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CHURCH REACTION

No 26.

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TELFORD ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUP.

The Church and the Bomb.

TELFORD OPINION POLL.

When the 'Church and the Bomb' report from the Church of England Working party appeared last autumn it caused uproar amongst the Church of England, and caused comment from MPs and even the Prime Minister. The Church of England suddenly changed from being the "Tory Party at Prayer" to the "CND at Prayer" (according to the Daily Telegraph).

This was all because the report recommended that the UK should renounce its independent nuclear deterrent (as one of 22 recommendations). The Bishop of Salisbury and his Working Party came to this conclusion because they said that a nuclear war could never be a 'just war'. Therefore "nuclear...deterrence is no longer a reliable or morally acceptable approach to the future of the world", says the report.

Now that the Synod of the C of E is discussing the report in February, TANG has contributed to the debate by conducting an opinion poll amongst the Telford C of E clergy. The question and results were:

Do you agree with the report which says that the UK should renounce its nuclear weapons?

Yes I agree - 40%

No I disagree - 36%

Don't know - 24%

(No comment from 2 clergy)

This shows that the clergy were divided, but all the don't knows said that they were tending towards agreeing rather than the other way.

This is in line with a national poll on the same subject taken last year.

There is a lot more support amongst the clergy for nuclear disarmament than among the population in general. This is a clear moral lead from the church.

'Our Country is the World.
Our Countrymen are all
mankind'

William LLOYD Garrison.

Bridgnorth Debate Cancelled.

Bridgnorth CND had to cancel a public meeting planned for 28 January to which Joan Ruddock the CND Chairperson had been invited.

They had intended to have a debate with a 'multilateralist', but they had not been able to persuade anybody to publically argue the multilateralist case.

This has been the case many times when CND groups have tried to openly discuss the issues with the opposition. Wellington CND has been trying hard to find someone to oppose them in debate. Broseley group has had the same problem, and when TANG invited the Shropshire Emergency Planning Officer to speak to us, he backed down at the last minute.

We could at least respect the opposition if they were prepared to debate openly with us, but they must realise, as we do, that if people are allowed to listen to the arguments fully, they will inevitably come down on the side of CND.

Plans for Broseley C.N.D.

Broseley CND are planning to leaflet the whole town and surrounding villages next month. The leaflet describes the effect of a one megaton bomb on Ironbridge Power Station (one of the targets listed by SANA in operation Hard Luck). Most of Broseley would fall within blast ring A with 98% dead. The leaflet also deals briefly with Cruise and the NFZ issue.

Leafleting will be followed up by a public debate on Saturday February 26 in the Church Hall. The subject will be The BOMB: Deterrent or Danger, and the local curate will chair it. Some of the women imprisoned for their actions at Greenham Common will be taking part.

The formation of the Broseley group has already caused ructions in the parish council and the parish magazine.

Some Facts About Cruise.

We still do not know how many Cruise missiles the American Armed Forces plan to station in Britain. However recently declassified Congressional testimony has provided new information about the method of deploying Cruise, and suggests that a far greater number will be deployed than has been rumoured.

Previous statements that 160 missiles will be stationed in Britain indicated a figure of 1300 American "technicians" necessary to man the launchers. It is now certain that far greater numbers are being catered for than 1300 in the facilities being built. More missiles or more missile-handlers.

In Britain the missiles will be divided up into "flights". Each flight will be fully mobile, consisting of a convoy of 22 vehicles carrying 69 men. This would include 4 Transporter Erector Launchers (Nuke-speak - TELS) and 2 Launch Control Centres (LCC). The launcher is over 55 feet long, carries 4 missiles and weighs 77,900 lbs. Each LCC is 57 feet long, has armour protection against nuclear blast and chemical warfare, and weighs 79,000 lbs. The 69 personnel included in the flight are the commander, four launch officers, 19 maintenance officers and 44 security guards. Plus one medical officer.

Such huge heavy vehicles travelling in convoy could only pass along major trunk roads and Motorways. The notion that Cruise missiles could be 'dispersed into the countryside' is therefore pure phantasy. For the movement of these missiles would be detected by spy satellites and 22 huge vehicles could hardly be hidden behind a hedge.

But far more disturbing is the correlation between the government's so-called civil defence plans and the operational capacity of the Cruise. We know that urban populations will be penned in inside our cities and that the transport network will be closed down. So guess what will be rumbling along the M.6 instead of fleeing townspeople?

Sizewell Inquiry.

As the Sizewell Nuclear power station public inquiry continues, a public opinion poll shows that people are equally divided on whether more nuclear power stations should be built. This should make the Energy Secretary start to eat his words. Last week he said that Britain will build more nuclear power stations, thus attempting to decide the issue in advance of the public inquiry. An example of being both judge and jury!

More Opinion Polls.

More opinion polls are confirming the majority opinion against Cruise and Trident in the country at large. Women especially are two to one against Cruise. However those in favour of Britain abandoning all nuclear weapons has decreased slightly to one quarter.

More importantly, over 8 out of 10 people believe that neither the Americans nor the Soviet leaders have 'sound judgement', or can be trusted to keep their word in disarmament matters.

Membership and Finance.

Please send membership fees for 1983 to Peter Templeton, 125 Withy Wood Drive Malinslee, Telford. Individual membership helps to provide an important basic income, so please dig deep. Remember 1983 is going to be a crucial year in our campaign against Cruise missiles in particular, and if we are to be successful we must be able to finance that campaign - Please Help!

Whats On.

- 29 Jan. Broseley Jumble Sale
at 10 am Red Cross Hall, Duke St.
- 8 Feb. TANG meeting, MOD film - A Better Road to Peace. 7.30 pm at Dawley Christian Centre.
- 10 Feb. at 8pm Broseley Business meeting at Duke of York.
- 22 Feb. at 7.30 pm Chain Reaction Newsletter
20 Calcott, Stirchley.
- 25 Feb. 7.30 - Anti Nuclear play - Woodside
Community Centre
- 26 Feb. Broseley Debate at Church Hall.
- 1 March Shropshire Peace Alliance,
College Hill House, Shrewsbury
7.45 pm.
- 18 March at 8pm - Cruise Missiles and Nuclear War - at Shrewsbury Technical College.

Contacts.

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