with the building of Sizewell B.

CND calls on its members and all who want a nuclear-free future to put aside all other commitments for this one day, and make every effort to

BE THERE

THE MARCH

Assembles on Victoria Embankment. Due to set off at 11 am via a route through Central London still to be finalized to Hyde Park.

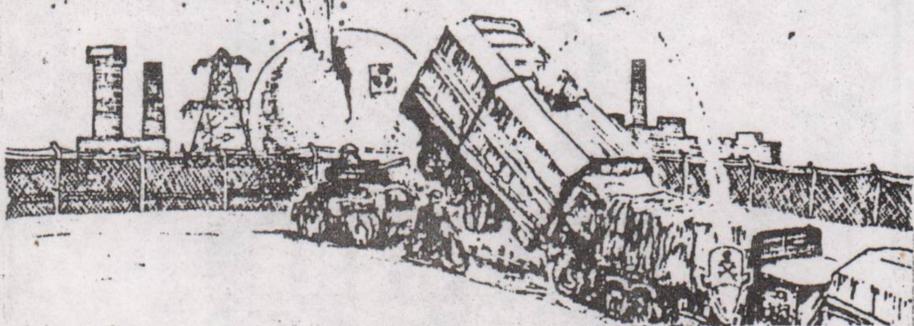
RALLY from 2.30 pm.

Speakers (home-grown and international) - comedians! - music.

SPECIALLY for TV

The stewards will ask some of the crowd to form themselves into giant CND and anti-nuclear power symbols by means of holding coloured cards. This will be very effective when photographed from the air for the nations's TV screens.

**No more
Chernobyls**



APRIL 25th

TRAVEL FROM NOTTINGHAM

COACHES

Leave Salutation Inn, Maid Marion Way 8 am
Return from point to be announced at 6 pm
TICKETS £4.50 (Concession £3.00)

Available from NCND Office, Mushroom, Hiziki, Rainbow Centre, Ouroboros.

We advise you to bring **FOOD AND DRINK**; getting refreshments in Central London during a demo is nearly impossible.

ALSO - Be prepared for it to rain!

You will be able to leave things on the coach.

FOR TRAVEL by TRAIN see page 4.

If you make your own travel arrangements, look out for the Nottingham banner (gold) on the Embankment.

BANNERS AND PLACARDS

Groups: Please bring your BANNERS.

Forest Fields are bringing drums and percussion
Sherwood are bringing two-headed Sheep. Other gimmicks needed.

Individuals: Please, everyone, make your own PLACARD to carry.

Nuclear-Free Roads

Four sponsored relay-rides starting over the Easter weekend will converge on London on April 25th. This will reach people in many different parts of the country and build up support for our campaign. It was originally envisaged as a CYCLE-RELAY, but the concept has now been widened. **ANY FORM OF TRANSPORT** can take part - feet, prams, wheel-chairs, even cars. SPONSOR FORMS from office.

NOTTINGHAM is on Route 1. You can take part in all - or part - of the relay from SHEFFIELD to NOTTINGHAM on Tues 22 April (total distance 40 to LEICESTER on Wed 23 April

Greet the Relay

MARKET SQUARE - TUES 21 APRIL - 5p.m.

Bring BANNERS, PLACARDS, and YOURSELVES to welcome those taking part in the relay from Sheffield and provide a show for the media. (Ring Barbara 625198 to confirm time.)

Molesworth CRUISEWATCH

Despite negotiations on the removal of intermediate range nuclear weapons from Europe, this government is persisting with the folly of installing cruise missiles at Molesworth. The peace movement has learned not to place any reliance on talks or promises, so action against cruise missiles will continue until they are removed.

One of the most successful and effective initiatives has been Cruisewatch, set up to track every convoy leaving Greenham Common for exercises - usually on Salisbury Plain. Cruisewatchers have disrupted all of the dispersals, and were responsible for the story of the nuclear bomb carrier that rolled off the road in January reaching the press.

It is now vital that a similar cruisewatch system be set up for Molesworth. It will have three elements:-

1. Information gathering: we must have watchers at base gates and strategic junctions around Molesworth and Alconbury between 23.00 and 02.00 every night to spot the convoy as it passes, and follow its route. We might also be able to guess when a convoy is due to emerge from watching police movements, and activity on the dispersal area. (almost certainly Stanford battle-training area north of Thetford, Norfolk.)

2. Focus for information and co-ordination: when they see the convoy pass the watchers will contact, by CB radio or phone, the focus person who will activate the telephone tree, inform CND and get the press work rolling.

3. Regional and national network: people on a tree who can mobilize straightaway when cruise comes out, follow it, and possibly undertake direct action to disrupt the exercise. Cruisewatchers who live too far away to get to the area when the convoy leaves can be warned so that they can get to Molesworth for its return.

We are seeking support from CND, and are drawing on the experience of Greenham cruisewatchers. Two things need to be set up as soon as possible. First, a WATCH ROTA of people willing to spend a few hours regularly sitting in a car at night once every two months, once a month, once a week - the more often you're a watcher,

the more likely you are to be involved in the excitement. Second, we must set up a MOLESWORTH CRUISEWATCH TELEPHONE TREE.

If you can help in any capacity, especially if you can commit yourself to a stint on the watch rota, or if you want more information, please contact

Glyn Carter, PAN, tel. 706088 or via NCND Office.

MARCH FOR A NUCLEAR FREE BRITAIN

APRIL 25th

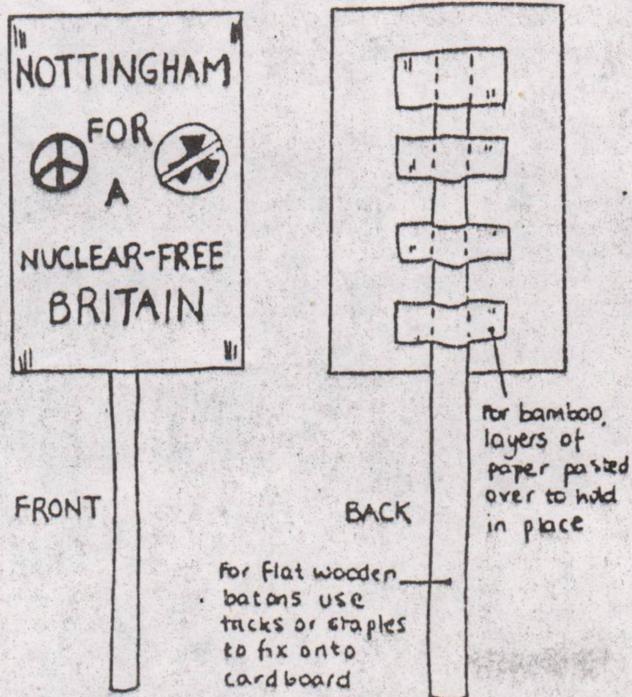
TRAINS

We have reserved 20 seats for members who want to travel by train on the 8.41 am. from the Midland Station. Return journey by the 6.00 pm from St. Pancras. Cost: £14.50. (£7.25. under 18).

To book any of these seats you must contact Barbara on 625198 as soon as possible, and before 15 April.

MAKE A PLACARD

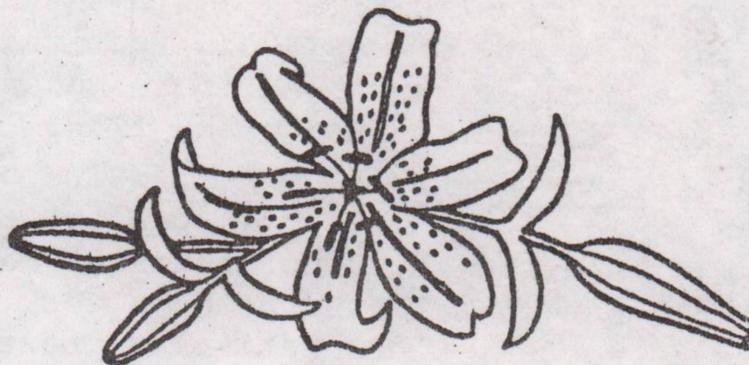
It's easy. All you need is: a cardboard box to provide a piece of card approx. 18 in. x 2 ft; a 3 ft. bamboo cane or other strip of wood; wallpaper paste, large sheets of paper (lining paper, old posters, computer print-out sheets, etc.) and felt tips (indelible if possible).



BE THERE

PEACE FESTIVAL

JULY 12th
VICTORIA EMBANKMENT NOTTM



At the March 12 meeting the Peace Festival and its finances were discussed. The members voted that the festival is a worthwhile event in Nottingham but that its financial demands should be balanced with those of CND's other activities.

The Festival income consists of:

- 1) Grant from Nottingham City Council
- 2) Earnings from Festival-organised sales and entertainments
- 3) Donations
- 4) Surcharges from Festival stallholders.

In addition East Midlands Arts Association makes grants which pay for certain performances and children's events.

Before the festival can be staged, equipment and services must be hired and publicity paid for. To allow this, Nottingham CND lends £1000 to the Festival organisation and this money, together with the Council grant of £500 pays the starting costs. After the festival the money from earnings, donations and stall charges repays CND's loan and pays the remaining festival costs including entertainers.

Naturally hire costs have risen since last year. But the chief difference is that the Council grant MAY not be possible this year. We won't know until May - rather late to order equipment, book acts or change plans.

CND itself cannot afford to increase its loan because of:-

- Rent & Rates commitments
- Increased Campaign costs in Election year
- The risk factor of weather.

So the availability of 'starting money' is in some question this year. There are three possible courses:-

- 1) Look for Alternative sources of funds. It's possible that National CND's Projects Group could offer some funds. The suggestion has been put that an appeal is made to local members for donations, each member needing to give maybe 50 pence.

(continued p.6 ->)

DO YOU WANT A PEACE FESTIVAL ?

This would be our 7th. If **YES**, fill in slip below and return it with donation to NCND office or your local group contact.

I enclose (state sum) towards the advance expenses of running the Peace Festival.

Name Address

(Receipts will not be given unless specially requested.)

FESTIVAL

2) Scale down the Festival to fit available funds. This may be possible in certain areas, but the bulk of the costs are on things like the Marquee, Publicity and equipment hire - and cutting these out would harm the earning capacity of the whole festival. We have tried - and failed - each year to borrow a marquee, but even if we managed to do this we'd still have to pay for the skilled erection and dismantling labour.

3) Cancel the Festival Most members agree that the festival is worth having. It publicises the cause to thousands, reaching many who may be missed by other forms of communication. We cannot measure accurately how well our campaigning methods work - so we must keep alive as many different forms as we can. The festival represents a fun event, a sort of 'Works Outing' for members who work over the year in local groups with no acknowledgement or compensation. It also gives every local group a big chance to raise funds for campaigning - the whole point of the movement.

Suppose the General Election were called for June and the present government were returned. If the Festival were cancelled, wouldn't this be seen by our members as a climb-down?

The Festival doesn't end up costing much, but it would die before birth if there were insufficient starting funds. It would also be impossible without a massive amount of voluntary labour. Members and non-members help with truck-driving and physical labouring. Administrative volunteers spend hectic hours chasing contractors, promised help, transport and police, by phone and in person. Sympathetic individuals and organisations lend tools, sound gear, staging, electrical equipment, chairs and tables. Professional performers on the smaller stage usually work for nothing. Some helpers even sleep overnight in the site marquee to maintain security. All this work is unpaid. The months of organising work leading up to the festival have to be fitted in between the other commitments of the volunteers, most of whom have full-time jobs as well.

Right now the planning team is looking also at ways to extend the festival without laying out much more money. In addition to the standard programme of Alternative Cabaret on Saturday evening and Main Festival through Sunday, ideas so far are:- Fun sports events, Folk Concert on Friday evening, Film & Video Entertainment on Sunday evening. We are exploring all these at the moment. We would also listen hard to YOUR ideas for other events, say through Saturday. All events are to be on site if possible.

Several members have had to leave the planning team since February because of work commitments, moving house and the like - we are in need of well-motivated helpers - ideas people and sloggers. There are only 3 members left on the team who have previous festival experience and they are chewing the carpet. Don't be afraid to suggest ideas - we won't force you to participate if you're too busy.

We want your ideas. We want your help. A little of your money wouldn't go amiss either. Phone Jeremy 621453 or come to the next meeting on at the Rainbow Centre, 180 Mansfield Rd., 8.00 pm

Jeremy Jago

Cinema Ad

The cinema Ad has now run for two weeks at Odeon One, hopefully reaching a large number of people, as it coincided with "The Fly" one week and "The Colour of Money" the other.

Taking advantage of two free tickets for the "Colour of Money" on the spot critics were able to gauge the cinema reaction! Greenpeace were also running their stark advert "Nuclear power - is it worth it?" and whether the two together proved to be a case of overkill for the general public, we

are not sure. The CND ad came about five minutes after the Greenpeace one. The images are very effective and ones that people can respond to; when the screen went black and the message "Nuclear Weapons Could Cost Us the Earth" came on, there was laughter from some people, but there also seemed to be quite a lot of talking, too, as if people had reacted to the message and it had stirred them up. Pete Strauss leafleting outside that evening was approached by someone coming out who stopped to say that the advert was "sound" - perhaps we are succeeding in getting the message across.

TOM BARBER.



Photo by John Birdsall



Defence Debate

The most appalling weather conditions greeted the CND Express as it drove into Nottingham on Friday 6th March and, despite a valiant effort by Clifton and Radcliffe members in particular, the bus stop in Clifton was abandoned by 11 a.m.

In the Market Square, though the snow kept falling, conditions were easier. That was because the bright red double-decker parked right in the middle attracted attention from a distance. From the office window above, it looked just great.

A steady stream of visitors came on board and were delighted with the use of space inside - a shop and comfortable seats for watching videos or talking together. Paul Johns was there as well as many members of NCND helping out or just visiting.

The weather prevented all the street petitioning, leafleting and musical entertainment planned for the Friday, but Saturday was a different story. Bulwell Neighbourhood Group were very happy with the amount of attention generated in Bulwell Market. Accompanying the bus was also a Christian CND act of worship and a local Woodcraft Folk exhibition. NCND members from the Forest Fields group then followed the bus up to Hucknall where the bus and the subsequent social were also a great success.

Friday's weather did not prevent a good turnout in the evening. More than 150 came to the YMCA to hear the Question Time debate. That turnout was most encouraging because the debate had been a pain in the neck to organise!

An explanation is due to those people who might have wondered why we ended up with the people we did, or did not, have on the platform.

As you know from the advance publicity, our original plan was to have speakers from National CND and Peace Through NATO, plus local parliamentary candidates from the three main parties. That would actually have given a pro-nuclear : anti-nuclear ratio of 3:2.

We were presented with a difficult decision when it was pointed out to us that Peace Through NATO's local representative, Professor Regan, has recently been involved in raising support for the Contras in Nicaragua. Now, even Thatcher's government does not support the Contras, who are widely recognised as terrorists responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent men, women and children. Should CND then put itself in the position of providing a public platform for an advocate of terrorism? The decision we took was to withdraw Professor Regan's invitation, having in the meantime secured a promise from National PTN (who had been told of our reasons for not wanting REGAN) of an alternative speaker. A few days before the meeting, we were let down.

(continued →)

Defence Debate (continued)

Meanwhile, a series of letters between NCND and the local Conservative MPs made it clear that none was willing to take part in the debate. Gerry Neale, MP, who recently claimed in a national newspaper to debate with CND and opposition parties, also failed to find us one. We insisted all along that we wanted a parliamentary candidate. Perhaps we suspected that otherwise we might get landed with the Conservative Party's lunatic fringe. As it turned out, that fear was well-founded.

Charging into our presence, minutes before the meeting started, with behaviour designed to intimidate, with concealed microphone switched on and leaflets that talked, not about the pros and cons of nuclear weapons but about the private lives of their opponents, came two prime examples. "This is like Alice Through The Looking Glass", commented Canon Lesley Moreley, our Chair for the evening, as he observed just some of these antics.

One observer has sent a long letter detailing the behaviour before, during and after the debate, of this "representative" to Michael Knowles, MP for Nottingham East. We hope that it will encourage the Conservatives to think again about their irresponsible attitudes to a very serious issue.

We did refuse permission for this man to be on the platform, offering him instead 5 minutes from the floor to put his views. We have since discovered that he has succeeded in getting himself substituted at the last minute for an invited Conservative candidate at at least three other CND Express Tour meetings or persuaded the Alliance speaker to threaten to withdraw unless he was included. In our case, the Alliance speaker, Stephen Parkhouse, recognized what he was facing. All credit to him for not being intimidated, especially so because this was his first political meeting.

In between this nastiness and a few minutes of amusing entertainment from a couple of anarchists, we had a good meeting. It would have been better if the need to finish at 9 pm (brought on by the Alliance speaker's having to leave early to battle the weather back home) hadn't curtailed questioning. And it would have been much better if the Conservatives had been willing to send a responsible speaker. But, maybe next time.....

ANN KESTENBAUM.

* Many thanks to everyone who helped on the bus and at the evening debate.

NEWS ONSUNDAY

GOOD NEWS FOR CND

On April 26th, News on Sunday
brings back quality journalism to popular newspapers.

- News on Sunday will be a paper that stands up for ordinary people, taking its readers' side against the establishment – whether in government or opposition, the City, the police or the media.
- It will speak out to redress the balance on issues like nuclear weapons, the running down of health and education, the environment.
- News on Sunday will stimulate with more in-depth news than any other popular paper.
- Article 12 of the News on Sunday Editorial Charter states:
NEWS ON SUNDAY supports the demand for the worldwide abolition of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. The paper believes that the unilateral abandonment by Britain of nuclear weapons, bases and alliances is a vital step towards this eventual goal.
- News on Sunday's launch has been welcomed by Bruce Kent, Joan Ruddock, Paul Johns, Meg Beresford and Edward Thompson.

Make sure you don't miss out. Tear off the strip below and give it to your newsagent NOW.

Dear Newsagent,

Please arrange to supply me with a copy of News on Sunday from Sunday 26 April 1987

Deliver to my home *

Reserve for me to collect *

(*tick as appropriate)

Name

Address

Signed

From News on Sunday, Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6LP

BULLETIN TELEPHONE SURVEY

The grand phone-up has been completed, so if an executive member has not been breathing down the phone to you, then you have been let off the hook! Thanks to all those people who have answered the survey and for those of you who want the chance to have your say, send any comments to the editorial team.

As might be expected, for a bulletin which caters for a wide variety of people within a group such as Nottingham CND, views differed about the use, quality, etc., of the paper, ranging from those who felt that it was of no use at all, those who felt it overdid the "hippy-vegetarian" stereotype and those who had no criticism for the bulletin production as they felt that the team works damn hard and they don't have to do it... You can't please all of the people all of the time!

CIRCULATION

Despite our pessimistic expectations, the majority of members (49 out of 55) did receive the bulletin monthly and 33 of those received it within the first two weeks of the month.

CONSUMPTION

Of those that do receive the goods, only one admitted to reading none of it!! 23 read all of it, 15 some and others varied depending on what time they had that month.

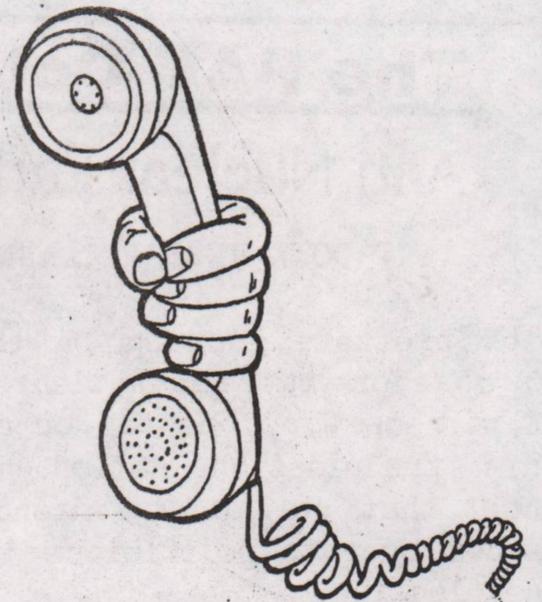
CLAPOMETER

When we asked people, how they rated the bulletin's content, presentation and interest on a scale of 0-10, some of them could not be pinned down to figures. Of those that did, the results are as follows:

| | 0-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 | 7-8 | 8-9 | 9-10 |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Content | 0 | 2 | 16 | 23 | 2 | 0 |
| Presentation | 0 | 6 | 11 | 18 | 3 | 3 |
| Interest | 0 | 5 | 10 | 22 | 2 | 2 |



Members were quizzed on whether they felt that the bulletin should have a wider circulation, 36 felt that the bulletin should have a wider circulation than just members, some pointing out that it already does via Mushroom, etc., but 17 of those felt it would need changes before that could happen. 7 felt it should not have a wider circulation and 7 simply didn't know.



CONTINUATION

A resounding "Yes, the bulletin should stay" from 42 members of the 45 that answered that question. 2 felt that it wouldn't matter if we stopped publishing and 1 didn't know.

CRITICISM

Members were nearly all agreed that past and future events, locally and nationally, were the most useful bits of the bulletin and the most frequently read. In addition, this was felt to be the main role of the bulletin, to keep people in touch with local and national CND and informed of events.

As far as articles and letters in the bulletin went, as many people seemed to like them as disliked them, although the Mushroom dispute did stand out as something that people had not felt was appropriate to be included.

Cartoons are popular and the front cover came in for a particular mention (Geoff's handiwork has not gone unnoticed!).

Constructive comments included the idea of a Youth Page, clear directions on where meeting places are for newcomers, putting adverts in from members about accommodation, etc. to bring in some revenue, improving educational input. More information from the "other side", e.g. as to why MPs have come to their decision. More about neighbourhood group activities.

Failings of the bulletin mentioned were that it is pitched at a cultural stereotype; it needs more fun in it as it is a bit of a despair workshop; it tries to do too much.

There is clearly quite a bit for the editorial team to digest, but meantime, if you are looking for changes, why not let the team know or send in articles, cartoons, etc., yourself.

CATH WAKEMAN.



The PAN Column

Anti Nuclear Parliament

SIT-DOWN IN PARLIAMENT SQUARE

With pressure growing on the Labour Party to abandon its non-nuclear defence policy it is necessary to step up our campaigning. This pre-election action is designed to show that we don't intend to hand the issues over to politicians in the run-up to the election.

The demand will be for an anti-nuclear parliament committed to dismantling the whole nuclear cycle, from the illegal mining of Namibian uranium, through nuclear power and the disposal of waste, to nuclear genocide weapons. Environmental campaigners and groups concerned with nuclear exploitation in the third world are invited to join us.

The action will be a sit-down in Parliament Square from 2 - 6 pm on Friday May 15th. We can have our own "anti-nuclear parliament". There have been actions and protests outside the bases, but there has not been one at the symbolic seat of power. It will be a chance to expose and oppose the fact that nuclear decisions are made by cabals of powerful individuals in Downing Street, the MoD and the military-industrial multinationals. Chevaline and Zircon show how they are not accountable to elected representatives, and how every basic notion of democracy is contradicted.

M.P.'s will be in session, and any assembly outside is forbidden. There is a risk of the Public Order Act being used against us. Consultations with a barrister lead organisers to believe that the legal consequences are unlikely to be any more serious than the obstruction laws familiar to blockaders.

This action is not a blockade of Parliament. Its impact comes from the non-violent civil disobedience, and the proximity of Parliament, rather than from huge numbers. However, the more people that come (organisers hope for 5,000), the less able the police will be to make mass arrests. Even if they do, it will demonstrate our point about lack of democracy. They are more likely to block off Parliament Square - in which case the fallback is to blockade the busy corner of Victoria Embankment and Westminster Bridge, or as close as we can get. We shall not be prevented from making our protest.

We want people going to work in affinity groups, so that if the police try to direct our movements we can decide in those groups what we want to do and therefore be better able to resist being herded around like sheep. There will be a meeting the week before for all those going from Nottingham to prepare ourselves for the day.

Coaches will leave from outside the Salutation on Maid Marion Way at 9am. Tickets from the usual outlets. For more details (and/or help with setting up an affinity group) write to PAN c/o NCND, or ring Glyn on 706088.

PAN

LETTER

As the election draws near, more and more groups are being drawn into the propaganda battle. Invariably progressive organisations find themselves on the defensive; CND is no exception. We always seem to be trying to answer in a patient logical way the propaganda put out by the media and the outrageous arguments of the Tebbits and Curries of this world.

There is a tacit acceptance amongst many that Russia is the enemy and so they allow the argument to run along the lines of what kind of defence, conventional or nuclear, is the best for this country. (Kinnoek, take a bow.)

We have not been able, in spite of the 18 months of the Russian moratorium on nuclear testing, to get the message across that Russia is not the enemy. As a nation we still suffer from delusions of Imperial grandeur, believing that we dominate the world and that Russia poses a threat to that domination.

The image of an enemy must be preserved in order to maintain an army and a very profitable arms industry. Even the Trade Unions have not found an answer to the argument that war means work and employment.

We need to go on the offensive. Let us not be afraid of the Russian Syndrome and be prepared to campaign against not only nuclear, but all offensive weapons, and against American bases and troops in this country.

It really does stretch the limits of imagination that Russia, having fought on our side in the last war and lost 20 million dead, should now be our mortal enemy.

The latest Gorbachev initiatives raise the possibility of a peaceful foundation for Europe. The hand of friendship is extended towards us. Let us grasp it and proclaim it without fear or favour.

"L'AUDACE, L'AUDACE, TOUJOURS L'AUDACE". (Danton.)

ERIC JESSOP

NCND member, Dave Dickinson, is a member of the Nottingham Building Brigade at present working in Nicaragua.

LETTER FROM NICARAGUA.



I am writing this in a roughly constructed house that forms part of the shanty surrounding Juigalpa, Nicaragua. The house is in the flight path that the helicopters take, bringing in wounded from the war, to the military hospital which is situated on the hill opposite.

It is partly because of those helicopters with their cargos of human suffering, shattering the calm that I am writing this, partly because I have been troubled since my arrival in Nicaragua with, what are to a British peace activist, conflicting images of peace and war, expressed in parallel.

Before my arrival here, I did not fully understand the implication of living in a country at war - with a British passport to get me out should the worst happen. I still don't, but I comprehend a little more, and find disturbing how blurred the definitions become.

The situation here is not that people feel justified in fighting, but that they have to. There seems little room for moral distinctions in war. Peace here is having more guns, more soldiers, more killing power than the enemy. Peace is more dead Contras than Sandinistas.

People know that they cannot run away. They cannot burn out or drop out. The only alternative to Victory is liquidation: the tortureships of Pinochet's Chile; the death squads of Guatamala; the massacre of Sandino and his followers. We, too, have examples from our own continent.

In a country of three million, 500,000 people are under arms. No-one is excused their obligation to the country's defence. Two-year military service is compulsory, though only one member of a family may serve at a time.

What am I to tell you? That in this region, Chontalis, volunteer recruitment has increased; partly because families would rather their sons join the army than be kidnapped and forced to join the Contras? Or that people have gone to jail for refusing to join the Army?

Conscientious objection is only allowed within the army in applying for noncombat positions. Objection to the duty of the citizen to carry arms is not legitimate.

In answer to any criticism, they say "We did not choose this war. We are not the aggressors. We want peace." And that is true.

If it were simply to make a choice between one side or another, there would be no problem. In my few weeks here, I have seen countless examples of people struggling together to fight poverty, disease and ignorance. Contrast that with two examples of what the people Reagan calls "Freedom Fighters" do. A week ago, close to here, the Contras attacked an agricultural co-operative. Several members were killed, others kidnapped. As the Sandinista Army tracked them down, the Contras used the kidnapped Co-op members as hostages and the Army helicopters had to stand by which the Contras walked away into the safety of the jungle. In the time of Somoza's Guardia, civilian lives meant nothing.

A thirteen year old boy, recaptured from the Contras, had been taught to kill and in a particularly horrific way, known as "neck tying".

Neither is it a question of what to do. We can only support the revolution with symbolic and economic help. Attempts at military aid, even if we could accept the idea, would only produce negative results.

The question rather is how to resolve our own actions and ideas for peace, with those of the Nicaraguan Government and people. Are we to support the Sandinista Gunships that rip human beings apart? Or are we to close our eyes and pretend that it isn't happening. Perhaps we can close our eyes to what is happening thousands of miles away, but that still does not solve the problem. There are thousands of struggles being waged in many different places in many different ways and every one will have its dilemmas, its shades of grey.

The choices seem to be to stand aside and do nothing or to close one's eyes and see only black and white, or to accept that human struggles - and I would include our struggle for peace - are neither simple nor straightforward. In these struggles we are going to have to act if we wish to win.

DAVE DICKINSON.



DIARY

APRIL

- Thu 2' Co-ordinating Mtg. 7.30. WEA.
- Thu 9 Monthly Mtg. See below.
- Wed 15 Youth CND Mtg. 7.30. WEA.
"What NCND does. How YCND can help."
- TUE 21 Nuclear-Free Roads RELAY arrives**
Market Squ. 5pm. (See p.3.)
- Thu 23 Relay starts for Leicester.
May BULLETIN DEADLINE & Editorial.
- Sat 25 **NATIONAL DEMO. BE THERE**
- Sun 26 "News on Sunday" See p.8).

MAY

- Sat 2 Trades Council May Day March.
- Thu 7 POLLING DAY (see p.2.)
Co-ordinating Mtg. 7.30. WEA.
- Fri 8 Peggy Seeger & Ewan McColl (see p.2)
- Thu 14 Monthly Mtg. (see below).
- Fri 15 Nuclear-free Parliament. (See p. 10)
- Wed 27 "Walk for the World"reaches Nottm.
(Development agencies' sponsored walk.
Details from the office.)

Monthly Meeting

ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE, Shakespeare St
(WEA) 7.30. 2nd THURSDAY in month.

APRIL 9th. Using the Media.

This meeting will be a WORKSHOP with brainstorming and discussion, and will hopefully produce practical results.

MAY 14. "The Need for a Test-Ban Treaty".

Video starring Paul Newman + a speaker.

BRING A FRIEND ALONG.

Two Umbrellas found after March 6th meeting are available for collection by owners at NCND office.

Membership

The new membership renewal form now offers you an opportunity to join National CND at the same time as renewing subscription to NCND. National membership is important for CND since it shows our popular support and gives us a more powerful voice as a movement. Why not join the next time your renewal comes up.....

APRIL BULLETIN TEAM: Jos Wood, Louise Jessop, Jackie Jezewski, Lawrence Geary, Phyllis Wells, Cath Wakeman.

COVER ADAPTATION: Geoffrey Young.

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