



# Heddwch

**ACTION NEWS** *the magazine of CND Cymru*



No. 4.

## The tide's turning on Trident

**P**eople everywhere are waking up to the realisation that Trident IS redundant and wasteful. Opinion formers are beginning to speak out, questioning the British Government's motives in deploying this relic of the Cold War.

But Trident isn't just wasteful, or dangerous because it represents a huge escalation in Britain's firepower. Trident is even more dangerous than this. Trident breaks Britain's commitment under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to 'pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament'. As the NPT comes up for review in 1995, Britain's failure to join negotiations on nuclear arms reduction could wreck the Treaty and encourage nuclear proliferation.

### TRIDENT – Do YOU Want It?

**P**ublic Opinion can make a difference. NOW is the time for us to ACT by getting out on the street and asking people to vote. If you're a member of Youth/Student CND why not hold a ballot in your school or college. Running a street ballot won't need many helpers or much pre-planning...but the results can make a good story for the local media.

**#** If you would like information about how to organise a ballot/mock press release/ballot forms/ contact Mary Jones on 0792 774687.



■ **Rally for a Nuclear Free World London October 9**

The campaign to get CND's message out across the length and breadth of Wales has started in earnest. Our new poster exhibition, leaflets, stickers and balloons are adorning libraries throughout Wales from now until next summer (or maybe longer!). The exhibition consists of 8 A2 bi-lingual laminated posters.

### Library venues

#### West Glamorgan

October 11th-29th Gorseinon  
November 1st-19th Sandfields  
November 22nd-December 10th Morrison  
January 31st-Feb 18th Swansea Central

#### Mid Glamorgan

January 10th-28th Bridgend (then on tour around the County until the end of June courtesy of the Libraries Department!)

#### South Glamorgan

January 4th-21st Cardiff Central (negotiations are under way for Roath, Canton, Whitchurch, Fairwater, Rhydypennau, Penarth, Barry and Dinas Powis, but dates have not been fixed yet). Gwent and Dyfed have responded to our request but so far no specific venues or dates have been arranged. Powys, Gwynedd and Clwyd have not responded. How

about someone reminding them ...

CND Cymru has so far only written to County Librarians but not all libraries are run by the County Councils. If you can get the exhibition into a library near you we'd like to hear from you.

Check the list above and if there isn't a venue in your area and you'd like one contact Mary Jones on 0792 774687.

*CND Cymru works for international peace and disarmament and a world in which the vast resources now devoted to militarism are redirected to the real needs of the human community*

# PLUTONIUM & PROLIFERATION

All nuclear reactors produce plutonium in their spent fuel. If this plutonium is separated out by reprocessing, it can be used to make a basic nuclear weapon or A-bomb. If the plutonium is used in conjunction with highly enriched uranium, a greater explosive power can be achieved for a given mass of fissile material. If the explosive power is boosted by a tritium-deuterium reaction then a thermonuclear or H-bomb is produced.

## Further Reading

**The Plutonium Legacy: Nuclear Proliferation Out of Control?** by Frank Barnaby, Current Decisions Rpt. 12, April 1993 Oxford Research Group, 32, Warnborough Rd., Oxford OX2 6JA. Price £10 inc. p&p

**Plutonium, Proliferation, Terrorism** by David Lowry and Paul Helliwell, WBMG Environmental Communications, Suite 610-611, Linen Hall, 162-8, Regent Street., London W1R 5TB.

In a nuclear reactor the uranium 238 isotope in the reactor fuel is converted into plutonium 239 as a result of neutron absorption. Gradually, some of the plutonium 239 is in turn converted to plutonium 240 by neutron capture. The longer the reactor operates, the more the uranium 238 is converted to plutonium 239 and the more plutonium 240 also builds up.

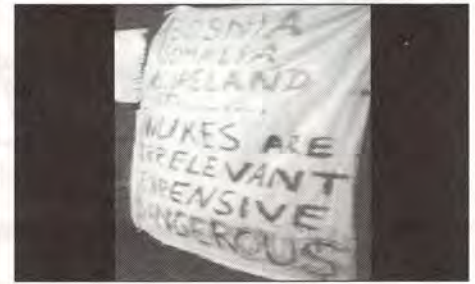
The military prefer their plutonium 239 to be relatively uncontaminated by the 240 isotope and so military reactor cycles tend to be short. Economic power production, however favours longer reactor cycle. In official circles, therefore, a distinction is generally made between **weapons grade plutonium** (containing less than 7% Pu 240), **fuel grade plutonium** (containing 7-19% Pu 240) and **reactor grade plutonium** (containing more than 19% Pu 240). Sometimes agencies, such as BNFL, use this distinction to convey the impression that reactor grade plutonium is not suitable for bomb making. It must be remembered, however, that the distinction effectively refers to how the reactor fuel cycle has been operated and not the suitability or otherwise of the resulting plutonium for weapons. All grades of plutonium can be used to make nuclear bombs.

In April 1992, in a speech to the Japanese Atomic Industrial Forum, William J. Dircks, Deputy Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said:

"the excess of fissile plutonium from civil nuclear programmes poses a major political and security problem worldwide and while plutonium from power reactors is not ideal for weapons fabrication it can nevertheless be used for this purpose."

Earlier, an American Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner, Victor Gilinsky, had written:

"So far as reactor grade plutonium is concerned, the fact is that it is possible to use this material for nuclear warhead at all levels of technical sophistication ... Of course, when reactor grade plutonium is used there may be a penalty in performance that is considerable or insignificant depending on the weapon design. But, whatever we might once have thought, we now know that even simple designs, albeit with some uncertainties in yield, can serve as effective, highly powerful weapons-reliably in the kiloton range."



By the end of 1990 around 650 tonnes of plutonium had been discharged from the world's nuclear power reactors. Of this, some 120 tonnes had been reprocessed and separated. By the year 2000, if current reprocessing plans (including the opening of THORP) are realised this total could rise to about 300 tonnes and by 2010 to some 420 tonnes. Approximately 70 tonnes of this plutonium will be in store at Sellafield.

In addition, some 200 tonnes of plutonium will arise from the dismantling of Russian and US nuclear warheads under the START process.

The growth in plutonium separation and stockpiling on such a scale will have grave implications for the control of this dangerous material. The more plutonium there is in the world the more difficult it is to oversee and control.

If THORP is allowed to proceed it will contribute to this growth. By the late 1990s THORP could be separating about 55 tonne of plutonium a year, with a total of 40-50 tonnes to be returned to overseas customers in the first ten years of operation. This is sufficient for several thousand nuclear bombs.

The risks reprocessed plutonium presents for nuclear proliferation arise in a number of ways. Plutonium may be diverted or stolen during the reprocessing process. It may be hijacked by state sponsored terrorists or sub-national terrorist groups on its return journey to its country of origin. Once returned, it may be diverted by the receiving country. Or it may contribute to *latent proliferation*, whereby the receiving country accumulates all the necessary materials and has the option of going nuclear at some time in the future. And, whatever the declared intention of the receiving country, the returned plutonium will inevitably affect the political/strategic situation in the region to which it is returned. For example, Japan intends to stockpile 85 tonnes of plutonium by the year 2010, far in excess of any possible needs for nuclear power production. What are China, Russia, North Korea and South Korea, all Japan's neighbours, to make of this?

Only relatively small amounts of plutonium are required to make a bomb and the technical information needed is available in open literature. Indeed, a number of students in the US are known to have designed functioning weapons as part of their university courses- their designs

have then generally been classified and confiscated by the authorities!

The Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) which advises the US Congress, concluded in a report on *Nuclear Proliferation & Safeguards*, written as long ago as 1977, that:

"A small group of people, none of whom have ever had access too the classified literature, could possibly design and build a crude nuclear explosive device. They would not necessarily require a great deal of technological equipment or have to undertake any experiments. Only modest machine shop facilities....would be required."

In the light of the risks presented by the impending growth in separated plutonium stocks, the Government Statement on Reprocessing and THORP, issued as part of the recent *consultation* exercise, is complacent, unconcerned and shameful – referring to THORP customer states it says:

"in the highly unlikely event that the character of THORP customer states changed....the crucial factor would not be the presence or otherwise of of plutonium from THORP on their territory....As advanced industrial states they have the undoubted ability, should they so wish, to produce and separate their own plutonium."

This statement can only be described as a 'cop out', a complete abdication of the Government's responsibilities to present and future generations.

Dave Andrews

{An Apology: In the article on Nuclear Power & Nuclear Weapons-the links (Heddwch Summer 1993) I inadvertently said that the plutonium for India's 1974 *peaceful* nuclear explosion had been reprocessed at Tarapur – this should have read Trombay.}

## Llanishen AWE Watch Watching them Watching us

**M**embers of Cardiff and Caerphilly CND Groups met the *Wimmin on the Road for Peace* who visited Llanishen Trident weapons factory on August 17th. They then all co-operated in a 24 hour watch on both the front and back gates of the plant. The back gate watchers saw not a single lorry pass through their gate and met only a family of rabbits grazing within stroking distance. The watchers at the Front Gate recorded a lorry entering the plant with *radioactive* symbols on it Presumably this lorry had arrived in Cardiff along the motorways and was carrying depleted uranium. Meanwhile, in answer to queries, South Glamorgan County Council has told us that the management of Llanishen AWE has not approached the Emergency Planning Officer or the Chief Fire Officer about any emergency procedures regarding the plant.

Depleted uranium bullets and shells were used in the Gulf War. Forty tons of uranium oxide dust was released which, when inhaled, produces radiation sickness.

Genetic mutations and leukemia are now common amongst children and the offspring of those exposed to uranium oxide during the war. Uranium has a half life of 4,500 million years.

**If you live in Cardiff or travel on the M4, why not write to your MP and County Councillor? Tell her/him that it is known that depleted uranium is used in Llanishen. Ask them how it is transported and what safety measures are taken to protect the public from an accident.**



### Come and join us

I want to join the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque/PO for £\_\_\_\_\_ payable to CND Cymru. Couple £15; Adult £10; Unwaged, pensioners, youth £3. Return to CND Cymru, The Peace Shop, 56 Mackintosh Place, Cardiff CF2 4RQ

## China's nuclear weapon test – business as usual?

**O**n 5th October 1993, apparently in a temper tantrum after failing in their bid to stage the Olympics in the year 2000, China exploded a nuclear weapon.

Not only did China bring an end to hopes that 1993 could be the first year free of nuclear weapons explosions since 1960, but their action could be used as a justification for the resumption of nuclear weapons tests by the other nuclear powers: the moratoria of America, Russia and France were all conditional on no-one else conducting tests.

The nuclear weapons industries in these countries – and in Britain – are now urging a resumption of tests. We, as individual supporters of CND Cymru, must join with members of the peace movement worldwide in urging the nuclear weapon states not to restart weapons tests.

The Chinese test must be seen in its proper context. China has always been a 'rogue' member of the nuclear club, continuing atmospheric tests for 17 years after America, Russia and Britain had signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963. China has conducted 39 tests in total, fewer than any other nuclear power, and a very small fraction of the worldwide total of 1,951 tests which were dominated by the USA (942 tests) and the former Soviet Union (715 tests).

## Trawsfynydd – the problems continue

**T**rawsfynydd Nuclear Power Station is closing. This early Magnox Nuclear Power Station with two reactors, was commissioned in 1965 and is the only nuclear power station to be sited inland. It uses water from an adjacent lake. Following various problems over the years both reactors were shut down in February 1991 because of problems of *embrittlement*.

Over the past two years Nuclear Electric have been trying various schemes to obtain a license from the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate to restart the plant. Both reactors have been fully fuelled ready to start for nearly two years.

However, the decision has been made to close the station and to carry out decommissioning work. As with everything involving radioactivity, there is no answer to the problems of decommissioning.

Nuclear Electric has proposed that the fuel rods are removed. The generating plant and ancillary equipment will also be taken away. Apparently, they then intend to build a concrete *raft* alongside the reactors, turn them on their sides and encase them in concrete. The intention is then to leave them for 130 years before carrying out complete decommissioning. By doing this, the major problem of decommissioning the reactors is postponed, leaving a legacy for our great great great grandchildren. Who will pay then? Whose lives will be endangered then? Will the entombed reactors be monitored? What of radiation leaks over the next 130 years?

The alternative to Nuclear Electric's proposal is to carry out complete decommissioning now, leaving the nuclear power station site as a *greenfield site* once again. This proposal is prompted by the genuine concern about the geological and hydrological problems that are indisputably present on the site.

However, once again there are problems. What of the radioactivity in the soil and the lake water? Dismantling the reactor is a highly dangerous operation. Working inside the reactor can only be carried out by any person for very limited periods. Every time radioactive substances are handled, more materials become radioactive – *dilution* of the radioactivity. The bulk of radioactive material would thus be greatly increased. All the radioactive materials would need to be transported to another site – Sellafield – for reprocessing. There are dangers involved in the transportation of radioactive materials. The problems at Sellafield would be compounded.

Are all these complications acceptable in our society? There is no simple answer to the problems of decommissioning. Anti Nuclear Campaigners have been highlighting this fact since the 1950s. Attempts have been made over the last 40 years to *blind the public with science* when nuclear matters are raised. Similar attempts are still being made.

My personal opinion which is not based on any of the *scientific facts lobbies*, is that we should handle and transport nuclear materials as little as possible. We must also stop producing any more radioactive materials now before the problems become increasingly unsurmountable.

There is an added twist to the Trawsfynydd situation. Nuclear Electric is seeking approval for an incinerator on the site. This incinerator will burn low level radioactive waste. The prime product to be burned is radioactive oil which is at present stored on the site. Will the burning *destroy* the radioactivity? I think that this is another example of *kicking the problem around until it disappears*. There is local opposition to this proposal, but there is also hope of *jobs* in the project. One again, an example of *work and money at any cost*.

When will people realise that the future of the world and its populations is at stake and that we must not endanger this further for short term gains?

Rod Stallard



■ Ystradgynlais 8 August 1993 – memorial service

## Welshpool CND's baby, 'Greenpieces'

**W**hen Welshpool CND took a majority decision to end their eight year lease of the group's stall in the town's weekly market, the four out-voted members – unwilling to submit to the democratic process – gave birth to a new campaigning idea. Having worked for years to become accepted in the local market community, it seemed crazy to abandon this established public presence in the town.

The four 'rebels' met to discuss how to use the market stall to complement and expand on the work of their CND group. All environmental issues had begun to receive increasing public sympathy, so the decision was to focus on 'green' campaigns. As well as being a sales outlet, the stall would provide information, promotion materials, membership forms, leaflets and donation boxes. The stall would thus raise local awareness of four chosen organisations; Friends of the Earth, Cardigan Bay Dolphins, Greenpeace and CND Cymru.

Next came the most difficult problem; a name! After many discarded suggestions and several glasses of wine, the ideas of jigsaw pieces and green issues emerged, combined and formed themselves into ... 'Greenpieces' – with which we were well pleased!

The stall lease was re-negotiated and letters were sent out to local people and town organisations appealing for financial sponsorship, which met with a generous response. Sales goods were bought and 'Greenpieces' was launched.

Several loyal supporters supply extra produce such as cakes, jams and vegetables which provide a valuable addition to the takings on the monthly stall. Many townspeople regularly visit the stall to talk about the issues, buy the goods, sign petitions and give donations in an otherwise commercial market.

'Greenpieces' has just completed its first successful year. It has paid its rent, paid an equitable profit share-out to each of its green 'pieces' and hopefully will continue to make a small contribution – as in the objectives of CND Cymru – 'to the real needs of the human community'.

Wendy Drew, Jenny Petch

## Spread the seeds of hope!

Swansea CND tell us that for every evening of CND leafletting they do, they recruit at least two new members for CND.

Why not enlighten your neighbours? Let them know that nuclear weapons are not inevitable, let them know that we are still here – hope in a changing world.

If you can distribute leaflets amongst your friends, leaflet your street or even town, get in touch with me and I will arrange to send you some material. Donations to help with costs would be welcome but not necessarily essential.

Jill Stallard, Nantgaredig, Cyngordy, Llanymddyfri, Dyfed, SA20 OLR

## Contacts

**CND Cymru General Secretary, Jill Stallard.**  
Nantgaredig, Cynghordy,  
Llanymddyfri, Dyfed SA20  
OLR. Tel. 05505 260

### CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

■ **Nuclear Testing, Nuclear Proliferation and Nuclear Power;**

**Brian Jones**, 72 Heol Gwyn,  
Yr Alltwen, Pontardawe SA8  
3AN. Tel 0792 830330

■ **Disarmament and Development, Defence Conversion, and Campaigning against the Arms Trade;**

**Mary Jones**, Tel. 0792 774687

■ **De-militarisation of Wales;**  
**Rod Stallard**, Nantgaredig,  
Cynghordy, Llanymddyfri,  
Dyfed SA20 OLR. Tel. 05505 260

■ **Low Flying;**

**Gillian Metcalf**, Tŷ Yfory,  
LLanfair Road, Lampeter, SA48  
8JZ. Tel. 0570 45576

■ **Youth CND;**

**Joe Castle**, 25 Aberystwyth  
Crescent, Barry, CF6 8EH. Tel  
0446 738020

■ **Trading**

**Jan Henderson**. Tel. 0792  
830330

### MORE INFORMATION & IDEAS

■ Please get in touch with your nearest CND Cymru Vice chair;

**North Wales**

**Dave Andrews**, Tel. 0978  
310491

**South Wales**

**Ray Davies**, Tel. 0222 886695

**Mid Wales**

**Medi James**, Aberystwyth  
Tel. 0970 832725

**Rod Stallard**, LLandoverly Tel.  
05505 260

**Ian Campbell**, Aberystwyth  
Tel. 0970 871360

## Heddwch Action News

- The next issue of Heddwch Action News will appear in January 1994
- Please send contributions to Jane Orom, 9 Heol Iscoed, Rhiwbina, Cardiff CF4 6PA.
- Contributions on computer disc are welcome. Please contact Jane/Mike Southern (0222 222782) for details.
- The copy deadline is Saturday 2nd December 1993.
- All help with editorial gratefully received.

## LISTINGS

**November 5** Test ban petitions to be returned to *Jill Stallard*, Nantgaredig, Cynghordy, Llanymddyfri, Dyfed SA20 OLR

**Throughout Autumn** – Touring exhibition of Basic Case Campaign (see page 1)

**November 6-14** Remembrance for Peace Week. A time to remember not only the millions who have died in all wars, but those now dying because of the misuse of resources. A time to work for peace. *White poppies available from CND Cymru Trading on 0792 830330, 50p each including p&p (please specify Welsh or English poppies)*

**November 14** Remembrance Sunday. Contact Tony Augarde, Peace Pledge Union for ideas

**November 14 1983** Cruise missiles arrived at Greenham Common

**November 16** Bruce Kent speaking at the United Reformed Church, St David's College. Contact Sheila, 38 Torrens Drive, Lakeside, Cardiff.

**November 20** Peace Education Day Conference, Friend's House, Euston Rd, London. Pax Christi 081 300 4612

**November 19-20** FOE Annual Conference and AGM. Guest Speaker Sara Parkin. Contact 0222 229577

**November 27** Swansea's 10th 'Green Fair'. Stalls, entertainment, great veggie food. 11am-4pm Exchange Building, Adelaide St.

**December 16** Christmas Ceilidh with 'Rough Edge', Swansea CND and FOE. 8pm St James' Church Hall, Walter Rd, Swansea. £2/3, Tel; 0792 830330

**November 12-14** British CND Conference, Bradford. Phone 071 700 4524

**January/February 1994** Basic Case Tour of Mid Glamorgan starting in Bridgend and touring seven other libraries. Contact Mary on 0792 774687

**Every Friday;** Women's Vigil at nuclear weapons components plant, AWE Cardiff (formerly ROF Llanishen) 7-8am. Contact Margery on 0222 753961

**November 17** Swansea's 10th 'Green Fair'. Stalls, entertainment, great vegi. food. 11am-4pm, Exchange Building, Adelaide Street

**December 16** Christmas Ceilidh with Rough Edge. Swansea CND & FoE. 8pm St James' Church Hall, Walker Road, Swansea. £2/3. Tel 0792 830330

## RAFFLE WINNERS

**First prize;** Holiday in Cuba – G.R. Davies, Rhondda

**Second prize;** Two tickets and accommodation for Pontardawe festival – a phone number

**Third prize;** Two tickets for Gwyl Cnapan – B. Gates

**Fourth prize;** Transforming Garden Table – D. Gallop

**Fifth prize;** 'Over Europe' by Jan Morris (signed) – W. Lewis

**Sixth prize;** £25 book token – I. Torok

**Seventh prize;** Peace News Subscription – M. Fogg

**Eighth prize;** CD donated by Sain – C. Walker

Lucky people! Thanks to all who took part in the raffle, and helped to raise some welcome funds for CND Cymru.

## DUCK RACE WINNERS

The 'Trident is a Dead Duck' Duck Race on the River Wye was cancelled as the river was dangerously high. The winning duck numbers were pulled out of a hat, and were:

**1st prize:** Mrs Owen, Caernarfon; **2nd prize:** Steffan Lewis, Cumbria; **3rd prize:** Fiona Parkins, Lampeter

Last year a group of Shoshone women visited Cardiff. The chair of South Glamorgan County Council hosted a meeting of peace activists at which the women explained the consequences of testing nuclear devices at their reservation in the Nevada desert.

People of the Shoshone nation, especially children, suffer from diseases associated with radiation poisoning and their mortality rate is amongst the highest in the western world.

The Cardiff peace group is pledged to campaign for a complete ban on all testing of nuclear devices which would include the site at Nevada where British weapons are tested. We honoured our pledge to the



Shoshone women by holding a peace camp on the lawn of the Welsh Office on Nagasaki Day. We dressed in Indian style, and sang peace songs and a Native American song which speaks of the need to protect Mother Earth. We handed in a signed letter to the Welsh Office demanding a comprehensive test ban treaty and full compensation for the Shoshone nation and decontamination of their

land.

Britain is isolated from all other countries in trying to persuade the US to resume testing at Nevada. We believe that the British Government is sending out the wrong signals to the many smaller countries who are on the brink of acquiring a nuclear capability.

Ray Davies, Vice-Chair, CND Cymru

## Looking backwards – or forwards?

Last year, a statue was unveiled in London to Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris. This action aroused great controversy, since Harris was the man who masterminded the saturation bombing raids on Germany in the Second World War.

Protest came not only from the British peace movement but also from the mayors of several German cities, understandably upset at this glorification of a man whose policies had caused such death and destruction. The mayor of Cologne, Norbert Burger, was particularly moved at the insensitivity of the statue being unveiled on the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Cologne; the first of the thousand-bomber raids, which devastated the city and killed or maimed thousands of civilians.

The controversy aroused by the Bomber Harris statue was a reminder of the similar controversy which recurs every year when the Peace Pledge Union offers white poppies for people to wear on Remembrance Sunday. The white poppy has now been used as a peace symbol for 60 years – since 1933 – but it is still attacked by the British Legion which wants everyone to remember with red poppies – and with the sort of ceremonial that the Legion is accustomed to.

So, how should we remember those who have died in war? Many of us are dissatisfied with the traditional sort of remembrance ceremonies which the British



Legion encourages: with uniformed soldiers marching and saluting, and with military bands playing. We are also unhappy with the narrowness of conventional remembrance, which concentrates on the war dead from our own country. We should remember the war victims from all countries – and those who were maimed or bereaved by war. We must also remember those displaced by warfare – as in the former Yugoslavia. Refugees are most often the result of wars.

Above all, current forms of remembrance too often suggest that we are ready to commit the same mistakes as in the past.

Many remembrance ceremonies say 'Never again!' while showing, in their militaristic trappings, that the participants are prepared to engage in future wars. Now that we are part of a united Europe, we should surely be looking forward to new ways of solving conflicts, and a break with the militarism of the past.

We ought to remember those who died and suffered in past wars – but we must use this remembrance as a lesson for the future. Those who do not learn from history are fated to repeat its mistakes. The white poppy is a symbol that we intend to work for future peace – and build the institutions of peace throughout Europe. This cannot be done by keeping alive the old hatreds that divide us.

In reporting the unveiling of the Bomber Harris statue, the German newspaper *Die Welt* noted that some of the crowd sang 'For he's a jolly good fellow' in praise of Harris. How would we feel in Britain if we read that Germans were singing that Goering was a 'jolly good fellow'?

Contrast this backward-looking attitude with the stance taken by the mayor of Cologne. Writing to thank the Peace Pledge Union for organising a protest at the Harris statue, Norbert Burger said: 'It is my self-evident duty to remember all victims, including the victims of Nazi terror-bombing in Britain. My message for you must be reconciliation and friendship'.  
*Tony Augarde*

## E. P. Thompson... a guiding light for the Peace Movement

Edward Thompson is fondly remembered in Wales for his many contributions to the Peace Movement, which encouraged us to make links beyond our shores.

He was a regular visitor to North Wales from the early 1950s. In 1982 he came to Blaenau Ffestiniog to address a festival of 3,000 people. This immediately preceded an important trip to Hungary, of which he wrote, '...we made it clear that we wished to talk with anyone, official or unofficial, who shared our objectives... I found it a good deal easier to enter and leave Hungary than I sometimes find it to enter the United States! There was extraordinary and rising support among young people, many of whom were wearing CND or other 'western' peace badges'. The next year he came back to Blaenau to tell us about the visit and encourage links

between secondary school children of both countries.

During the first half of the 1980s he spoke every year at the Meirionydd Peace Festivals, which were held in different towns in the county. Not only was he aware of the need to overcome the east-west divide, he believed in the great importance of national peace movements as a contribution to ending the Cold War.

As early as 1980 he wrote, 'We must campaign to detach more and more European countries from great-power nuclear strategy. Our aim must be to create in Europe an expanding zone, free from nuclear weapons. The campaign must be conducted at every level – churches, sportsmen, trade unions, intellectuals – and it must certainly include the mobilisation of popular movements, as well as international exchanges in which a common solidarity between 'dissidents' of East and

West Europe will be expressed. Nations may maintain a loose allegiance to one alliance or another, while refusing the stationing of nuclear missiles on their own soil. But this refusal must certainly be made. And within each nation the expulsion of nuclear bases from its own soil must be a prime objective of the popular movement'.

The essence of Edward Thompson's thinking and practice was that of ordinary people combining together to make history; '...the world of politicians, East and West has become impervious to rationality, so that we must start at the bottom once again.'

The strength of the anti-nuclear movement is its diversity; it does not belong to one particular section or class and Edward Thompson was totally aware of this. Only by uniting all the different strands can we succeed in defeating the industrial/military complex. As

he wrote in 'Beyond the Cold War', 'The opportunity is now, when there is already an enhanced consciousness of danger informing millions. We can match this crisis only by a summoning of resources to a height like that of the greatest political or religious movements of Europe's past... but this time it must arise, not in the wake of war and repression, but before these take place. Humankind must at last grow up. We must recognise that the Other is ourselves.'

The Cold War is over, but we still live in very uncertain times. The tragedies of Yugoslavia and elsewhere remain to haunt us. Now is the time to dedicate ourselves to what Edward Thompson once called the Third Wave of CND, the wave that will finally rid the world of nuclear weapons.

E.P. Thompson died in 1993.  
*Bob Cole  
Rhoda Jones*