

## **1982**

### **Anti-Trident Campaign**

#### **Citation:**

"Anti-Trident Campaign", 1982, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CND/ADD/5/12, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) Collection, LSE Library,  
<https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/projects/peace-security/cnd-archives>  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/300295>

#### **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.

#### **Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from London School of Economics and Political Science & The Open University

#### **Original Language:**

English

#### **Contents:**

Original Scan

## Anti-Trident Campaign

6

In the summer of 1981, the Scottish C.N.D. took the decision, fortunately, to start a special campaign against one particular step in the arms race: the British "Trident" nuclear-weapons project. There are to be 4 (British) Trident-Two (D5) giant submarines with 16 missile-tubes each, but not necessarily 16 missiles. The missiles will have a huge range of 6,000 nautical miles. Each missile will have 14 warheads. Each warhead will be very accurate, can be independently targetted and even manoeuvred. The power of each warhead will be either 150 kilotons (=  $7\frac{1}{2}$  x Hiroshima destruction) or 335 kilotons (=  $8\frac{3}{4}$  x Hiroshima destruction). The Government has implied that it will use "only" about 120 warheads per submarine, but obviously they could carry up to 224 warheads each (no. of missiles x no. of warheads).

Priorities: I would encourage almost any type of campaign or activity against nuclear-weapons, but the disarmament movement has to keep deciding its political priorities, like any other political alliance. We have quite a few types of choice to make too. - Do we start with the weapons most dangerous for the world? or the most unpopular ones, (foreign or most unpleasant or best known or dear)? or the newest ones? or the ones nearest to hand? or the ones the military themselves are not sure about? or the ones politicians seem likeliest to scrap? or the ones we could even delay or stop with boycotts, blackings or direct obstructions? By almost all these measures our anti-Trident campaign must be given the highest campaigning priority.

Danger: By the criterion of "danger", Trident certainly qualifies. The Trident 2 (which Britain is buying) has been described in America as "the most de-stabilising weapon ever made". It is meant as a second-strike weapon at least for its occasional independent British use, but it is very accurate (to 100 metres) and will normally be targetted by N.A.T.O. on (first-strike) military targets. It may well become less of a safe last-resort as anti-submarine warfare gets better and submarines cannot hide. It will further hold back talks on disarmament (and even arms-control) because the U.S. and Britain refuse to include the British nuclear weapons for negotiation.

Unpopular: The British Trident project is also very unpopular. The Gallup poll says 56% of the British public are against Trident. (Only 58% are against the much more publicised Cruise missiles.) In Scotland, poll results against Trident have ranged up to as high as 73% at one point. The people seem to understand well that while everything else gets cut, Trident will cost a fortune (over £10 - thousand - million), using up to 20% of the weapons budget 1988-93. The project is a high-technology job-loser, even compared with other weapons. Fully 45% of this money will be spent in America, for the missiles (while we build the subs. and warheads). The "independence" of the missiles from foreign control is very doubtful as, they will need U.S. satellite guidance. And people seem to be grasping the grotesque scale of this evil war machine: 4 submarines of 18,000 tons, as big as football pitches, carrying the power to cause between 1920 times and 15,008 times the Hiroshima slaughter.

Easier to Stop: the Trident is certainly a new nuclear weapons system, and that much easier to scrap than any established one. It is a project definitely known to be going on in various sites throughout Britain, so attention can be focussed on the warhead work at Aldermaston and Burghfield (Berkshire), the naval planning at Bath, the submarine building at Barrow-in-Furness (Cumbria), the operating bases of Faslane and Coulport (Strathclyde), the refitting at Rosyth (Fife) and perhaps the various nuclear-processing plants.

The other main focus for protest is obviously Parliament. If we work hard enough, after the General Election, the chances of Trident being stopped are fair because all political parties, except the extremist Conservatives in power at the moment, are against Trident.

In fact the Establishment is deeply split on Trident, many Tories being opposed (in private), the army and air-force unhappy, and even much of the Navy worried about the whole idea. Most defence experts and most of the Press are at best lukewarm.

The Last Resort: Lastly, if the democratic process fails majority opinion on Trident, a British-based weapons project like this could be stopped or delayed a lot, by the financial pressure of trade-union action for the political principle, or by popular direct obstruction of this British project, through boycotts, blackings, go-slows, strikes and tax-refusals/non-violent and direct-actions, large and small. (Of course, Trade-union action and direct actions should be accompanied by continued conventional lobbying and demonstrations to show continued broad support for the campaign.)

/over

Publicity: In the meantime, more publicity is definitely needed for the Anti-Trident cause. Routine press work has been well done, and the Faslane Peace Camp has helped to catch the imagination. But perhaps some completely fresh publicity ideas are now overdue. Can you suggest them? And carry them out?

General Campaigning: The thriving Postcard Campaign against Trident is being led by Parents for Survival and there will be an anti-Trident lobby of Parliament in February led by British C.N.D. At Easter Scottish C.N.D.'s mass die-in, carnival and march in Glasgow on Saturday 2nd. April will stress the Trident question, and there may be anti-Trident action down south at Aldermaston or Burghfield (as well as an event against Cruise missile).

Widening: We are asking for the North of England to support the Glasgow event. The need to build a stronger Anti-Trident campaign outside Scotland is clear, though there may still be a (mostly Scottish) Convention Against Trident in May. Trade Unionists especially, all over Britain, must be made fully aware of the Trident issue.

Types of Argument: There may still be an Enquiry into the huge Trident expansion planned at Coulport, and Strathclyde Council means to hold its own enquiry. In such enquiries, the issues will be more local questions about safety, the environment, civil liberties and the economic and social mess. But the Campaign outside the West of Scotland will have to stress more general anti-Trident arguments about fuelling the arms race, wasting money, and jobs, getting a poor overall return for the investment. (Trident also raises questions about scrapping all British nuclear weapons.)

Urgency: The disarmament movement desperately needs successes, to keep apathy at bay. Stirring and creditable failures we can't afford to waste too much time on, when there are likely wins to consolidate. David Owen has given us fair notice that if Trident is not stopped soon, whenever too much money has been put into the project, he would then change to supporting. Some people are saying that we must stop Cruise missiles, in 1983 or the disarmament movement cannot move forward at all! This is to set ourselves a task that is very hard for several reasons, an immeasurably harder first task than stopping Trident!

Surely we can be more confident about stopping an unpopular British project, which the Americans are not desperate to give us, which is paid for by our taxes, which loses us jobs, which escalates our arms race, which divides even the hawks themselves, which is the decision of a Government we elect, and which (2/3 of it) has to be produced, transported and serviced here, using our own people? But we must put in the effort, and we must start now.

Ian Davison  
(The Anti-Trident Campaign,  
420 Sauchiehall Street,  
Glasgow, G2.)