

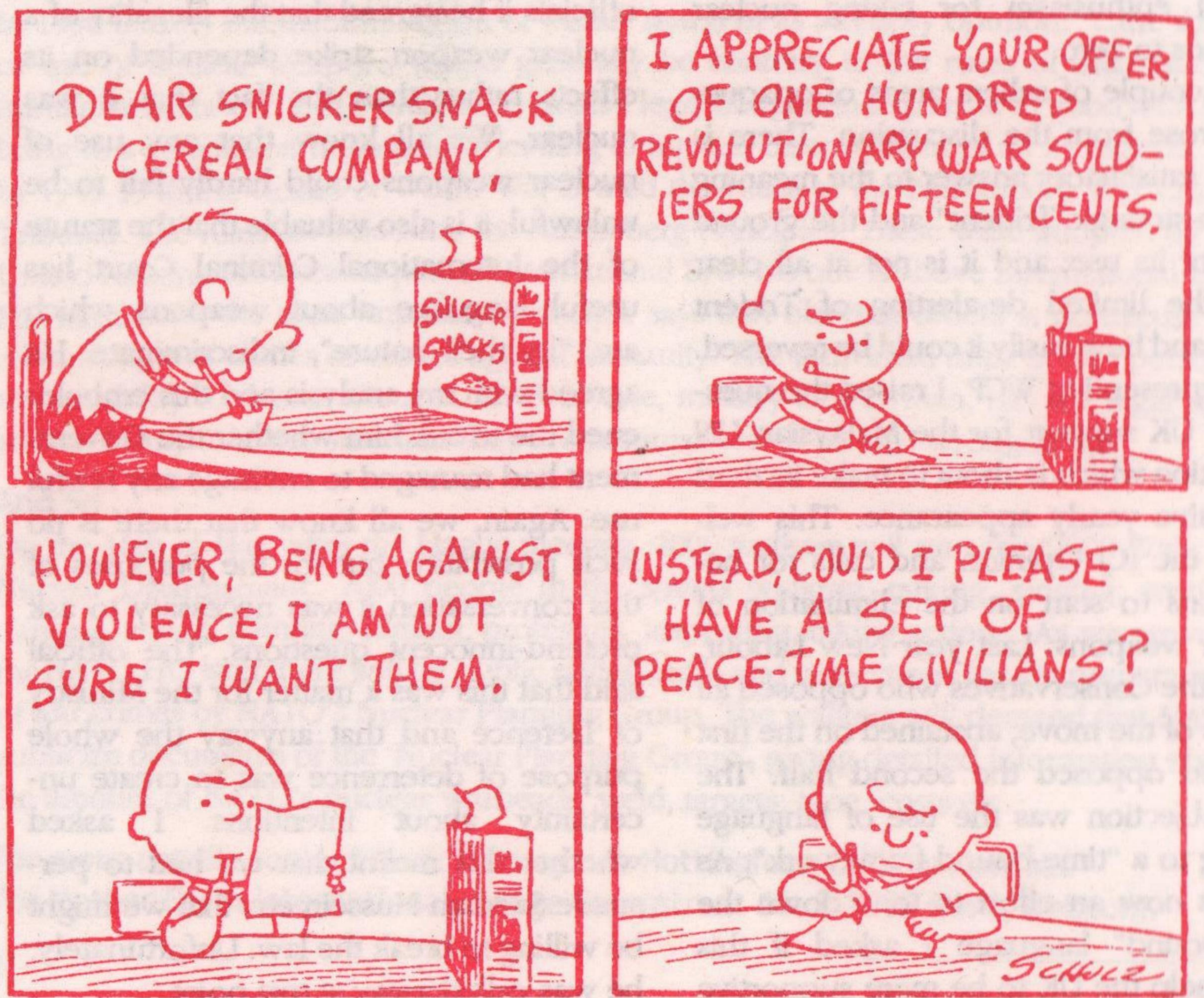
Diary Dates

29 - 31 Jan 1999 World Peace and Disarmament weekend. Details and/or resource pack (£4) from World Disarmament Campaign, PO Box 13779, London NW11 7WZ.

Sat 6 Feb 1999 Meeting to discuss regional strategy and actions in Derby. 1.30pm at 5 Leeds Place, Railway Cottages, Derby (near the railway station).

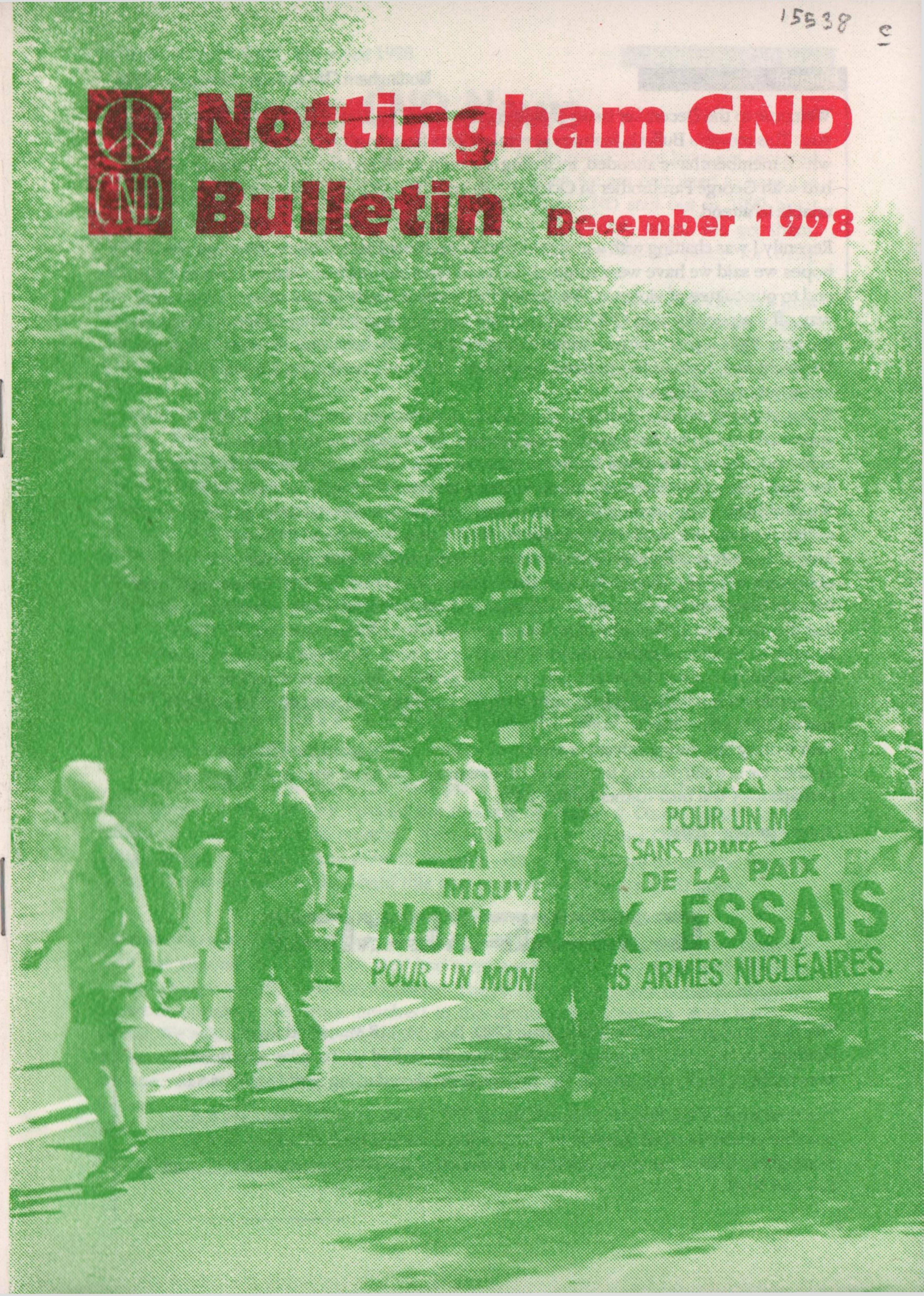
The job of a peacemaker is to stop war, to purify the world, to get it saved from poverty and riches, to heal the sick, to comfort the sad, to create joy and beauty, to find God in everything and everyone.

Muriel Lester



Nottingham CND Bulletin

December 1998



Welcome to the December issue of Nottingham CND Bulletin and a Merry Christmas to you. This month's Bulletin features several reports from conferences and meetings which members have attended, including our own AGM and the Public Meeting we had with George Farebrother in October – so you can catch up with them if you were unable to attend.

Recently I was chatting with a group of friends on the subject of hope. Amongst the hopes we said we have were some of the usual ones like nuclear disarmament and an end to our culture of violence. We agreed that nuclear disarmament seems to be a long way off – especially as in CND we have been campaigning for disarmament to begin by the year 2000, a year which is now drawing very near. To help ease the sense of gloom we might feel, I would like to share two points, about celebration and hope, which came out of our discussion.

Focused as we are on a giant goal like nuclear disarmament we have often not appreciated gains we have made along the way. If we take time to celebrate achievements like the recent landmine treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, we could carry on towards our eventual goal with renewed vigour and confidence. We should also note signs of hope when they appear. The new German government is calling for a nuclear no first use pledge by NATO, and, in a recent UN General Assembly motion calling for nuclear weapons states to take their disarmament obligation seriously, abstained rather than voting with the US and UK. Increasingly over the past few years (usually retired) Generals and other officials have 'come out' to say that the age-worn philosophy of nuclear deterrence is no longer sustainable. There appears to be an inexorable drift away from that doctrine. Even our own government cannot ignore forever the risible nature of their position that we need nuclear weapons for our defence whereas other countries (India, Pakistan, Iraq, etc) don't need them and shouldn't have them.

I am writing this during Advent, a season of waiting and hope in the Christian calendar. In CND we are still waiting for nuclear disarmament, but there are signs of hope and perhaps they will bear further fruit in 1999.

Mark Ramsey – Editor



The Bulletin is produced by Nottingham CND, Box 33, 118 Mansfield Road, Nottingham NG1 3HL. Telephone 9588586 (usually staffed on Tuesday afternoons, answerphone at all other times). The Bulletin is produced using Serif PagePlus 5.0.

The next issue of the Bulletin is due in March 1999. Articles (on PC computer disk if possible please) or other material to be considered for inclusion should be sent to Nottingham CND at the above address or e-mailed to [redacted] Feb 2nd 1999.

Nottingham CND News

A happy Christmas and hopefully a Peaceful New Year. What would make 1999 a real year to remember and help a positive start to the next millennium would be the total abolition of Nuclear Weapons. To this end we need to step up our campaigns locally, nationally and internationally. 1998 has proved that CND is still needed especially when we saw the testing of nuclear weapons in India and Pakistan, plus, even though we now have a Labour government, the launch of the fourth Trident submarine Vengeance. CND has worked hard in 1998 to make the public aware, not only by having protested by using non-violent direct action and citizens inspections of sites, but also by petitioning, leafleting, public meetings, taking the stall out and using the media effectively. I thank every member who has helped – please continue in 1999 as we still need your help and ideas.

At the moment we have not received dates when we are permitted to have the Nottingham CND stall out in 1999 but I will let you know when we get them. Please ring the NCND office for more information.

On February 6th we are having a joint meeting with CND members from Leicester and Derby to discuss regional strategies and set up activities in Derby. This will be held at 5 Leeds Place, Railway Cottages, Derby, starting at 1.30pm. Please come.

A lot of people have asked what we plan to do if the situation in Iraq erupts again. There will be a vigil on the day of any attack on Iraq from 6pm outside the Council House. Please bring candles and banners, and inform people you know. Once again a Peaceful New Year.

Diane Lunzer – Secretary

Nottingham CND AGM 1998

Report by Peggy Westaway

The AGM, chaired by Jeremy Jago, took place on November 2nd at the International Community Centre. Jeremy opened the meeting by thanking Diane Lunzer for her efforts over the last twelve months. This time last year Doreen Gower had had to resign as secretary after many years in the post. Diane had agreed to become the new secretary and she had worked hard this year to keep Nottingham CND going.

Secretary's report: Diane reported that she felt the decision to keep going had been the right one particularly as the past year had seen nuclear testing by India and Pakistan. Campaigning during the year had increased. The NCND stall had been out in Nottingham on more occasions. We were involved in the demonstration outside Rolls Royce in Derby. We held a vigil on Hiroshima Day and had a good presence at the Green Festival where our two stalls made over £100. NCND was represented at the Peace Camp at Faslane and two committee members attended the National Conference in September. Recently we held a public meeting with guest speaker George Farebrother from the World Court Project. Finally we made our own badges, "Real Ale Drinkers against the Bomb" and these sold well at the October Beer Festival.

[contd on p4]

Nottingham CND AGM 1998 (Continued from page 3)

Treasurer's report: John Hort reported that our expenditure had increased considerably during the year. This was not only due to the increased cost of campaigning but we had donated £4000 to National CND as agreed at the 1997 AGM and £470 to 118 Workshop for a new door entry system, as a gesture of our appreciation of all their assistance over the years. John was concerned at the low rate of interest on our deposit account but the majority of the meeting felt that we should continue banking with the Co-operative Bank, despite the poor interest, because of their ethical policies. The accounts were passed by the membership and a vote of thanks was given to John for all his hard work over the past year.

Membership report: Peggy Westaway reported that membership had declined slightly over the year. We had 149 members in 1997 and now we have 139. Eric and Louise Jessop had moved away and it was with deep regret we learned of the death of Connie Ford. All of them had been longstanding members. However, we have gained 8 new members. Maureen Maitland came to us through contacting National CND, four rejoined after a lengthy absence, one joined at the stall in St Petersgate and two more as a result of our membership drive with local National members. Peggy regretfully announced that the Radcliffe-on-Trent Peace Group, the last of NCND's Neighbourhood Groups, had been wound up and the balance of their funds split between the "Free Vanunu Campaign", "Ploughshares" and "Campaign Against Arms Trade".

Stall report: Diane Lunzer reported that despite the weather the stall had been out 10 times this year and there had been a good response from helpers. Thanks to the efforts of Jeremy Jago it now looked very professional. Our petitions had been well supported by the public. Permission had been given to sell White Poppies on Monday 9th November, as Saturday 7th November was not available. We have applied for our permit for 1999 but this has not yet been granted. Concern was expressed that the building work at St Petersgate might eliminate the site for stalls. John Peck offered to approach the City Council for further information.

The membership expressed their appreciation to Mark Ramsey for all the work that has gone into producing the quarterly bulletins this year. We feel that it looks very professional. Mark has assured us that he is prepared to continue with this very valuable job and we are grateful to him. The membership wished to express their thanks to Doreen Gower for all her past hard work in keeping NCND going and it was proposed to offer her Life Membership in gratitude. Diane Lunzer, Peggy Westaway, Emma Simmonds, Maureen Maitland and Jeremy Jago were thanked for staffing the office.

The following Officers were elected:

<i>Secretary</i>	Diane Lunzer	<i>Treasurer</i>	John Hort
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Peggy Westaway	<i>Bulletin Editor</i>	Mark Ramsey
<i>Committee members</i>	Jeremy Jago, Marguerite Oldham & Maureen Maitland		

The meeting concluded with a review of our year in picture form by Jeremy Jago. Jeremy was congratulated on his excellent photography and warmly thanked for such an entertaining half hour.

CND National Conference 1998

Report by Maureen Maitland

This year's CND Annual Conference was held in Manchester on September 19th and 20th and the delegates representing Nottingham were Diane Lunzer and myself. The first day coincided with the launch of the new Trident submarine at Barrow-in-Furness therefore it was decided that Conference should begin with a demo against this launch. Accordingly we all assembled outside Manchester Town Hall at 7.30 am on the Saturday for the bus journey to Barrow. We arrived in Barrow about 11.30 am and made our way to the bridge on which the demonstration was to be held, the sun was shining and the weather was mild. While we were waiting for the sub to be launched there were a number of speeches and among the speakers were Bruce Kent and Dave Knight. At approximately 1.00 pm the hangar doors opened and HMS Vengeance was revealed, she was black and evil looking and I wondered on whom was she going to wreak her vengeance. There was a noisy but orderly protest from the bridge which lasted for about an hour and then we boarded the buses back to the Conference venue.

Conference officially opened at 4.15 pm with the Annual Report. Among the items mentioned were the 40th Birthday Celebrations which took place in London, the Peace for Life Campaign, The Trafficking Trident Tour and the international flavour of the Faslane gathering which indicated that CND is just one part of a world wide movement. It was stated that this year we have received much more media coverage and we now appear to be

a credible and respectable movement - this is a definite image change. The next item on the agenda was the Treasurer's Report - this was doom and gloom as it appears we have a falling membership and subsequently a drop in funds. It was stated that next year's budget is to be reduced as membership continues to decline. A number of amendments to CND policies were voted on before Conference closed for the day at 6.30 pm. There was a social in the evening which I did not attend as I had a very heavy cold. However, Diane informed me that this was very enjoyable and well attended, so much so that the beer ran out.

Conference opened on Sunday at 9.30 am and we began by finishing the voting on policy amendments. This was followed by a number of different workshops such as Europe, Trident Ploughshares, Pluto-

nium Economy and Abolition 2000. Diane attended the workshop on Militarization of Space and I went to Nukewatch. I came away feeling more than a little worried as I live alongside the A1 not too far from RAF Wittering and there appear to be a number of nuclear convoys that almost pass my door. After lunch we voted on amendments to the Strategy Document which had been put forward by a number of regional groups. At 4.30 pm elections were held for CND Officers, Council Members and Regional Representatives. These were followed by the Chair's Closing Remarks and Conference ended at 4.30 pm.



Nuclear Space – Real or Fantasy?

Report by Diane Lunzer

On November 14th I went to a conference on colonising space organised by Leicester CND and Leicester Peace Action Group. The event was very well attended and extremely thought provoking and frightening. There were two speakers from America: Dr. Karl Grossman who has researched into the use of plutonium in space, and Dr. Donna Johnston from Colorado Springs, home to the headquarters of NORAD (North American Aerospace Defence Command) – which receives information from Menworth Hill in Yorkshire – Air Force Space Command and the Space Warfare Centre. Donna Johnston has been very active campaigning against the centre and spends most of her life campaigning and educating people about the base. Dr Martin Barstow of Leicester University also spoke at the meeting, mainly about the advantages of peaceful exploration of space.

To me personally the most interesting and thought provoking part of the conference was Dr Karl Grossman who concentrated mainly on the nuclear threat to our planet. He has written a book called "The Wrong Stuff – The space programme's nuclear threat to our planet" and has just completed a video which was shown at the conference and is worth seeing as it is really up to date and very interesting.

Dr Grossman has been researching the use of nuclear material in space launches and showed that NASA's use of plutonium to heat its deep space probes goes along side the US government's intentions to put weapons in space. We were given some pages from "New World Vistas – air and space power for the 21st Century". It talks about space based weapons, including lasers, which will be

developed in the next two decades and will be able to "effect very many kills compared with current concepts, and therefore they could be utilized against a large number of high value surface, airborne and space targets". It says that nuclear power in space is one alternative to power such weapons and "setting the emotional issues of nuclear power aside, this technology offers a viable alternative for large amount of power in space".

The military's wish for nuclear power in space puts into context NASA's use of 72 pounds of plutonium on the Cassini space probe which was launched on October 6th 1997 (by a Titan IV rocket – the same type of rocket that exploded 42 seconds after lift off in August 1998). Cassini will pass within 500 miles of Earth on August 16th 1999 so that the gravitational forces can propel the craft towards Saturn and, if the mission went wrong and it entered the Earth's atmosphere, at least 5 billion people could be affected. However if the mission is successful this is just the start and the United States are prepared to spend billions on future nuclear space missions.

What is really crazy is that it has been shown that the same mission could go ahead using solar panels as fuel. The use of solar energy was investigated by the European Space Agency in 1994 and, according to Carla Signorini, a physicist from Holland, the mission could go ahead using solar energy within 5 years.

Nottingham CND has more information on Cassini if you are interested and we also have leaflets and petitions. We are hoping to get a copy of the Karl Grossman video and we will then show it and get a speaker.

Stop the Cassini Earth FlyBy

A Call to Stop Space Missions that Endanger Life on Earth with their Plutonium Payloads

On October 15 of 1997 NASA launched the controversial Cassini space probe carrying 72.3 lbs. (32.8 kg) of lethal plutonium. The purpose of the mission is to study Saturn and gather information on the origins of our solar system and universe.

To reach Saturn, NASA has scheduled a series of gravity-assisted flybys (or swingbys) that accelerate the probe's speed. They scheduled a flyby around Venus for June 24, 1999. The Earth flyby would occur on August 18, 1999. They expect the probe to approach Earth at a speed in excess of 42,000 mph and pass within 500 miles of the Earth's surface. An accident or miscalculation could be catastrophic to life on Earth as we know it.

According to the NASA Environmental Impact Statement, in the event of an inadvertent re-entry of the probe into the atmosphere of the Earth "approximately 5 billion of the estimated 7 to 8 billion world population at the time of the swingbys could receive 99 per cent or more of the radiation exposure."

A Cassini flyby accident could double the current artificial radiation activity in our atmosphere. There is a debate among scientists about how much damage this amount of radiation would cause. NASA claims that only "2,300 health effects could occur over a 50-year period". Dr. Ernest Sternglass, professor emeritus of radiological physics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine said that "they underestimate the cancer alone by 2,000 to 4,000 times." According to Dr. Sternglass, there have been recent studies showing that low-levels of radioactivity are disproportionately more damaging than high levels. Such a dangerous mission is ludicrously irresponsible. NASA recently disclosed that 13 additional plutonium-fueled space shots are possible in coming years. So, even if Cassini avoids an accident, NASA plans to continue to put humanity and life at risk. The risk of an accident may be small, but the consequences of such an accident are devastating.

Why is NASA using nuclear power on this mission? Solar could have been developed. Then we could "celebrate" deep space missions involving flybys. But the Pentagon and the US nuclear power industry are pushing to use nuclear power in space. Star Wars still exists, under a new name, but with the same plan to use nuclear power for energy and weapons orbiting Earth. The objective is to obtain the ultimate "high ground," for Earth warfare.

Please help us to stop the Cassini flyby and keep space free from nuclear power and weapons.

THE CASSINI MISSION IS OUR CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR FUTURE

For more information contact Nottingham CND or Yorkshire CND, 22 Edmund St, Bradford, BD5 0BH, Tel: 01274 730795.

Visit the NoFlyby Web Site at <http://www.nonviolence.org/noflyby>

How to Ban the Bomb

Report by Jeremy Jago

On October 13th, a well-attended Nottingham meeting was addressed by George Farebrother of the World Court Project. George stressed that despite the legalistic emphasis of the project's work, he is not a lawyer but a history teacher, retired since 1991 but busier than ever. The project is associated with Abolition 2000, a global network to eliminate nuclear weapons, and takes its name from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), or World Court, in the Hague. In 1996, following hearings of representatives of many countries, the court issued an 'Advisory Opinion' that the use of nuclear weapons would generally contravene humanitarian law.

The World Court Project UK is based in Sussex, its staff being George, his wife and a part-timer George referred to as 'a fifth of a woman'. This small number is made possible by the use of computers.

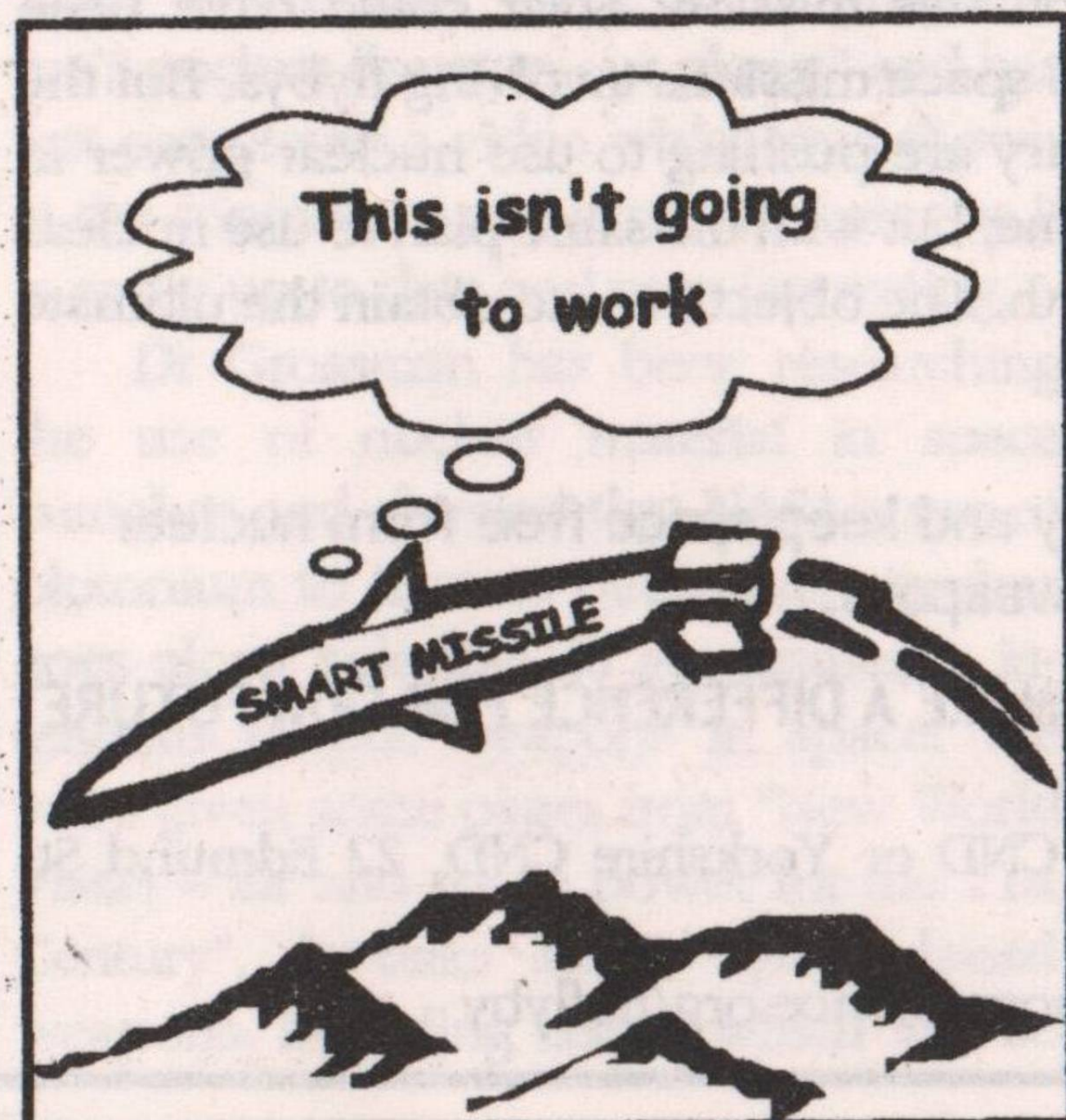
International law, George recalled, has two branches: the rights of states and those of individuals. But the right of a state to survive can conflict with the rights of

people. Careful study of the ICJ document reveals that non-discriminatory weapons may not be used even if a state's survival is at stake. The Hiroshima bomb was 12 kilotons. Today UK's Trident alone is 100 kilotons: how could this be used with 'discrimination'?

The ICJ opinion stresses a general obligation to disarm. It claims the principle of 'mutually assured destruction' is a cause of instability, not deterrence. It says there is an obligation 'to pursue in good faith, and bring to conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament.' Late in 1996 a large majority of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution that noted the World Court opinion, thanked the court, and called for negotiations in 1997 towards a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The three NATO nuclear states - France, US and UK - voted against. A year on, a similar resolution was adopted - this time not totally opposed by the UK. Meanwhile, a 'Model' Nuclear Weapons Convention had been drafted to show governments the feasibility of the whole process. Late in 1997, the UN adopted it as an official document.

George cited several prominent figures now definitely in the abolitionist camp: among them Lord Carver, former US president Jimmy Carter, and General Lee Butler, formerly in charge of US Strategic arms. At another extreme come exponents of Non-Violent Direct Action or NVDA. The ICJ opinion promises a defence. The recent Trident Ploughshares NVDA action in which campaigners swam underwater to a nuclear submarine was world news: less widely reported was the subsequent decision by a Helensburgh

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How to Ban the Bomb (continued)

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court to release those charged, with a reprimand. The case never went to court - thus was not tested legally. But the magistrate did say he had been convinced by the campaigners' case.

A key feature of the 'Model' weapons convention is progress by logical, agreed stages: George explained the way a practical convention might proceed at each stage from 'containment' to 'elimination'. For example, de-targeting weapons and removing them from alert status for short periods could lead to longer term de-alerting and 'decoupling' or removal of warheads. This would be the biggest single step away from the possibility of accidental firing.

One of the purposes of George's visit was to talk about Citizens' Forums. These one-off roundtable sessions aim to inform people of the present situation in law of nuclear weapons, to encourage open, informed discussion and to inform the Government of the results. George said no one in the room would do as a member! Forum members should be articulate and alive to community issues but not involved in

anti-nuclear activity. This, he says, gives their final report greater authority. A good facilitator and a note-taker are needed too. Members are given in advance a factual briefing on the current situation including the ICJ opinion, legal aspects and arguments against a ban. They also see a video on the ICJ hearings and opinion. The forum isn't just a talking shop: its conclusions are conveyed to Government twice a year via meetings between Abolition 2000 and the Foreign Office.

Obviously, the main difficulty is finding and recruiting people to take part in a forum. Most organisers, said George, are terrified and agonised. Personal approach is the best (and about the only) workable method of recruitment. The rewards can be interesting: a recent session in Abingdon turned out to be unexpectedly enthusiastic and delivered new insights.

No one is underestimating the effort involved: but at least it is effort shared - and, as George said in conclusion, it's no longer a case of 'ban the bomb' ... but 'how to ban the bomb'.

Peace is for Life not just for Christmas

Send a Christmas card to Tony Blair and other members of the government asking them for a world free of nuclear weapons in 1999.

Addresses:

The Rt Hon Tony Blair MP, 10 Downing Street, London. SW1A 2AA

The Rt Hon Robin Cook MP, The Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AH

Tony Lloyd MP, Minister of State, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AH

Doug Henderson MP (Minister of State for the Armed Forces and responsible for nuclear policy), Ministry of Defence, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AH

Bonn wants Nato no first nuclear use

Germany wants Nato to break with half a century of military and strategic doctrine and commit itself not to use nuclear weapons first. The policy shift by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's coalition of Social Democrats and Greens is already encountering resistance in Western capitals and threatens to put the new Bonn government on a collision course with Washington.

In the run-up to next April's Nato summit in Washington, which marks the alliance's 50th anniversary and is to adopt a new "strategic concept" redefining its purpose in the light of its expansion into eastern Europe, senior German officials said they would fight to have the no-first-use commitment enshrined in the document. "The security and military situation has changed so radically in recent years that the time is right for this," a senior German foreign ministry official said. "It belongs in the Nato review and we want to push it at the April summit."

"These are highly sensitive issues," another German official said. "But if the nuclear states don't move towards more

disarmament, then the incentive for those states on the brink of going nuclear is extremely low."

Western governments are monitoring shifts in German foreign and security policy. The no-first-use demand is a concession to the environmentalist Greens, the junior coalition partner, whose leader, Joschka Fischer, is the new foreign minister. The 50-page coalition pact agreed by the Social Democrats and the Greens last month included a line stating that the new government "will campaign to lower the alert status of nuclear weapons and for a renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons".

The first indication of the position emerged last Friday at the United Nations in New York when Germany abstained on a motion by neutral countries for nuclear disarmament. The key Nato allies the US, France, and Britain all voted against the resolution. A German official said: "The abstention showed that we can't say yes because of the allies, but that we don't want to say no."

Taken from the Guardian, 19 Nov 1998

Halve our nuclear arsenal, senator urges Clinton

President Bill Clinton should order immediate unilateral reductions in United States nuclear weapons and should aim to take its nuclear missile arsenal off instant alert by removing their warheads, a senior member of his party urged yesterday. Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, a possible Democratic presidential contender in 2000, said the US should make an instant cut of more than half of its nuclear forces, reducing its warheads to 2,000-2,500 and stand down all US nuclear weapons surplus to internationally agreed treaty levels from their current "hair-trigger alert" status.

The Clinton administration has been

sounding out both parties about proposals for weapons reduction, and Mr Kerrey's speech was seen yesterday as a kite-flying exercise for an administration initiative on nuclear weapons after months of deadlock with Congress. Mr Kerrey said that maintenance of high levels of nuclear missile deployment merely forced Russia to maintain an equally high and worse-controlled arsenal of its own. The \$25 billion spent annually by the US on its nuclear arsenal is "diverting resources from real and imminent threats to fight an old one", Mr Kerrey said.

Taken from the Guardian, 18 Nov 1998

A Bug in the Bomb

The year 2000 may bring chaos to nuclear bases

As the fireworks burst in the sky, heralding the Year 2000, could we see larger rockets taking to the air, bearing payloads of nuclear death and destruction?

It sounds far-fetched. Surely the worst the Millennium Bug could do is close down cash machines for a few days and cause a bit of confusion in supermarkets when fresh food is labelled 99 years past its sell-by date?

But the danger is all too real, according to *The Bug In The Bomb*, a report published today by Basic, the British American Security Information Council. It cites a test in 1993 by curious technicians at Norad, the US early warning radar network. They rolled the system's dates to January 1, 2000. The result: a total systems blackout.

Thomas Neve of Basic says this scenario is more to be feared than the possibility that missiles confused by the date change will decide to launch themselves. "If everyone's completely blind or they get a false image, things start getting really dangerous," he says.

But if the danger has been known about for at least five years, surely remedial work is well in hand?

Michael R. Kraig and Herbert Scoville Jr, the report's authors, have no confidence in the measures taken by the US Department of Defense. They point out that last year the department published an impressive sounding five-point plan for knocking out the Year 2000 bug. Last June an audit found that out of 430 machines labelled Year 2000 compliant, only 109 had been correctly certified. The procedures were actually vague and ambiguous - for instance, validation through testing was not required before a lower manager

certified a system; the only real requirement was that the manager signed the testing slip.

The report highlights the layers of complexity: no one check can be run for all the different weapons and warning systems; many systems incorporate chips and code which are now 'obsolete' and there is great difficulty finding experts to work with them; even if a system is 'debugged', it could still be 'infected' by another system.

Russia is sanguine about the Year 2000. Igor Sergeev, the defence minister, said in August: "This problem mostly affects sectors where they use conventional computer technologies. There is no such danger [for nuclear weapons] since in the Strategic Missile Forces we use special technologies."

Brave words, but not echoed by Sergey Fradkov, a former Soviet satellite control technician now working in the US. "Russia is extremely vulnerable to the Year 2000 problem," he said. "If the date is used somewhere to track an incoming missile and the date shifts to 0000000 for a brief moment, there is a division by zero - an extremely high value - that fools the system into thinking there is a high probability of an attack in progress."

The report's authors call for all the nuclear powers to work together on the problem. Nuclear systems should be taken off alert, they say, or nuclear warheads should be uncoupled from missiles.

The Ministry of Defence said that a comprehensive Year 2000 review was underway with all systems and it was confident there was no risk.

Taken from The Guardian, 11 Nov 1998

Shrines to Destruction

The old religion of nuclear deterrence is dying, says Martin Woollacott

When a religion is in decline there may be a long period when, even though its temples empty and its priests turn apostate, the tenets of belief are still haltingly and hollowly observed. So it is with the religion of nuclear deterrence. Thousands of missile silos, shrines to destruction, are still powered and manned, nuclear-armed submarines still quarter the oceans, the scriptures are still studied in war ministries and staff colleges, and there are still converts, in the shape of an India, a Pakistan, or an Iraq, who wish to join the elect. Yet nuclear deterrence, as a belief system, is close to collapse in the countries where it was invented.

Many of the generals who commanded nuclear forces, the politicians who were involved in nuclear decision-making, and the intellectuals who tried to create doctrines for the use of nuclear weapons have now repudiated deterrence, wholly or in part. Those who now devise or advocate nuclear weapons programmes are usually mediocrities, time servers, or careerists, like the third rate scientists responsible for the Indian and Pakistani tests. Or they are politicians – like some in Russia, who see in nuclear weapons a currency that can buy continued great power status after economic and conventional military strength has dwindled away.

The terrible truth about this decayed religion is that it retains the capacity to exact unimaginable sacrifices from the human race. True, the nightmare of a huge exchange of weapons between Russia and the United States may now be very distant. It has been replaced in Western countries, but at a much lower level of awareness, by anxieties over proliferation, and over the

acquisition of nuclear weapons by terrorists or by "rogue states" like Iraq.

But, on the whole, the public in developed countries acts either as if nuclear weapons had already been abolished or as if the maintenance of these arsenals was a safe procedure. The political and military establishments, meanwhile, act as if these weapons were as necessary as they ever were. They may not really believe it, but the habit of belief remains intact, largely because assessing deterrence in the degenerate form in which it now exists requires a revolution in understanding the history of the last 50 years, an effort which is only just beginning to be made.

What is left is the muddled idea that since nuclear deterrence supposedly "worked" in the past, it still "works" today. When this notion is challenged, even in a small way, Washington, the Vatican of deterrence, reacts with anger. The German defence minister, Rudolf Scharping, has consequently had to equivocate on his coalition's argument that Nato should adopt a No First Use policy. Germany would do nothing unilaterally, he said after meetings in Washington this week. Yet a proper American response would have been to say that such a move was eminently worth exploring during the discussions about a new strategic concept for the alliance, which are going on in preparation for the 50th anniversary summit of Nato in April next year.

The refusal to embrace No First Use of nuclear weapons in the past was based on Nato's need to be able to respond to Soviet conventional superiority. That conventional advantage has not only dis-

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Shrines to Destruction (continued)

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appeared, but been replaced by a Western conventional superiority – to such an extent that Russia abandoned its own No First Use pledge in 1993.

It is hard to say which country is being more irrational. Neither faces any threat to which the appropriate response would be the first use of nuclear weapons. Certainly not from each other, and, as to other possibilities, would even the use by Saddam Hussein, say, of a biological or chemical weapon, justify firing nuclear missiles at Iraq?

Washington's resistance to German ideas is no doubt less to do with the No First Use debate than with the fact that No First Use leads on naturally to other measures of disarmament, like the withdrawal of the tactical nuclear weapons still deployed in Europe.

Not that the nuclear powers are against arms reductions. The Pentagon, it was revealed this week, may well go ahead with unilateral reductions of its nuclear forces in the event that the Russians fail to ratify the Start-II treaty in the near future. The weapons simply cost too much.

The problem here is that arms reductions have been part of the game of deterrence for many years. They were and are aimed at preserving the deterrent in a "safer" form rather than abolishing it. This is a critical and intricate question. While advocates of arms reductions and advocates of abolition can work together, there is a sharp distinction between real disarmers and those who propose only a certain "tidying up" of the deterrent, to make accidents less likely and to appease non-nuclear powers. Ultimately, abolitionists want to see complete renunciation, with no road back to weapons envisaged.

Would that we were at the stage where such arguments could be joined in practice rather than only in theory. But we are stuck in Cold War mud. The present doctrine is a palsied holdover from the past. The only difference is that the names of previous enemies have been rubbed out and such formulations as "a rogue state", "terrorists", or "Russia... should circumstances change for the worse" as the British defence review put it, are filled in instead.

The former US ambassador, Thomas Graham, led the successful American campaign to persuade non-nuclear states to indefinitely extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty. He recently wrote to Nato leaders – including Tony Blair – that the non-proliferation regime will be in "grave danger" if Nato continues "to assign a high value to nuclear weapons, for instance as an essential bulwark of Alliance cohesion". Instead Nato ought to be moving toward No First Use, the de-alerting of tactical nuclear weapons preparatory to their abolition, and an end to nuclear sharing.

But the essence of the situation is that the days when the nuclear deterrent, apart from being justified by what seemed to be a manifest threat, was sincerely defended by able generals, formidable intellectuals, and powerful politicians, are over.

It is with us still because of institutional inertia and a lingering refusal to understand that something so powerful can be without use or value. The deterrent for which we should be aiming is the fear of returning to a nuclear-armed world, which would always stand guard over the treaty by which the world had eliminated nuclear weapons.

Taken from The Guardian Nov 28 1998.

The Hague Appeal

In May 1899, representatives of the major powers met in The Hague to discuss peace and disarmament. A hundred years later there is to be another Hague conference in May 1999 which will be attended by at least 5000 people from all parts of the world. It is a non-governmental event planned by four international citizens organisations and has the backing of Nobel prizewinners.

The Hague meeting will last from 11 - 16 May and include a wide range of events, discussions and celebrations. Four main themes will run through the whole event - disarmament, international law and human rights, conflict prevention and the creation of a culture of peace. It will not abolish war, but is the start of the process to convince others that swords can be turned into ploughshares, and it will look at practical steps to take.

Registration for the event is 150 guilders for student/youth, 300 guilders before Jan 31 1999, 400 guilders after then, and 150 guilders for student/youth (£1 = 3 guilders). For more details send an sae to 'The Hague Appeal', 11 Venetia Rd, London. N4 1ET.

2000 Walk for Nuclear Disarmament

For Mother Earth International network invites you to join the '2000 walk for nuclear disarmament' from the International Court of Justice in The Hague (Netherlands), to NATO HQ in Brussels (Belgium), 15 - 30 May 1999. We are calling for the immediate start of multilateral negotiations for a Treaty banning all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. We will take the international law to NATO in Brussels!

Nuclear Weapons and the Law ...

In 1996 the UN International Court of Justice stated in its advisory opinion: "...the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international humanitarian law..." and "...that there exists a legal obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects..."

In 1945-1946 the victors of World War II tried the Nazis at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal. The rules used became the Nuremberg Principles. These were adopted by the United Nations and became part of International Law. No one is above International Law. For individuals the most important principle says that obeying orders is no excuse for committing war crimes or crimes against humanity. The individual must accept personal responsibility for his or her actions. Everyone, military and civilian, has the legal right and civil duty to make sure that they are not involved in serious wrongdoing.

And So ...

On the 16th of May, after the Hague meeting, 2000 walkers will start the '2000 Walk for Nuclear Disarmament'. 2000 people in the streets walking, talking, singing, writing, dancing, eating, painting, filming, protesting, inspecting, taking action... As we arrive at the NATO HQ later there will be public rallies, vigils and inspections for the preparations of war crimes by NATO's Nuclear Planning Group. The walkers will demand that NATO publicize documents of the 'Nuclear Planning Group', giving detailed information about the amount of NATO's nuclear warheads, yield, targets, type, costs etc.

For more details contact Mark Ramsey c/o Nottingham CND, or contact For Mother Earth International, Lange Steenstraat 16-d, 9000 Gent, Belgium.

Tea and biscuits at the FCO

A report by George Farebrother, taken from the World Court Project UK's Autumn 98 Newsletter

October's visit by a bevy of anti-nuclear groups to the Foreign Office to meet Tony Lloyd at least shows a Government willingness to discuss these issues. This was the second such meeting.

The Minister more or less stuck to the agenda provided by Abolition 2000. He listed the Government steps towards a nuclear-free world, including those featured in the Strategic Defence Review. The enthusiasm for a global ban on fissile materials, the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the greater transparency in UK nuclear stockpiles, and the movement of Trident's alert status from hours to days are all welcome - as far as they go. However, we were lukewarm in our reception of these achievements, still needing considerably more evidence of real enthusiasm for taking nuclear weapons to zero.

A couple of salient areas of opacity arose from the discussion. There is still no satisfactory answer to the meaning of "sub-strategic Trident" and the ground rules for its use; and it is not at all clear what the limited de-alerting of Trident entails and how easily it could be reversed.

Representing WCP, I raised the question of UK support for the Malaysian UN Resolution which is about to make its third successive yearly appearance. This welcomes the ICJ Opinion and calls for negotiations to start on the elimination of nuclear weapons. Last year New Labour, unlike the Conservatives who opposed all aspects of the move, abstained on the first half and opposed the second half. The main objection was the use of language relating to a "time-bound framework". As there is now an effort to tone down the "time-bound" language I asked if this might help the UK to be more supportive

of the Resolution. Mr Lloyd said maybe, but we didn't support resolutions for the sake of it. I apologise for saying that goal posts were being moved; but in this case no other analogy is suitable.

The Minister said that the UK took pride in its positive role in the Rome Conference on setting up an International Criminal Court. He also said that they had opposed making the use of nuclear weapons automatically part of the Court's remit. This would have been illogical as Britain retains the policy of nuclear deterrence. Fair enough, if you share the basic premise. However, he said that that using nuclear weapons could still precipitate an ICC hearing if that use was contrary to Humanitarian Law.

I asked one of the Foreign Office officials if he agreed that the illegality of a nuclear weapon strike depended on its effects rather than the fact that it was nuclear. We all know that any use of nuclear weapons could hardly fail to be unlawful; it is also valuable that the statute of the International Criminal Court has useful language about weapons which are, "by their nature", indiscriminate. He agreed with my analysis and this emboldened me to ask him whether the Government had managed to envisage any lawful use. Again, we all know that there is no such possibility; but for the purposes of this conversation it was necessary to ask pretend-innocent questions. The official said that this was a matter for the Ministry of Defence and that anyway the whole purpose of deterrence was to create uncertainty about intentions. I asked whether this meant that we had to persuade Saddam Hussein etc. that we might be willing to break the law. Unfortunately, he was called away at this point.