

October 26, 1983

Bruce Kent, 'Direct Action Thoughts'

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Summary:

In this letter, Bruce Kent explains his views on direct action by the CND in the autumn of 1983. He also notes that polls suggest that public opposition to the deployment of Cruise - which would begin in the following weeks - had decreased.

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BRUCE KENT: DIRECT ACTION THOUGHTS

1. We do not any longer have a substantial majority in the polls with us on the Cruise issue. The argument that we are the majority and that Cruise deployment is undemocratic is that much weaker.

2. I should have made more noise at the last Council. I feel deeply that action which impedes or seems to impede Parliament will be counterproductive. Most people do see Westminster as the home of some sort of hard won democracy and would resent action there unless we commanded a very strong majority in the country.

I am sure that there will be not a few who will think that the 'Parliamentary' decision was rushed through without much Council reflection and certainly with no wider consultation.

3. As far as CND Council goes a London action (Whitehall or whatever) lends itself now to take over by those who want trouble. The 'Anarchists' would be into any direct action CND sponsored like a shot and we would be held to be responsible for their actions which would not remain non-violent.

4. If there is to be illegal London based direct action there is a strong case for limiting it to named small groups - ie. Church, Trade Union or Medical.

5. The Greenham situation is developing. I was there last night and think that the scene is changing there. A mixed action becomes more of a possibility after this weekend. How about an all-night torchlit vigil around the base called for Saturday 10 December? This is a Stan Banks idea and he can produce the torches. Perhaps an inner ring of women with men standing behind them could be negotiated.

6. Please see the paper from Bertram Russell of Peacehaven CND concerning the 'National NO CRUISE Stand-In'.

Bruce Kent