

1982**A Programme for 1983: A Report from Projects
Committee to Executive****Citation:**

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Summary:

This report, prepared by Ian Davison for the CND Executive sets out the organisation's strategy for 1983, including campaign themes and activities for the year.

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A PROGRAMME FOR 1983A Report from Projects Committee to Executive

The Government retreat over Hard Rock represents CND's first major victory. We should use this victory as a launching pad for next year's crucial campaign to prevent the deployment of cruise missiles and reverse the decision to go ahead with Trident.

Up to now we have tended to act from hand to mouth. In part this reflected the difficulty of building a coherent national apparatus for the hugely expanded campaign that was capable of planning and executing a long-term strategy. The intelligent and constructive tone of the CND National Council meeting in July showed that these problems have now been substantially overcome. The other main obstacle to planning has been a sense that the campaign should not be allowed to 'peak too early'. The time for waiting is over. The campaign must now gear itself up for what has to be a year of unprecedented activity. From the outset of the CND revival we have seen 1983 as the key year - both because the deployment of cruise missiles at Greenham Common is set for December '83 and because we can expect a General Election during the year. One of the campaign's aims over the coming months must be to demonstrate - both to ourselves and to the 'body politic' the political power of CND. We must show that we can transform the potential power that the campaign clearly possesses into a real political force. This depends both on more militant activity and a continued expansion of the broad base of support that the campaign enjoys.

The role of civil disobedience within the campaign (sit-downs, obstruction, etc) is obviously important, and needs more discussion than can be covered here. (We hope there will be a paper prepared for the next National Council) It is, however, clear that if we do not take the initiative others will, both at the bases and perhaps in London. It seems vital therefore that any programme of activity for 1983 includes an element of, or at least space for, such actions. What follows are the main heads of a time-table and programme for '83 as they emerged from a very preliminary discussion at the Projects Committee on 22 July. For obvious reasons there is more detail and discussion on the early part of the programme.

1. The Campaign Against Cruise & Trident

- i) It was suggested that we should be launching a joint campaign, not only against Cruise, but also Trident. It was pointed out that whilst in Southern England it is Cruise that provides the focus, in the North and more particularly in Scotland, the focus is Trident. Also the opposition to Trident is even more widespread than to Cruise and is probably the battle we are most likely to win.
- ii) This could be launched either on December 12 or from National Conference. A launch from Conference followed two weeks later by nationwide, local demonstrations (torchlit processions etc) would in effect give us 'two bites at the cherry' as well as being good advertising for those demonstrations.

2. Ballot for Survival The proposal was made for a door-to-door canvas, along the lines of the 1934-35 'Peace Ballot', with 4 or 5 specific questions on Cruise, Trident and US bases. The aim would be to have an effect on the general election that is likely to be called during '83, recognising the difficulties that CND would face during the election period itself. The purpose of the ballot would not be simply a laborious way of conducting an opinion poll - we know we already speak for majority opinion on the immediate issues. The purpose would be to mobilize opinion; to impress and frighten politicians not only with millions of signatures but with hundreds of thousands of canvassers. These are obviously major questions that this proposal throws up:

- i) Could we carry out such a survey logistically? It is a vast undertaking that would need the commitment of the whole campaign for some months. The suggestion is that it could be done from January to March '83. Work is presently being done on a pilot study to see how feasible it is.
- ii) Would the campaign want to concentrate so completely on one activity? One of the advantages of the proposal is that it could provide strong direction for the campaign over a period which is often relatively quiet. On the other hand it is questionable whether local CND groups (?) jealous of their autonomy from the centre, will all be prepared to commit themselves to it. Such a commitment would of course be vital to the undertaking.
- iii) What gains and/or losses will be made through comparison with the 1935 'Peace Ballot'? (Atomic bombs were not available at that time.) Then the Peace Ballot was followed closely by a General Election; and shortly afterwards by World War Two. As a result the Ballot has sometimes been portrayed as one of the causes of World War Two. However wrong this may be, could this lead to damaging comparisons?

3. Easter at Greenham Common / Aldermaston Scottish CND are planning a major demonstration against Trident. The suggestion for it is to organise 3 or 4 days of action against Cruise and Trident at Greenham Common and/or Aldermaston. The action could involve a blockade at Greenham and a march from Aldermaston to Greenham. It was agreed these would need to be kept separate to some degree, so a possible programme could be:

Good Friday-Easter Sunday: a 3-day symbolic blockade of Greenham Common (and possibly Aldermaston). Easter Monday - a national march between Aldermaston and Greenham Common and rally. Projects Committee has been conducting discussions with the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham and other interested parties. The proposal that looks most likely to emerge from these consultations is for CND to support a continued emphasis on women's actions at Greenham. Specifically, in any blockade, it should be women who sit down and risk arrest, while men (and other women) take supporting roles. Any well-organised blockade will need at least as many people in support roles as on the front line. (The main problem at Greenham on March 21st was to find enough people for the support roles). If CND National Conference decided to go ahead with this, then regions would be asked to take responsibility for, say, a 12-hour shift in the blockade - undertaking (with help from the Non-Violent Direct Action training collective) their own programmes during the early months of 1983 and bringing down a well-prepared team of people on the day. The suggestion of women's action is not made in an exclusive spirit, but (a) in recognition of the fact that Greenham has become an international focus for women's action, and (b) in the belief that a confrontation between women and the forces of militarism has a specially positive contribution to make to the image of the campaign as a whole.

It might be possible to organise a second blockade, as a mixed action, at Aldermaston, either at the same time as the Greenham action, or at a later date.

4. Youth Festival - May Projects Committee agreed that it is vital that the festival postponed from September '82 should go ahead in May '83. The date would either be 2nd May (Bank Holiday Monday) or 7th May. 1983 is GLC's 'Peace Year' and it is possible that, if the festival is on 2nd May, they would dedicate substantial resources, making the whole weekend (April 30th - May 2nd) a time for action on peace. It could all be angled towards youth, with difference emphasis on different days. Thus a possible programme could be:

- i) Saturday 30th April - Youth Forum on Peace, organised in co-operation with GLC, ILEA, YCND, Student CND, NUS, NAFHE, local nuclear-free authorities, etc.
- ii) Sunday 1st May Morning: some kind of religious event co-ordinated by Christian CND
Afternoon: an activity with emphasis on Jobs & Peace - including TUCND, Labour and Liberal CND, YCND.
- iii) Monday, 2nd May - March and Festival in London.

5. Summer 1983 General campaigning against Cruise and Trident, probably involving further direct action at the bases. Good dates for this could be:

4th July - American Independence Day.

Late July - The Greenham Common International Air Tattoo is one of the largest military air displays in Europe and an obvious target for possible action.

6. Hiroshima/Nagasaki Not discussed in the Projects Committee due to the assumption that things would be happening. There is certainly the opportunity for making this a more important date than we did this year. War memorials are increasingly favoured centres for activity at this time and can be good publicity if handled carefully.

7. General Election The last National Council started to generate ideas of how CND could intervene in a General Election. There is obviously a lot more work needed to be done on this. If the 'Ballot for Survival' has gone ahead, it will obviously be one of the major angles we would take up.

8. October - London The biggest ever demonstration in London. Not in Hyde Park and not simply repeating the style of the last two years. The type of activity would have to be determined by the political situation in autumn 1983 being the most likely time for the General Election. The demonstration would be a consolidation of our broad support and a launch-pad for our plans to oppose the possible deployment of Cruise in December.

9. Nov/Dec 1983 We will probably have had the General Election by then. Depending on the outcome, we may be faced with the deployment of Cruise in December. (Though it is quite possible that the deployment of Cruise may be delayed, we must be prepared if it is not. The object of our year's campaign should be to create a position in which:

- the vocal majority have declared against Cruise & Trident.
- whatever the government, a majority of individual MP's are pledged against Cruise & Trident.
- our capacity to mount large-scale non-violent direct action has been tested and demonstrated.

If, despite all that, the new government decides to go ahead with Cruise & Trident, then we will be placed to take drastic action, e.g. mass civil disobedience in central London - without jeopardising our majority support.

10. Other Events We have received a request from Scottish CND to organise a lobby of Parliament on Trident. To be considered at next Projects Committee.