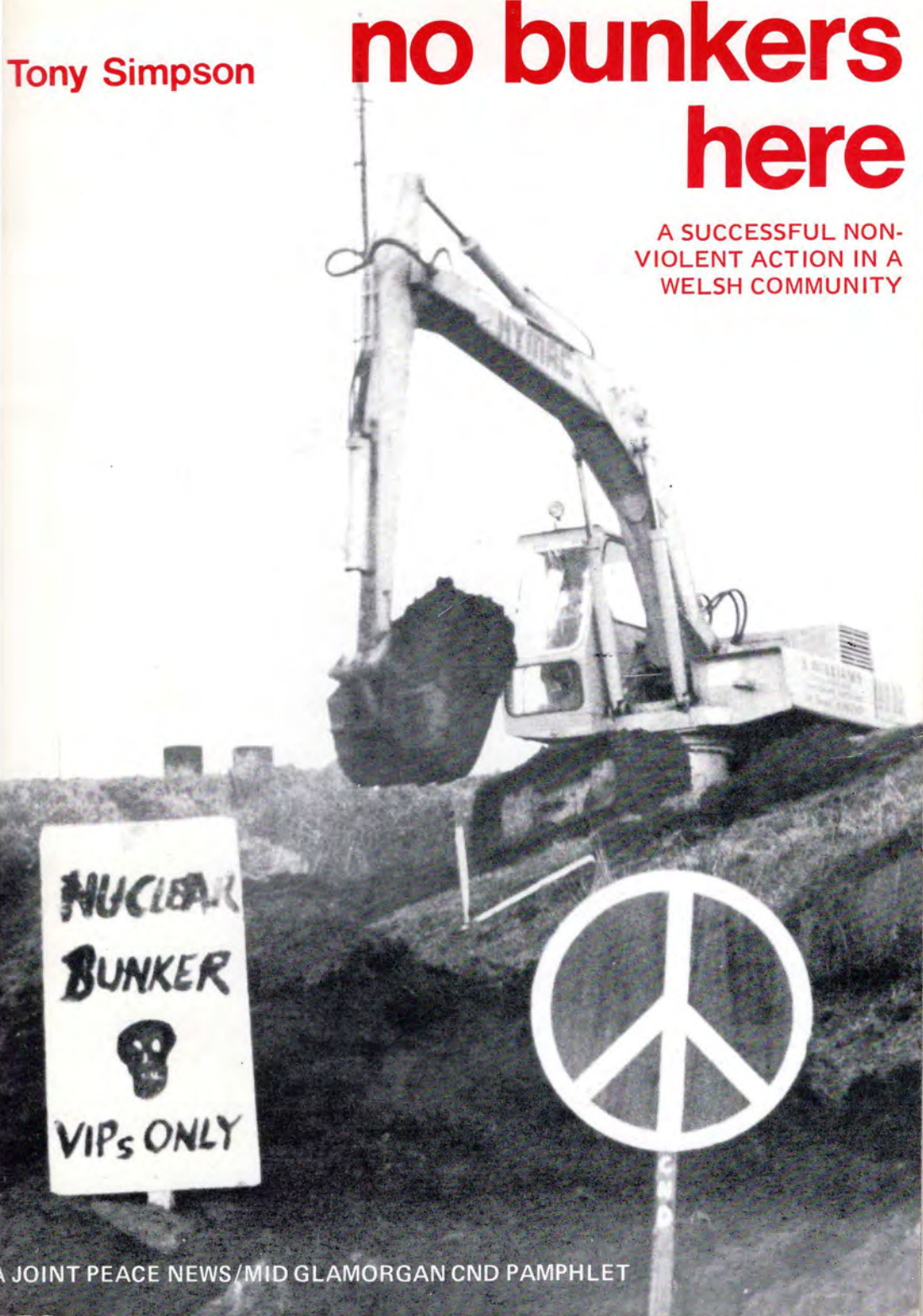


Tony Simpson

no bunkers here

A SUCCESSFUL NON-
VIOLENT ACTION IN A
WELSH COMMUNITY



A JOINT PEACE NEWS/MID GLAMORGAN CND PAMPHLET

"In this age of the Atom Bomb unadulterated nonviolence is the only force that can confound all the tricks of violence put together."
M. K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 1947

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The story of *No Bunkers Here*, like the events it describes owes a great deal to the co-operation of many people. In writing it I wish to acknowledge the assistance of the Committee and members of Mid Glamorgan CND and local branches throughout South Wales, Anna Benson Thomas and Kevin Littlewood for allowing me to reproduce their work, Terry Dimmock and the workers at the South Wales Video Workshop for access to tapes, and the *Western Mail*, *South Wales Echo*, *Rebecca*, John Kavanagh and Pat Curry for permission to reproduce photographs.

I am grateful to those who contributed to the costs of preparing this report, including members of Bridgend, Merthyr, Pontypridd and Rhondda CND, Frank Allaun MP, Leela and Robin Attfield, AUEW Merthyr, Jane Dauncey, Cllr Paul Flynn, Dr H Jones, Cllr T. I. Jones (Mayor of Rhondda) and Ray Powell MP. I am indebted to Kevin Littlewood who inspired the title and Sandra Thomas, Merthyr who efficiently typed the final draft. Finally, I wish to record my sincere appreciation, and that of Mid Glamorgan CND, to Chris Jones and the *Peace News* collective for their help and encouragement with publication.

I hope the story of *No Bunkers Here* will serve as a tribute to those who took part—too numerous to name—and may also provide learning and encouragement for the wider peace movement to which Mid Glamorgan CND is proud to belong.

Tony Simpson, Bridgend, September 1982.

This joint Peace News/Mid Glamorgan CND publication forms Peace News Pamphlet Number Four.

No Bunkers Here
1982

A Mid Glamorgan CND/Peace News pamphlet

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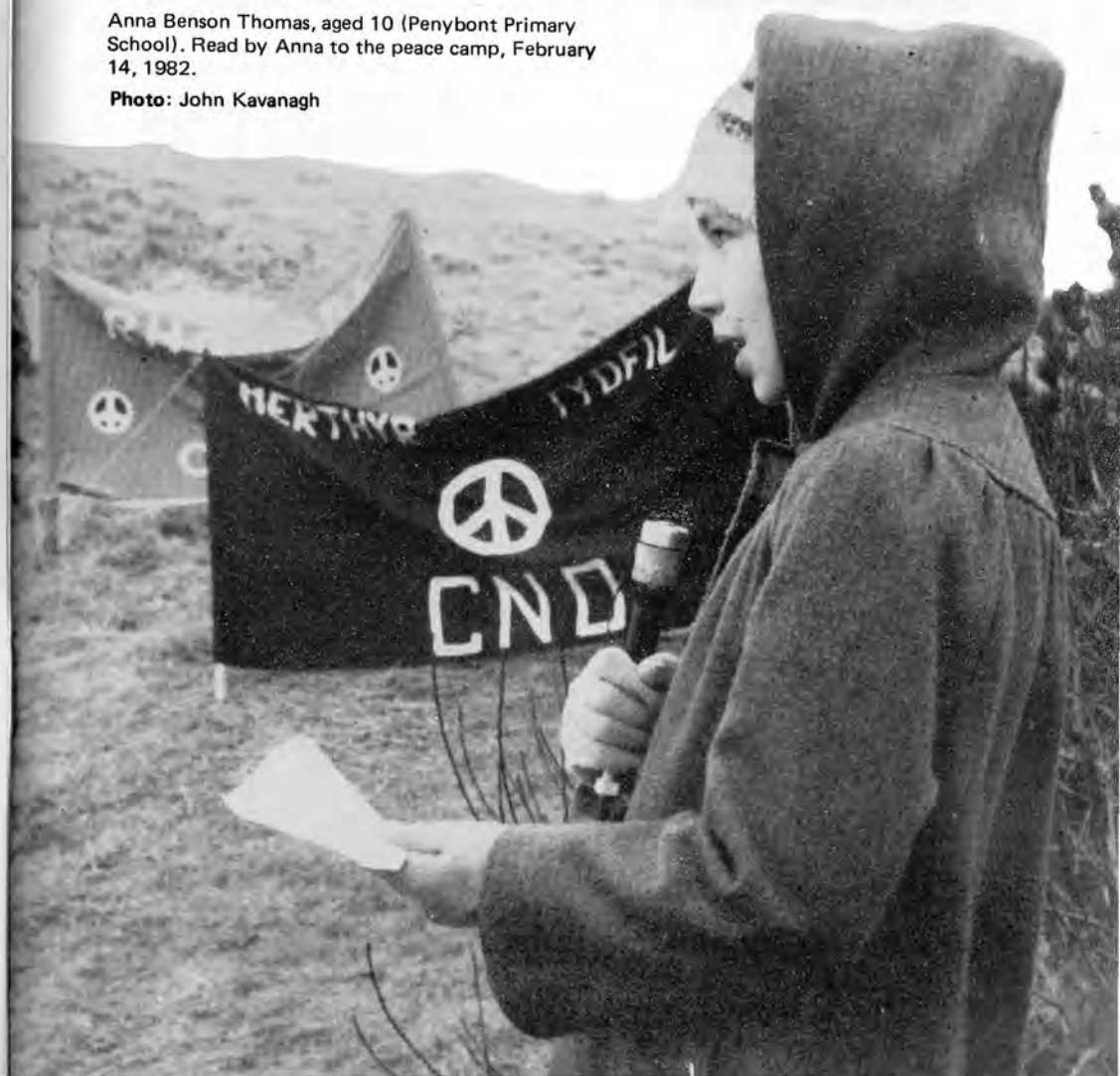
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"Today I can see the grass, the sky, the trees and everything there is to see. I wonder what it's like in Heaven, because that's where we'll all end up if they press the button. I don't want to die, but what can I do about it? It's just a question of now you see us now you don't. It's like putting your life in someone else's hands. No one ever looks after your possessions as well as you do.

Won't someone tell me why people will kill themselves. Why fool ourselves that we can hid in some tin hut until it's all over, then come out into a world where everything is as it was. The world won't be the same! There will be dead bodies everywhere. I will be dead. They will begin a war, and end the world."

Anna Benson Thomas, aged 10 (Penybont Primary School). Read by Anna to the peace camp, February 14, 1982.

Photo: John Kavanagh



foreword

For the second time in its history, CND has become a great mass movement. Its present members and supporters are mainly new recruits, but neither rapid growth nor local group autonomy have prevented the achievement of a clear consensus around certain policies. Thus, both nonviolent direct action and the declaration of local nuclear free zones have been enthusiastically endorsed as ways of furthering the campaign.

The actions of Mid Glamorgan CND, as recorded in the following pages, illustrate the practical application of these policies in a unique way. Their success in preventing the construction of a nuclear bunker, by a council which had declared itself nuclear free, has already served as an inspiration to the movement. But the details of exactly how they acted; how they supported each other; how they affected the political process; and how they used the media—these are the vital lessons for all those who would mount such actions themselves.

I was not present at the time, but having stood later on the top of the abandoned bunker, I can attest to the considerable courage required of those who lay on the high narrow ledge to stop concrete being poured.

As a woman, born and bred in the South Wales valleys, I am particularly proud to be associated with the publication of this pamphlet. I have no doubt that activists in the peace movement will find it an essential aid in the continuing struggle to remove nuclear weapons from Britain.

Joan Ruddock (Chairperson of CND)

Tony Simpson no bunkers here

A SUCCESSFUL NONVIOLENT ACTION
IN A WELSH COMMUNITY

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introduction

January 24, 1982: At 7pm on a cold and wet winter's evening, groups of CND supporters from many parts of Mid Glamorgan assembled on Bridgend Industrial Estate. Their object was to try and prevent the building of what became known as the Mid Glamorgan "super-bunker", to be paid for out of the rates. Their method was to occupy the site and mount a continuous "picket for peace" to inform people what was going on and try to prevent the contract proceeding by nonviolent means.

To provide shelter for the pickets—snow still lay on the ground after the worst winter in Wales for 35 years—they placed a caravan (borrowed from a local councillor) outside the existing bunker entrance. This makeshift "peace camp" was occupied by small groups, beginning with four women from Porth in the Rhondda. On the caravan the women draped a home-made cotton banner showing a brightly coloured picture of the world, which said simply, "It Will Cost The Earth". On top of the earthen mounds nearby, supporters erected large wooden signs saying "£400,000 For Nuclear War—No Rates For Reagan" and "Keep Mid Glamorgan Nuclear Free". Others ringed the site with small posters announcing "Nuclear Bunker: VIPs Only". Later, approaches to the town of Bridgend carried wooden road signs pointing the way to the nuclear bunker. The protesters told visiting press they would stay "as long as is necessary to stop the bunker and nuclear war plans in our county."

history of peace movements in wales

The "Welsh Battle of the Bunker" did not occur in isolation. It was the most potent evidence of two related developments—the renewal of the peace movement and the growing confidence of the campaign for a nuclear free Wales. As a picket stated at the beginning of the occupation: "If we don't scrap the bunker, they will scrap the nuclear free zone and we can say goodbye to nuclear disarmament in Wales". To understand the process of renewal requires a brief historical note.

Peace movements in Wales, though small and lacking coherency, have often played what K.O.Morgan describes as a "crucial role" in the political and cultural evolution of modern Wales (1). The Welsh have also played a prominent part in founding and promoting the work of anti-war movements such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the No Conscription Fellowship and the League of Nations Union, whose massive Welsh Temple of Peace in Cardiff civic centre is still a focus of anti-war gatherings. (It should be added here that violent struggle is also a part of Welsh history).

As a small nation Welsh people have opposed war as an instrument of intervention in the affairs of other nations, supporting popular movements against intervention in Russia, the Spanish Republic and more recently Vietnam. It must be admitted however that Welsh peace movements have often made up in influence for what they lacked in numbers. Often begun as minority causes, they have at times won popular support through alliances forged between radical opinion and vital strands of Welsh life and community. They have also been characterised by the boldness in ideas and actions of people who were not afraid to challenge the status quo—Henry Richard, Saunders Lewis, T.E. Nicholas and many other distinguished people shared these qualities.

Richard of Tregaron, an avowed internationalist and "Welsh Apostle of Peace" was elected Member of Parliament for Merthyr from 1868-88. Though, as K.O. Morgan points out, Richard "above all others inextricably linked Welsh radical opinion with the quest for international peace", he does not stand alone. Others who inherited the Merthyr seat—Keir Hardie, R.C.Wallhead and veteran miners leader and unilateralist S.O.Davies (who held the seat from 1933-72)—also inherited the Welsh peace and radical tradition, which was also linked to industrial struggle, especially that of the miners. In 1970, over a century after Richard's election, S.O.Davies was re-elected in preference to the official Labour candidate and elsewhere in Wales voters continued to elect prominent peace campaigners and unilateralists, such as Labour's Michael Foot (an early Executive Member of CND) and Plaid's Gwynfor Evans (a lifelong exponent of nonviolent nationalism). Yet, ironically, by the 1970s unilateralism as a popular movement in Wales seemed in steep decline.

WELSH ANTI-NUCLEAR CONCERN

With hindsight it is clear that a major weakness of the early nuclear disarmament movement in Wales (1958-66) was its inability to draw sufficiently on the Welsh peace and radical tradition. Whilst it won strong support in some

areas, and mounted some notable actions, CND in Wales seemed fragmented and leaderless. It suffered as elsewhere from being viewed as a single issue campaign detached from the problems of Wales and looking toward London and the annual throngs at Trafalgar Square and Aldermaston, rarely sustaining action within Wales. With the general decline of CND due to Test Ban Treaties, Labours's supposed commitment to nuclear disarmament, and the Vietnam War, the movement virtually collapsed in many parts of Wales.

During the "lean years" of CND, anti-nuclear concern, especially in Mid and West Wales, was focussed on more discrete environmental campaigns such as opposition to nuclear waste dumping and plans to extend the nuclear power programme in Wales. The nuclear waste borehole programme was abandoned by the Government in December 1981, in some part due to the vociferous campaigns and actions by members of MADRYN and PANDORA, including occupations and obstructions by local people. A leading member of the campaign said "It is possible for a small, supposedly weak and scattered community to resist the might of central government's oppression. It is powerless without our consent" (Paul Wesley in *Ynni*, January 1982.) The strength of the Welsh Anti Nuclear Alliance (WANA) was its capacity to link people directly with issues, develop knowledge and awareness and unite community with community in a common concern, represented in a range of local groups.

Indirectly, the Welsh peace and radical tradition contributed towards this movement, as well as the experience of the environmental and anti-nuclear lobbies outside Wales. Concern was also expressed about the movement of dangerous materials, the effects of military exercises and low flying aircraft in Wales, and later the mysterious bunker at Manod. When this kind of local awareness ultimately began to be linked to the growth of international concern and activity against nuclear war plans, it became a springboard for subsequent demands for a nuclear free Wales.

By the 1980s the fragmentation of the earlier "Ban the Bomb" campaign had given way to a more confident and mature movement, attempting—though not without difficulty—to unite both environmental and anti-military nuclear awareness. This was evident among delegates to a major WANA conference in South Wales in April 1980, which preceded the revival of CND. The problems facing such a movement were those of renewal, rather than resurgence. They were and are formidable—some would say impossible—given the history of Wales.

The challenge was: to tap the roots of Welsh radicalism and the peace tradition, whilst avoiding the pitfalls of simple, one-party alignment; to strengthen and be strengthened by international concern about nuclear weapons and the arms race whilst confronting the nuclear menace within the Welsh communities; and to develop popular consciousness and support throughout Wales (avoiding North-South/rural-urban splits).

MILITARY RENEWAL

During the 1970s, military bases, communication centres, command bunkers and nuclear war plans continued to burgeon. For instance, the Armed Forces headquarters at Brecon—which had been the scene of a CND/Spies for Peace protest in 1963—was refitted. The Government's major Wartime Control in Wales (Sub-Regional Headquarters 82) was reorganised and rebuilt at Brackla Hill, Bridgend and a "secret army" of over 1,000 officials rehearsed several full dress nuclear war exercises (2). Much of this activity occurred with hardly a murmur from the peace movement. Equally serious, it took place with the tacit collusion, and sometimes active assistance of many Welsh local councils, some with radical majorities.

PEACE MOVEMENT RENEWAL

The renewal process began in the Spring of 1981 and was symbolised by the daffodils of "Cymru Ddi Niwcliar", (Nuclear Free Wales). Local authorities in Wales received Home Office Circular ES/1/81 urging them to "direct their efforts" to the modernisation of plans for Wartime headquarters and shelter accommodation for officials which should be "capable of implementation within 48 hours" of the threat of nuclear attack. In South Wales, 20 new peace groups formed within weeks, six of these in Mid Glamorgan.

At a meeting in the Cardiff Students Union, E.P. Thompson drew a crowd of over 1,000. In the North, the first effective demands for a nuclear free Wales began to take root. The Welsh Labour Party Conference at Llandudno voted for unilateralism and affiliation to CND. In West Wales the biggest peace action against a specific target occurred on June 6 when 1,500 people with banners from all parts of Wales, demanded the removal of the US Naval Surveillance Base at Brawdy.

In the Welsh capital, a large contingent of peace groups supported a march and rally against unemployment—which in many parts of Wales was over 20%—and there were many demands for cuts in the arms budget and for socially-useful work. Weeks later, the first ever All Wales Peace Festival proceeded through the city streets and took over Sophia Gardens, hosted by Cardiff CND and its many neighbourhood groups. Local environmental campaigns were much in evidence. Not for 15 years, since the marches against the US Arms Depot at Caerwent—once again a live issue—had the peace movement shown such unity of purpose.

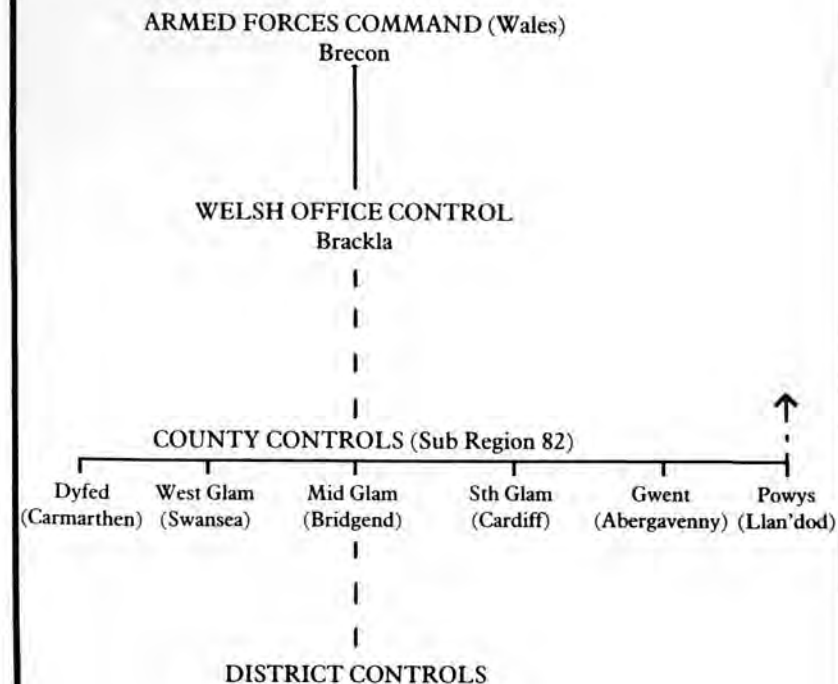
Throughout the summer and autumn this activity continued. On Hiroshima Day, many towns and villages in Wales witnessed vigils and actions for peace. The Military Tattoo in Cardiff was picketed. Dozens of Welsh councils heard demands for a nuclear free zone. In Mid Glamorgan, peace groups converged on the Government Wartime Headquarters calling for the removal of the bunkers. They lit a giant symbol of peace on Brackla Hill and fired flares and rockets over the Command Bunker, where news of nuclear war would be broadcast to any survivors in Wales. One police escort was heard to say, "There would be no shelter for us either".

From August to September a group of women marched from South Wales and chained themselves to the perimeter of Greenham Common US Air Base where 96 Cruise missiles will be based in 1983. The "Women For Life" began an occupation the significance of which was felt all over Europe and nowhere greater than in the South Wales valleys. By October 1981, CND Wales was established as a "Region" and the largest ever contingent from Wales attended the National CND rally in Hyde Park. A new feature, reflected in many of the banners, was the county-based nature of the Welsh peace contingents and in particular the representation from "Nuclear Free Counties". By December, six of the eight Welsh counties had supported the nuclear free resolution first proposed by the Manchester City Council. The seventh of these, and arguably the most diffident, was Mid Glamorgan.

CND's growth and activity in Mid Glamorgan was rapid but not untypical. New groups had formed at Bridgend, Maesteg, and the Rhymney and Cynon Valleys whilst groups had reformed in Rhondda, Merthyr and Pontypridd. Most had organised local marches, held public meetings and shown films such as *The War Game* to packed audiences, recruiting numbers greater than in the 60s and in some cases challenging the traditional dominance of valley politics. Rhondda CND for example recruited more members than belonged to the local Labour Party.

At Bridgend, an embarrassingly small Labour Party May Day procession led by Michael Foot and Mid Glamorgan Council Leader Philip Squire was suddenly joined by hundreds of young people and local families marching behind their own nuclear disarmament banner. In Foot's presence, local MP Ray Powell and Labour Party Chairman Idris Jones went out of their way to welcome CND and pledge support for nuclear free policies. Foot said these policies "needed support from the people in the County Council elections." It was to be a prophetic remark. Five days later Labour romped back and confidently renewed its massive control of policy at County Hall. Little did they realise how the nuclear free debate would shake such confidence more than any other issue.

HOME DEFENCE STRUCTURE IN WALES



Reproduced from 'H-BOMB ON OGWR 1981' page 29

nuclear free wales ? a test case

On December 17 1981, the Council Chamber at Mid Glamorgan County Hall was packed with CND supporters from all parts of the county, lobbying members in support of the proposed nuclear free resolution put forward by the Public Protection Committee. Rumours abounded that the same committee had also proposed a large contract for what the chairperson described as a "Civil Emergency Centre". The "£389,000 mystery of the super-bunker" as the *South Wales Echo* described it, had come to a head five days earlier. Following a split at an emergency meeting of the controlling Labour Group, the County Planning Committee had also approved the plans for the "super-bunker", even though the Labour Group was committed to review civil defence policies.

Many elected members seemed less informed about the proposed "centre" than those lobbying them, though they were clearly uneasy at the justification of the project put forward by the Director of Land and Buildings. In his statement Mr Tom Donne referred to a recent exercise (which CND members believed was Operation Square Leg) when the bunker "had proved totally unsuitable to house a number of people for any length of time", adding "It could not sustain a direct hit from any appreciable explosive device". CND members who asked questions about the exercise and the reason why a civil emergency centre should be subject to the effects of bombing were not answered.

BACKGROUND TO THE BUNKER

When the Labour Group and the council took their decision to proceed with the contract the bunker was neither a benign civil project nor a mystery. CND activists had known its true identity for several months. Photographs and details of the bunker had been published along with information about the major elements of the Civil Defence network in South Wales, following extensive research and correspondence with emergency planning staff (3). The existing bunker at Waterton was described and listed by the Home Office in their circulars on nuclear war as a "county wartime headquarters" (4). Private speech lines existed between the bunker and the Government SRHQ 82 at nearby Brackla Hill, Bridgend, two miles away. Similar communications existed with the Armed Forces HQ at Brecon and to the United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation which had several posts in the area, including one at Merthyr Tydfil.

Several factors may help to explain the ignorance and confusion of some of the elected members who tacitly supported the bunker project, apparently believing it to be a purely civil project. The idea of updating the bunker had come not from the councillors or even from the Labour Group—it went back almost two years, pre-dating the County Council elections at which newer members of the group had been elected. The project had been instigated by a sub-committee of the main Public Protection Committee, upon the recommendation of the recently appointed Chief Executive, Hugh Thomas. It followed closely the thinking behind Government advice for the updating of civil defence preparations under which local authorities would play a more



Families lobbying Mid Glamorgan County Council in support of the nuclear free zone, December 18 1981. Photo: Western Mail

important role—Chief Executives would become Wartime Controllers with powers far more extensive than those they possessed in peacetime. These standby bunkers would become County Wartime Headquarters, working closely with the Government's own Sub-Regional Headquarters. Following the decision to site Cruise missiles in Britain (December 1979) and the preparations for the largest ever simulated nuclear attack exercise, Operation Square Leg (September 1980) local authorities were being advised to radically improve the bunkers and communications systems for wartime use.

In a "Confidential" report to a sub-committee on March 17, 1980, Hugh Thomas noted that "the facilities had been fully tested"—probably in the previous exercise, Operation Scrum Half (1978)—but "further direct lines were needed between county and district controls". Thomas further reminded the committee that "the system is specifically designed to meet the needs of wartime regional government in the immediate post attack period", and he said that to bring control up to standard including "proper control and feeding arrangements after the attack" would cost in the region of £250,000. By June 1980, specific recommendations were made for a new block incorporating a decontamination room, blast walls, contouring of earth embankments, water tanks and recycling equipment and provision of doorways "to face away from greatest blast sources". A meeting was being arranged with Home Office officials "to assist in specifying equipment".

In March 1981, as the peace movement in Glamorgan was beginning to flex its muscles, Mid Glamorgan Architects Department completed a revised plan of one of its most unusual, but least known, design projects. JOB No:B6051 was for a massive earth covered "Link Block" for the Waterton Control Centre. It incorporated the specifications referred to for wartime shelter accommodation, including separate male and female toilets, dormitory accommodation and rest room provision where games could be played while the ultimate catastrophe afflicted citizens of the county.

CND's occupation of the Waterton site on January 24 1982 was thus some-

thing more than a parochial dogfight or a single issue campaign. It signalled a direct challenge to the wartime machinery of local councils and the Government's nuclear war plans in Wales. The siege of the Waterton bunker ultimately became a test of local democracy and the strength and willpower of the campaign for a nuclear free Wales.

STRATEGY

The recognition that the bunker was a vital test case was symbolised in the corporate strategy. Groups throughout Glamorgan worked together and the methods used were more direct than hitherto, though constitutional approaches continued throughout the campaign. The tactics of picketing, lobbying and direct action were not unknown to the groups concerned. They had been tested by the history of industrial militancy in the county and more recent peace actions, including the march to Greenham Common USAF base. Four Rhondda women who had visited the Greenham action returned to Porth and organised a week long occupation outside the telephone exchange, where they were joined by CND supporters from local peace groups. The women specifically linked their action to that of the Women for Life on Earth at Greenham Peace Camp and to the growing opposition to war preparations within Mid Glamorgan. They encountered considerable support from the people of the valley and were also visited by Opposition Leader Michael Foot (who was speaking at a nearby meeting) who congratulated them on their stand.

The use of the experience gained in industrial and peace actions was linked to CND's new county based organisation in Wales. In Mid Glamorgan, the groups—Rhondda, Merthyr, Pontypridd, Bridgend, Maesteg, Cynon and Rhymney Valleys—had been meeting regularly since May 1981 to pool information and ideas. They had originally recorded their view that "no attempt was to be made to co-ordinate organisation between the groups", however this view had gradually changed in the light of knowledge about civil defence arrangements in the county and the experience of joint co-operation between groups, such



Main entrance to Wartime Bunker, before conversion began.

as sharing speakers and supporting each other's marches. The coming together behind a Mid Glamorgan banner at the Hyde Park rally had encouraged this process. What made a corporate strategy essential was the proposal from Rhymney Valley that they should lobby councillors for the county to be declared a nuclear free zone. Despite the fact that Mid Glamorgan County Council was governed by the largest and most powerful controlling Labour Group in Wales, progress on the nuclear free zone was painfully slow. When the groups came together for a mass lobby of County Hall on December 18 their jubilation was tinged with the knowledge that the nuclear free zone resolution passed by the council made no reference to the Civil Defence programme.

At their meeting on January 3 1982, the groups learned that the bunker contract would probably be approved by a special meeting of the Public Protection Committee within 48 hours and work might begin within a fortnight. In an urgent letter to the council, the County Campaign Committee of CND said the bunker project was "a complete contradiction of the nuclear free zone and also of Labour Party Policy" and they gave notice that they would demonstrate directly against the contract. A proposal from Rhondda CND for a picket of the site and some form of direct action to oppose the work was referred to groups for discussion and it received strong support. In the meantime all constitutional methods would be used to stop the bunker, including approaches to the chairperson of the Public Protection Committee, the controlling Labour Group, the Executive of the Mid Glamorgan Labour Party and the trade unions, including Wales TUC, mineworkers and the Fire Brigades Union, who were opposed to further civil defence spending. Support for Mid Glamorgan CND was also mobilised by peace groups in the "sister" counties of South and West Glamorgan and Gwent and Dyfed, who saw the struggle as essential to the success of their own pressure to defend nuclear free zones.

On January 5, reports appeared in the press announcing the placing of the contract for the bunker, amid protests by CND and certain councillors. CND learned that the contract had been placed with Fairclough Engineering, part of a multinational group with experience of similar projects. Fairclough seemed ready to commence work on the new bunker almost immediately. Ironically, a full scale civil emergency—the January snow crisis—held up the start, and enabled CND to prepare its action. Snow fell almost continuously in the county from January 7-9. The subsequent chaos proved so serious that at one point over 1000 troops and RAF personnel were drafted to assist the council in a clear up operation that went on for ten days. At no time was the civil defence bunker utilised. Instead emergency services in the county were based at County Supplies Department and fire station headquarters—just as CND had described.

On January 21, representatives from the county's CND groups held a special emergency meeting at Bridgend. The groups had agreed that in the event of the contract proceeding, direct action should be taken. Various options were considered, including action at County Hall and the contractors's base. It was unanimously agreed to jointly organise and sustain an occupation of the site, mobilising as much support and accompanying pressure as was possible in the time available.

Over the weekend of February 23/24 the thaw continued and traffic was moving freely again. Discrete inquiries had revealed that Fairclough were about to take possession of the bunker site. Within hours of the first phone calls on CND's new "telephone tree", 40 people had set up Wales' first peace camp.

occupation at waterton

"Demo at South Wales Nuclear Shelter" said the *South Wales Echo*, January 25 in its front page leader. "Ban the Bomb campaigners today began a marathon demonstration at a South Wales nuclear fall out shelter, aiming to prevent workmen from installing £400,000 worth of equipment. More than 30 demonstrators blocked the entrance to Mid Glamorgan Control Centre's bunker on the Waterton industrial estate, Bridgend—and they are prepared to stay there for months."

If it had achieved nothing else, CND's occupation had certainly drawn public attention to the facts concerning work on the site. And it was CND's version of the truth that was being reported—the press showed no hesitation in describing the site as a nuclear bunker nor was there at this stage any denial. By day two reports had also appeared on radio and TV along with a clear indication of CND's determination to stop the bunker: "Bunker Demo stands firm" said the front page report of the evening *Echo*. "Bomb Bunker Picketed" said the weekly *Glamorgan Gazette* with a large photograph, while the *Morning Star* reported "Third CND Peace Camp Set Up".

Press reports also made it clear that the contractors, council and police had been taken by surprise and were unsure how to treat the action. The preferred course seemed to be to ignore, or at least play down, the significance of the on-site protest. Thirty-six hours after it had commenced the council's Deputy Clerk was reported as saying "the work is proceeding as normal"... "I do not know if the protesters caravan is parked on our land"(5). At the bunker negotiations were taking place between CND and the contractors and police, to decide the fate of the peace camp. After several hours of being warned that they were "trespassing" and of the dangers of the earth-moving equipment, CND moved the camp to the bunker's second entrance, thirty yards away but still clearly on the site. Earth was immediately pushed to within inches of the caravan and tent.

The organisation of the on-site protest raised many problems for peace movement supporters in the county. How could the occupation be sustained in such a difficult, and at times, isolated environment that was 25 miles from some of the counties stronger CND groups? Those staying at the peace camp and taking turns in the 24 hours "peace picket" also faced many hardships—the cold bleak weather, the lack of on-site facilities, including water and toilets, the constant dangers and threat of eviction and the possibilities of legal action.

PRACTICAL HELP

In dealing with these immediate practical needs the peace camp received much help and kindness from workers in nearby factories and workshops. They provided access to water and toilet facilities, the use of a public telephone, and even tinder for the camp's brazier and materials for poster production from industrial waste products. Food supplies were sustained by various means—gifts from visiting groups, including Swansea Chilean Refugees and Greenham

Common Women's peace camp—and daily visits by supporters and regular visits from a nearby fish and chip van. Within days milk and postal deliveries were also arranged, the latter by a bemused postman conveying the first of dozens of letters and telegrams simply addressed "Nuclear Bunker, Bridgend" or "Glamorgan Peace Camp".

LEGAL POSITION

The peace camp closely followed the activities of other peace camps and investigated and kept under review its own legal rights. Mid Glamorgan CND (whose chairperson was a practising lawyer) rejected all suggestions that the action was illegal, though the campaign recognised the possible risks of legal action should a harder line be taken. Apart from trespass, alleged by the contractors, there was the theoretical possibility of legal action for obstruction, unlawful assembly, breach of the peace etc. All CND's activities were closely monitored by the South Wales Police, whose headquarters were at Bridgend—"community policemen" from Commander Squire's division regularly visited the site. By far the most serious risk was that of criminal damage arising from the occupation of contractor's territory, which at one point resulted in police investigations, though no charge was ever made.

AIMS AND ORGANISATION

At their first meeting, 48 hours after the action had begun, Mid Glamorgan CND began to address the organisational and strategic questions facing what was now generally regarded as a full blown campaign to defend the nuclear free zone. The action committee identified four basic related aims of the action: 1) To get the work stopped; 2) To expose the realities of civil defence plans in the county; 3) To strengthen the council's nuclear free policy; 4) To build a stronger peace movement in Mid Glamorgan.



Peace camp stands firm as bulldozers move in. Photo: South Wales Echo

The camp would remain "as long as necessary to achieve these aims", but it was realised that action at the bunker would inevitably be of limited effect and had to be accompanied by other levels of action. A campaign was launched to "Keep Mid Glamorgan Nuclear Free", involving the publication of 30,000 leaflets, plus posters, badges etc. To sustain the campaign and focus action on the bunker, it was decided to begin a series of weekly public rallies on-site and beginning on the Sunday afternoon of January 31. Letters were sent to Trade Unions informing them of the action and inviting support. Letters were also sent to every factory and workplace on the surrounding industrial estate. A newsletter was produced for distribution to supporters and those attending the public meetings, and individual groups began town centre leaflet distribution in their areas.

The costs of sustaining the peace camp (heating, lighting, food, etc) were borne by contributions from the county's CND groups and well wishers. Efforts were made to acquire a second caravan for sleeping purposes and a travel fund was set up for those helping to picket—especially the unemployed who lacked transport from outlying areas.

The underlying strategy and public work of the campaign was to be the responsibility of the Mid Glamorgan Campaign Committee, in discussion with local groups and those on-site. To assist communication and decision making, especially in emergencies, an Action Sub-Committee was established. This consisted of chairperson Paul Llewellyn, campaign treasurer Steve Samuel (who were both local and readily contactable in an emergency) and the secretary Linda Matthews, who maintained official contact with groups and organisations, including trade unions. Paul Llewellyn dealt with most of the press work and Steve Samuel undertook the key task of day-to-day liaison with supporters, including maintaining a rota of both regular and "flying pickets" for whenever the need arose. It often did.

"THIS FAR, NO FURTHER"

At the end of week one, about 250 people from all ages and backgrounds attended the first of eight public meetings on the site, most witnessing their first nuclear bunker in the making. The aim of these weekly meetings was to encourage people to see the work on the bunker and to mobilise action and publicity for the demands of the nuclear free campaign. The visibility of the work proved a strong point in building support. Speakers included leading members of both WANA and CND, as well as councillors, trade unionists, parliamentary candidates and grass roots supporters.

Interviews with the public who attended the meeting reflected a strong sense of concern, and even of outrage toward those responsible for the project. Ivor White from Brynmenyn, a young worker at a nearby factory said: "I never thought I'd see this going on in our county. It's disgraceful and a cover-up of lies. What we are doing is bringing the light to people". A woman from Llanharan said: "I'm a mother of three sons. I think it's disgraceful they are spending money on this when there is so much that needs doing". Gareth Jones from Bridgend (a young father with a baby) said: "I'm here because I'm concerned for my child's future and the future of every child. It's wrong that this money is being spent for such purposes when our schools and hospitals are being neglected", and Stella Jones from Cardiff said: "We cannot as ordinary democratic people stand by and see our money spent on a few people locked in preparing to run the country with guns. Democracy will go clear down the drain in favour of a military government. We are saying 'No taxation without representation' (6).

The public meeting was addressed by two of the original women occupants of the camp and three county councillors who had opposed the contract from



Mid Glamorgan chairperson Paul Llewellyn introduces "rebel" councillors Jeff Jones (Maesteg) and Morgan Chambers (Merthyr). Photo: John Kavanagh

the start. Sue Lamb from Porth, speaking for Women for Life on Earth, invited people to join the picket at the bunker. "It is a symbol of what our government and council think of us. They close down hospitals yet they spend money on this. I can't sit back and let this threat overcome my family and me. If we are defeated on this we shall help to bring nuclear war closer." Lyn Forte from Porth, another of the women occupants, spoke of the hardships of the occupation but summed up the mood of many who were taking part when she said "it is enjoyable to be actually doing something together."

County Councillor Mog Chambers (Labour, Merthyr), referring to the Labour Group's decision to build the bunker said: "We are ruled by a small group of people within the group who are deciding the issue. I've been a councillor for 15 years and my loyalty is to the people I represent who oppose this. The £400,000 being spent here is an attack on our right to live in our beautiful county of Mid Glamorgan". County Councillor Ted Merriman (Plaid Cymru, Ogmere and Garw) said "any issue that would get me on the same platform as Labour members is a big one and a great one. Let this be the beginning of telling the government and County Hall, this far, no further". County Councillor Jeff Jones (Labour, Maesteg) reminded parents that some of their children "are in schools in Mid Glamorgan that would make Dartmoor look like Buckingham Palace. Would the Tories offer 70% assistance for anything other than civil defence? If they want civil defence here let them carry it out by themselves".

The meeting succeeded in conveying first, the true nature of the work taking place at the site and second, the under-lying decision making process. It had also aroused people to joint action. Many offers of help and support were received and a resolution opposing the work was carried unanimously. The first newsletter and many campaign leaflets were taken by supporters to

other parts of the county, as well as to Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and West Wales. "Your fight is really our fight too", said supporters from Dyfed.

BREAKTHROUGH FEBRUARY 1

On the eighth day of the bunker siege the peace camp appeared to have made a breakthrough in the consciousness of elected members of the council. County Hall had not only recognised the occupation of council land but also agreed to visit the site and meet peace camp supporters. In the meantime, no action was taken to remove the camp. What had helped to produce this change in attitudes was a combination of lobbying and leaks of confidential material by CND.

A minute of a special sub-committee meeting held in March 1980 and a report of a site meeting in June 1980 clearly revealed nuclear war preparations. In a front page report in the *South Wales Echo* entitled "Public misled on bunker" the Chairperson of the Public Protection Committee had not denied the leaks, which had clearly worried many members of the controlling group as well as some non-Labour members. Opposition groups like Plaid Cymru (and the Communist Party Member) said they were "appalled that the council were deliberately misleading the public and their own members about their commitment to civil defence."

On the morning of Monday, February 1, the 50 strong Public Protection Committee agreed to visit the site, and, at CND's request, to meet members of the peace camp. The Bunker was now festooned with the banners of a dozen anti-nuclear towns, standing in solidarity with the red dragon of "Penybont Dros Heddwch" (Bridgend for Peace). Over the entrance to the bunker a large notice proclaimed:

"Entrance To The Most Exclusive Club In The World. You Are Paying But You Won't Get In. Stop This Nuclear Madness."

At a meeting at the nearby Fire Service Headquarters at Lanely Hall, Chief Executive Hugh Thomas warned councillors that the police were worried about



Peace picket at Mid Glamorgan peace camp.

the consequences of the visit and there were fears of a "possible confrontation" between councillors and peace camp supporters. If they ever existed, these fears proved groundless. Not only did many councillors listen intently to CND's evidence, they also seemed genuinely shocked at what they had seen and the implications of further work on the bunker. A hurriedly arranged meeting took place between Campaign Committee Representatives and the Chairperson and officials of the Public Protection Committee in a bus shelter—"neutral ground"—opposite the site. Dismissing CND's claims, Councillor Douglas McDonald said "the work is to make the site suitable for civil emergencies." Asked why a civil building should be built in such a way, he replied "There are no windows in the place so there is air conditioning. The water filtration has always been there. The decontamination rooms may never be used."

The meeting in the bus shelter produced one major result for CND. The committee agreed that a CND delegation could speak direct to councillors. CND rejected the "unacceptable conditions" that were attached to this meeting—it would not take place for six weeks and there should be no lobbying or demonstrating in the interim period. Within 24 hours the council had backed down. The meeting would take place on February 18 at County Hall. In their letter to the Council, CND said they were "surprised that a member of the Labour Party and a democratically elected councillor should seek to prevent the exercise of democratic rights of protest and lobby." CND went further and wrote to Chairperson McDonald in his other role of Labour Party Group Secretary, and called for an urgent meeting. The on-site visit had convinced them that many councillors seemed ignorant of the true nature of work on the bunker. This was the second occasion CND had asked for the meeting and like the first their request was ignored.

In the period leading up to the deputation to County Hall, CND consolidated the occupation and picket of the site and also the campaign at other levels. New groups were established at the Polytechnic of Wales, Caerphilly and Llantrisant. Using funds from groups and a £200 gift from women at Greenham Common peace camp, the Campaign Committee purchased its own caravan for sleeping and office facilities to supplement the one on loan. This new Mid Glamorgan peace caravan improved the conditions for those on the night time occupation rota. It also provided a psychological boost to those who saw the peace camp being enlarged, especially the Sunday public meeting which continued to be supported by numbers ranging from 150-200 people.

CND's attempts to black the site and to prevent the delivery of materials proved unsuccessful. In most cases trade unionists were not involved because the site was not unionised, and because the unions, whilst sympathetic, did not feel they could provide legal immunity to their members as this was not an industrial dispute. This was not surprising given the serious unemployment situation in Wales. Nevertheless, contact with the unions proved useful in other ways. The Wales TUC made clear their opposition to the work, as did the Fire Brigades Union. The NUM sent £100 to the peace camp fund and miners joined the picket bringing with them a gift of coal and a brazier from the Maerdy lodge. On the Waterton industrial estate, workers from nearby factories began to show constructive interest in the occupation—many would wave or honk their car horns in support, whilst some came along to join the camp during their lunch or out of work hours.

PRESSURE BUILDS UP

Pressure mounted at County Hall for the work to be called off. A motion to this effect was put forward to the Public Protection Committee by Councillor Ray Davies who said "There is still a chance for members to come back from the brink." The Plaid Group attacked the Labour Group for what it called "foolish and hypocritical action" in building the bunker before the



Prof Alan Lippman, Elisabeth Goffe (Bridgend CND), Co Cllr Arthur True, Paul Flynn (WANA) and concerned child.

review of civil defence policy had been undertaken. The local Ogmore Constituency Labour Party agreed on a resolution for the Labour Party Conference in Wales calling on Labour councils to refuse to allocate funds for the provision and maintenance of wartime control centres. (7)

Local church groups, especially Quakers, Welsh Congregationalists and the United Reformed Church gave moral and practical support to the campaign, while other church members became interested at a meeting between CND and the local Council of Churches.

At its second public meeting on the site, Councillor Paul Flynn, representing WANA said the peace camp "provides a marvellous opportunity of exposing 'Alice in Wonderland' preparations for Civil Defence and to demonstrate the waste of half a million pounds.....People can see it is a waste of money. It's another way of getting people to think about the issues, thus increasing awareness." Mid Glamorgan CND launched a petition deploring the spending on the bunker and demanding the reallocation of ratepayers' money to socially useful projects.

After the meeting, the Campaign Committee sent a delegation to see local MP Ray Powell. Powell expressed deep concern at what he had heard and undertook to investigate the whole Bunker question. Within days, a major story appeared in the press "MP Probes CND Claims on Bunker" in which Powell said he was making "the strongest possible protest about this scandalous waste of money." (8)

He also said he was tabling questions in the House of Commons on the precise function of the bunker. Privately, Powell was making informal approaches to the Labour Group in Mid Glamorgan, since Labour's credibility, with its own

supporters in CND as well as with the ratepayers, was now being put at risk. It was later learned that the Labour Party in Wales was engaged in similar approaches.

For its preparations for the meeting with councillors on February 18, the Campaign Committee sent every elected member of every party an "Information Pack" containing a summary of the confidential council documents relating to the bunker and CND's research on nuclear war within the county. Two retired Quaker women, members of Bridgend CND, paid for copies of *H Bomb on Ogwr* to be included in the pack. The committee were also seeking to obtain and publicise plans of the bunker, showing full details of the controversial features of the project which council officials were playing down. Formal requests for such plans produced no response.

On the eve of the committee meeting, Councillors Jeff Jones and Morgan Chambers, who had both supported CND and voted against the bunker project, were expelled from the Labour Group. The Public Protection Committee now mirrored a crisis not only within itself but one which seriously threatened what a leading lobby correspondence later called "a relatively newphenomena at County Hall." (9). There was now public disagreement on a major issue within the controlling group itself.

turning point: the lobby

Several hundred people assembled with their banners on the steps of County Hall, Cardiff on February 18. Extra seating had to be provided in the public gallery as CND supporters packed first the full council meeting and then the Public Protection Committee in support of CND's deputation.

At the full council several attempts were made by a minority of councillors to prevent further progress on the bunker contract. Councillor Ray Davies, whose resolution was referred to the Public Protection Committee said this would save a "massive amount of finance", now rumoured to be over one million pounds with loan charges, most of which would come from the rates. Ironically, the council's own Budget Strategy document recorded the damaging effects of government cuts. These included a shortfall of £1.5 million in the education budget which was to be met by reductions in the numbers of teachers, child care placements, retained firemen and cuts in highway maintenance and bus operations. The public who listened intently to this debate were made even more aware of the real costs of the bunker project. Many Labour members remained silent but clearly uncomfortable as cries of "shame" and "disgraceful" issued forth from the public gallery. During the lunch hour the discomfort of elected members was reinforced as individuals and groups of peace camp supporters lobbied councillors. While some councillors were still playing down the facts about the bunker, another was heard saying "You people know nothing about it. You never fought in the war. The blast is no different and a strongly built bunker will afford protection for the survivors—Why are you opposed to that? Don't you people want to survive?"

A Liberal member approached a group of protesters and seemed at pains to explain his position "I'm personally in favour of civil defence and a bunker, but there's some hocus pocus going on here. Like you I want to get at the truth and I support your efforts to establish the facts." A Labour member swept by with the words "Don't listen to him boys. He's only after your votes" but refused to be drawn himself on Group policy.

When CND's representatives, Paul Llewellyn and I appeared before a crowded committee it appeared most members of the council were present. Whilst concentrating on establishing the true facts relating to the bunker and civil defence policy we tried to make it clear that CND was not opposed to efficient civil emergency services, indeed cuts in retained firemen adversely affected these.

NUCLEAR FREE ZONE REALITY

What CND sought to do, we said, was to strengthen the council's Nuclear Free Zone policy, to protect the integrity of the Nuclear Free resolution and to see that the policy was made a reality rather than being undermined by the bunker contract. Putting a series of pointed questions on specific features of the contract, Paul Llewellyn asked what possible civil emergency could necessitate such a large number of officers having to be accommodated below

four feet of earth for 14 days. The council argued that burying the bunker saved costs of fuels and maintenance. "Is this some remarkable new conservation measure that will now be applied to other council buildings including County Hall?" asked Paul, to loud cheers from some councillors and the large contingent of peace camp supporters. "This bunker represents a crisis of confidence in this council's resolve toward Nuclear Free policies. CND will continue to oppose it until satisfactory assurances are given," said Paul amidst applause.

Despite the positive reception most councillors gave to CND's case, an air of crisis now entered the committee room. Both CND supporters and most ordinary councillors seemed unsure how the impasse could be resolved without the threatened full blown confrontation. Discussion of the CND case was immediately suspended by Chairperson Doug McDonald who introduced the council leader, County Councillor Phillip Squire. Squire said he wished to make a statement of intent on behalf of the controlling group. He gave notice of a motion which the group would lay before the next meeting of the Public Protection Committee on February 26:

- "(a) the Mid Glamorgan County Council would withdraw from any involvement relating to a war emergency scheme.
- (b) the County Council would declare the centre at the Waterton Industrial Estate at Bridgend to be a county civil emergency centre and,
- (c) The County Council would instruct the appropriate officers to report on any activity which may be regarded as a wartime emergency activity.

Moreover, in view of the Authority's decision to declare the county of Mid Glamorgan a nuclear free zone and an area where the manufacture and siting of nuclear weapons is totally opposed, as is the transportation of any materials or components for nuclear weapons, will further **recommend** that:

1. In concert with the foregoing decision and in the belief that there can be no meaningful defence afforded to the civilian population in any future war involving the use of nuclear weapons, the Authority's interpretation of its statutory duties as defined in the Civil Defence Act 1948 and the Civil Defence (Planning) Regulations 1974 must be consistent with this policy and all officers are accordingly instructed to undertake those duties compatible with the policy guidelines.
2. the County Clerk and Co-ordinator be instructed to convey the Authority's decision to the Home Secretary, who has specific responsibility for civil defence matters."

"SURELY WE'VE WON"?

To many CND supporters present, the Labour leader's words were a vindication of CND's stand. "Surely we've won." "I can't believe it—they've given in" were snatches of the mood of euphoria tinged with uncertainty that broke out immediately Councillor Squire completed his statement. He, in characteristic fashion, gave nothing more away, either to press or public. It was clear that the explanations lay in the tensions within the Labour Group itself and CND members were to be left to make whatever conclusion they chose. (Labour Party members within CND saw the motion as an attempt at tactical compromise by the group in response to recent Labour Party pronouncements—including an NEC statement and the Ogmore Constituency resolution for the Labour Party Wales Conference.)

The story of the bunker again broke the headlines. "Mid Glamorgan Bunker Pledge" said the *Evening Echo* but on that evening's BBC TV Wales report, CND Chairperson Paul Llewellyn made clear the Campaign Committee's

reserved welcome for the statement "If these measures were made effective and monitored it will mean an unprecedented victory for CND." The *Western Mail's* headline "CND Sceptical After Victory at Bunker" (10) revealed the reasons for CND's position. Home Affairs correspondent Clive Betts reported that "most of the work will go ahead and will cost as much." Asked whether the work would continue as usual before the next meeting of the committee, the most that Councillor Squire was prepared to say was "I expect that after the meeting the architect might whisper in someone's ear." Leaks from the Labour Group revealed that a majority of rank and file members at County Hall, many of whom were under pressure from constituents, now wanted radical alterations to the bunker such as the removal of possible war equipment, the dropping of plans to earth over the bunker and—what was most likely to be resisted—the installation of windows. In the newsletter distributed from the peace camp the headlines read "Victory in Sight."

At the site there was no let up or modification of the work. Peace camp pickets became alarmed at what seemed like an acceleration of the contract with work proceeding over the weekend period. An unusually thick groundslab had been laid and as soon as the steel reinforcements arrived they were immediately welded into position. Pickets noticed that inner and outer walls consisted of a lattice of steel with no spaces for windows.

CLWYD DECLARATION

On February 23, the peace camp heard the news of the historic Declaration of a Nuclear Free Zone in Clwyd—the last of the Welsh counties to support the Manchester declaration. They were joined by END representative Meg Beresford for a double celebration on the site—a nuclear free Wales and a nuclear free Mid Glamorgan. It was the thirtieth day of direct action and the first time that peace camp supporters had felt able to partially relax in the



Mid Glamorgan peace caravan at the entrance to the bunker on the day Wales declares itself a nuclear free zone.

In other words, the nuclear bunker was to be built precisely as it had been designed by those who had originally planned it within the Public Protection Committee. There was not even the hint of recognition, in Thomas' letter, that the elected members had made clear their view that the contract was now unacceptable. Other concerns were felt when peace camp members learned of the letter. Why had the leader not replied to it personally (as he often did with direct approaches to him)? How was it that Thomas' letter had been sent so quickly?—suggesting overnight contact between the leader and the clerk. What was the officer's role in all these matters? And did ordinary elected members, who were now informally assuring CND supporters that things would be put right, know precisely what was going on?



Underground room being prepared to provide dormitory accomodation for 40 staff.
Photo: Rebecca

knowledge that at last the political process was going their way. They drank wine and made hot food from the tiny kitchen caravan and they lit a large "Beacon of Peace" at the highest point of the earthworks (similar beacons were being lit all over Britain). The glowing CND sign could be seen by night shift workers at the nearby Ford and Sony plants. As the bonfire subsided two new large banners were placed over the second entrance to the bunker. They read, "No Bunkers For Bureaucrats", and "Queue Here" (showing people in white radiation suits). Before they dispersed from the site that evening, and feeling a genuine sense of unity with groups in the eight Welsh nuclear free counties, peace camp supporters were visited by police in squad cars. The police were alarmed at the sight of what they thought was the bunker burning, "We don't need to set fire to it" said a young supporter, "people will see it's evil and it will fall down".

WORK SPEEDS UP

It was not the visit from the police that worried peace pickets that evening. It was the fact that as they were celebrating, work on the bunker appeared to be proceeding at a frantic rate—workers were on overtime and did not leave the site until 9pm. Indeed one or two briefly joined the "Beacon of Peace" celebration. Later that evening, the chairperson of Bridgend CND, Elisabeth Goffe, sent an overnight telegram to Councillor Leader Philip Squire, protesting the continuation of the original bunker contract at such speed and without regard for the discussions at County Hall. Within hours Liz Goffe received a reply from County Clerk and Co-ordinator Hugh Thomas confirming CND's fears: "The method and time of work is entirely a matter within the discretion of the contractors and I can assure you there have been no instructions whatsoever from the City Council for the contractors to work outside the schedule they had planned and taken into account when tendering for the contract".

battle at county hall

When they arrived for the February 26 Special Public Protection Committee, councillors met another strong lobby from CND groups and the peace camp. They were given a document outlining the Campaign Committee's considered response to the Labour Group's statement of intent, and a warning letter from CND outlining the serious concern felt about the state of work on the bunker.

"We anticipate that in a matter of days work will begin on building massive solid walls of re-inforced steel and concrete. We understand each wall will measure sixteen inches thick and will be without windows or cavity. The building will presumably require air filtration and other features associated with wartime centres. In our view these are not features consistent with a standby centre for peacetime duties. Rather, they describe a nuclear bunker as originally planned and are therefore unacceptable to CND. We seek no misunderstanding or conflict with the council but we regard such work as incompatible with the statement of intent and with the council's declaration of a nuclear free zone to which CND is committed. Now that the facts are known, CND holds elected members fully accountable and will expect support from the controlling group on this matter. We call upon the council to act unequivocally and to halt work on this site until modifications are made which are consistent with the statement of intent."

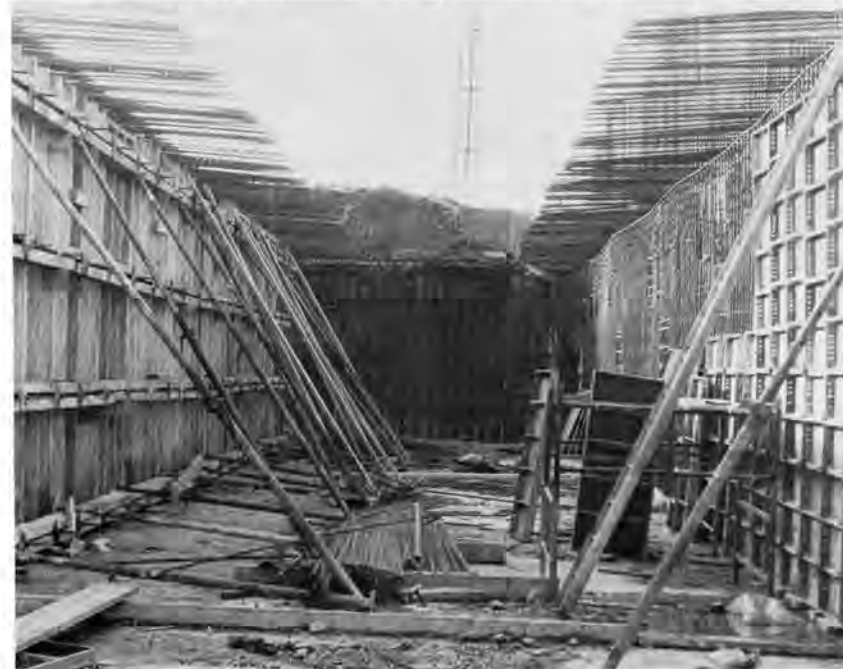
Councillors also received letters of concern from the Mid Wales Peace Council and the Union of Welsh Congregationalists. A letter from CND Cymru appealed to the council to strengthen its nuclear free zone, following the Clwyd declaration.

WHO IS MAKING THE DECISIONS HERE?

Among more experienced peace camp supporters the elation that had briefly followed the last meeting of the Public Protection Committee had now changed to a suspicion that the council could not be trusted. The tendency of leaders and members of the Labour Group to avoid answering specific questions, or even to avoid contact with CND supporters served to feed this suspicion. Some even believed that democracy was being subverted at County Hall — "Who is making decisions here?" asked one vociferous lobbyist of an embarrassed councillor. The Campaign Committee statement generally supported the Labour Group's statement of intent but appealed to the council not to retreat "but to provide leadership and unity with other councils to resist war plans" but it added "this matter has raised important issues about the democratic process in Mid Glamorgan County Council—especially the role and balance of power between certain officers, council leaders and elected members. The questions we have asked remain unanswered. What is at stake is the confidence of a large number of the public in democratic decision making at County Hall. The first casualty of peace is usually democracy—that is the real challenge to be faced by the Public Protection Committee if it is to live up to its name."

The pointed references to "the powers of certain officers" was to appear especially relevant when the agenda and reports for the meeting were published. These revealed one other major item on the agenda; the Joint Chief Officers Snow Emergency Report, produced from the Office of the Clerk and County Co-ordinator which concluded: "the snow emergency underlined the essential requirement for senior officers of the authority having an emergency role in the county Emergency Plan to operate as a Control Team from an adequately equipped and properly staffed County Emergency Control Centre at which liaison officers representing other essential services are present."

The timing of this item and the fact that it was put on the agenda before the debate on the Labour resolution seemed to many, including some councillors, to be aimed at justifying the construction of the bunker without reference to war planning. It was followed by a 3000 word report from the Clerk and the Director of Land and Buildings on the bunker project itself, skillfully placed in the context of the proposed resolution. Dismissing CND's case without a reference to the fact that it was based on council documentation, the report reminded elected members of their legal duty to provide civil defence. Each councillor received from the clerk a personal copy of the Government's own booklet *Civil Defence—Why We Need It*. Councillors were then warned of the serious consequences of default, which, in the interpretation of the clerk, could result at least in the loss of grants or more seriously, fines, disqualification, sequestration of property and the putting in of a Civil Commissioner to run civil defence. This would not apply to those who voted against, but he said "an abstention in the face of a duty to negative is wilful misconduct." "It would be advisable" said the clerk "if the county sought a meeting with appropriate government representatives and Home Office officials



On St David's Day, March 1, massive shuttering goes into place for the blast walls.

to explain its position and assess the response before declaring a policy on the lines of the notice of intent."

CHANGE OF MIND

Following a brief and low key discussion of the report, the leader moved the motion, instructing the officers to report on "any variation necessary" to divorce the bunker from "any activity which may be regarded as wartime emergency activity". As pressure from inside and outside County Hall mounted it became clear to the watching public that it was not the "rebel" councillors who were being asked to "bite the bullet" by accepting the Labour Group's new proposals, but members of the Labour Group who had gone along with the leadership.

Several Labour members were clearly uncomfortable about what a lobby correspondent said "could spell double embarrassment for County Council leaders" and "could be interpreted as a victory for the rebels and the swell of public opinion" (11). Looking directly at the public gallery, Councillor Wallace Philpin, a new member, unconvincingly asserted, "Let us make it clear. It is not outside forces which have led us to change our minds but careful talks within the Labour Group."

This statement, the first to admit a "change of mind", along with the acceptance of the motion by 39 votes to 1, and the glum faced looks on the faces of certain officers, was the signal to CND supporters that a major policy change had been brought about. In a clear effort to make concessions to the nuclear free lobby, the leader described the decisions made as a "first phase" of the county's civil defence review, adding "the policy has to be made a reality".

The test of this would be whether the present work would stop. Mr Tom Donne, the Director of Land and Buildings, told Mid Glamorgan CND it would, but the *Western Mail*, recognising the reality of decision making in County Hall, reported that "Officers were unsure whether to stop work at once...until the full council meets in three weeks time the committee's recommendation cannot be confirmed" (12). Since this now seemed to be contrary to the entire strategy of the council, and to what CND had been promised, by both members and officers, the County Campaign Committee of CND immediately issued a statement saying it would be "wasteful and foolish" of the council to allow any work to continue.

At its first public meeting following this decision, the 150 people who turned up at the site were told by members of the Campaign Committee that a "major victory for peace had been achieved but we must remain vigilant and ensure that practise follows principle". The peace camp would continue, and between then and the full council meeting, it was planned to widen the campaign to ensure a massive turnout at County Hall. After a brief halt in the work, on-site steel fabrication was again accelerated. A forest of re-inforcing bars 35mm in diameter was spaced at 150mm intervals in preparation for outer and inner blast walls of solid concrete. On March 1, St David's Day, massive shuttering, approximately 400mm wide, was placed along the proposed south wall of the bunker. Again, peace camp supporters noted no provision for windows or even for doors on the south side, furthest away from the detonations rehearsed in the bunker during Operation Square Leg. Through its contact with the workforce, the peace camp learned that construction of the outer blast walls would probably begin in the week beginning March 8, when large amounts of ready mixed concrete were expected to arrive on the site. The contractors had also not received instructions to effect a modification in the design of the bunker.



Peace camp coordinator Steve Samuel shows press the steel reinforcement being prepared for the blast walls. Photo: *Western Mail*

At its weekly meeting, Mid Glamorgan CND Campaign Committee agreed to seek an urgent meeting with the leader of the council and officers to clarify the position. In the meantime, councillors would be notified that if the work was not halted or modified in accordance with the council's resolution, CND would recommend a campaign of nonviolent direct action. This proposal would be placed before branches and the on-site public meeting the following Sunday.

On the morning of March 5, as CND's second letter to councillors was being sent, a strongly worded letter was received from the contractors, instructing CND to remove its "flags of protest" from the radio masts of the bunker, stating that all costs of damage would be recovered, and calling for the removal of the peace camp caravans. The Campaign Committee immediately saw this as confirmation that the construction of the blast walls was about to begin and neither the council nor the contractors were prepared to tolerate any longer the challenge posed by a round the clock occupation.

At CND's request, Professor Alan Lipman, Professor of Architecture at the Welsh National School of Architecture, inspected the site and agreed to release his report for councillors and public. Professor Lipman concluded, "To my mind, there is little, if any, doubt that this new link block and the renovated west and east blocks have been designed and are being built to withstand the likely effects of all but direct local nuclear strikes".

On March 7, the solidarity of the campaign was further strengthened by a visit from Peter Seggar and Paul Flynn of WANA, who presented the peace camp with a copy of the Declaration of a Nuclear Free Wales which they were taking to the European Parliament. With the declaration, the two men said they carried the "clear determination and most recent mandate from the people of Wales against their government's nuclear war preparations".

That afternoon the Campaign Committee met briefly, prior to the public meeting on-site. They learned that construction of the south-east wall of the bunker—a special mix of concrete 16in thick, without cavity or windows—would almost certainly begin the following day. The campaign now faced a major crisis—the speed of construction threatened to outpace it and out-flank its attempts to build a broadly based resistance sufficient to force the council to climb down. Despite the determination within the peace movement, there were weaknesses in the broader campaign. Trade union leaders had shown no enthusiasm for any form of industrial action and work with miner's lodges had not been followed through by CND. The Labour Party now seemed to believe the Labour Group's resolutions in council were sufficient to restore confidence. Attendance at the public meetings was beginning to wane as some sections of support believed the fight had been won, or conversely, that it could not be won because of the power of government, bureaucracy, or the ruling group within County Hall. Some peace camp supporters were reaching exhaustion.

THE STRUGGLE GOES ON

Amongst those who had witnessed the work on site there were few serious doubts: feedback from groups was unanimous in wanting the struggle to continue and messages of support were still arriving. The reports in the peace press and the visits and information provided by Peter Seggar and Paul Flynn of WANA and Professor Alan Lipman were of great encouragement.

Saul Alinsky, a US Community Organiser, had once written: "The basis for tactics is the construction of constant and rising pressure...Make your opponents live up to their own book of rules." What the campaign was now demanding was nothing less than "Keep your promises".

After discussion, the Campaign Committee decided to propose two levels of strategy to supporters. The *first*, and longer term, was mass action in numbers far greater than the public meetings. This would inevitably mean going through the process of closer working with trade unions, community organisations, shop stewards and miners lodges etc. CND Wales would be asked to make the bunker a specific target of its All-Wales demonstration and it was hoped to organise a large picket around the site.

The *second*, and immediate proposal, was for more direct action specifically aimed at stopping, or at least inhibiting, the work on site. This was in line with CND's recent (1981) Conference, although there was no precedent on which to draw and there were risks to any such action: people had not been trained for it (though psychologically some peace camp supporters now felt ready to take such action); the consequences were impossible to foresee; and—since CND could not instruct supporters—the numbers might be small and vulnerable. In addition participants risked legal action, though the campaign would organise a defence and aid fund if the need arose. On behalf of the committee, Paul Llewellyn put these proposals to the public meeting, calling for maximum support during the coming days: "At this stage there is nothing more the Campaign Committee can do. It is now up to each of us as individuals to decide whether we are prepared to take the further non-violent action that may be needed to prevent the continuance of the work on site and to ensure the council keeps its promise." There was no dissent. It was 20 years since the last significant use of direct action for peace in Wales. On December 9 1961, 300 people supporting the Welsh Committee of 100 had at one point obstructed the trolley buses running through Cardiff City Centre (13). Now peace campaigners were wondering whether they could really stop the completion of Wales' most modern nuclear bunker and so declare that the nuclear free zone was more than mere words.

direct action

The morning of March 8, like the first morning of the occupation was cold and wet. At 7.30am as the peace campers were finishing their breakfast and handing round mugs of tea to a dozen or so supporters the workers arrived. They were joined by a number of unfamiliar faces and after reporting at the foreman's office in the bunker they began to attend to the wooden shuttering already in place for the blast walls. It was soon learned that the cement mixers were expected in an hour or so. The atmosphere at the peace camp was more tense than at any time in the 43 days of occupation.

Suddenly it was clear something was wrong. The workers were shouting from inside the high wooden shuttering and the site foreman ran quickly over to the scene. The inside of the shuttering was littered with assorted debris—clothing of every description, mattresses and cushions, shoes, trendy magazines and flowers, including a bowl of roses. Smiles broke out as peace campers watched harassed workers "fishing" out items of lingerie. A scrawled sign appeared over the bunker announcing, "Jumble Sale Here Today: Proceeds to P. Squire." Despite the obvious consternation of the foreman, the workers joined in the jokes and laughter. They were ordered to enter the shuttering and remove every item: small items were laboriously removed by a vacuum type machine. The cement would be delayed by an hour or so.

In the slight easing of tension resulting from the symbolic "rubbish to the bunker" episode, the peace campers and picketers renewed their discussion of what was to be done. Almost all those now involved in the occupation shared the commitment to direct action that was evident in the previous days on-site public meeting. It was agreed that any action should now be aimed directly at the construction process—the pouring of cement—and should be nonviolent, avoiding dangers to the workers on site. At 9.30am a picket reported that an area in front of the bunker had been cleared and a large yellow pumping lorry, with a hydraulic boom to reach the top of the shuttering was being put in place. A further hurried and tense discussion took place.

One of those involved described it as follows:

"As a fine drizzle began to fall, people packed into the tiny caravan. There were nine or ten inside and several others outside, but people were arriving all the time. Someone said 'Well the time has come—we've done everything we can, we've tried every method but we haven't stopped the bunker'. Someone else said 'Today's the day alright—after today the walls will be built and they will have won—it's a fait accompli'. 'I haven't come this far to go home now' said a young woman from Rhondda. 'We have to do something now'.

Everybody agreed with this remark but it seemed we were all coping with our own anxiety. After all, it isn't everyday that ordinary people untrained in the techniques of satyagraha (nonviolent resistance) decide to be obstructive and maybe break the law. 'I think this talking about it makes it worse', said somebody. 'It's now or never and I say we go before it's too late.' And they did.

I don't exaggerate when I say we filed out of the little caravan and up the earthen slope of the bunker as one person, or like a trained unit. There was almost complete silence as we climbed onto the steel re-inforcing rods and across the top of the high shuttering, taking advantage of the pre-occupation of the workers in clearing the rubbish. Only the foreman was on the shuttering—at the very end. About eight of us had climbed on when he turned round and literally gasped, and after a few moments said falteringly: 'What are you doing...you can't do that!...go back...it's dangerous' and after a few moments 'Stop it now...I demand you go back or...'

His words were lost in the wind and the rain. In any case we weren't listening. We seemed to be concentrating on adjusting to our new found status, as well as settling ourselves in and keeping a steady grip. It was very dangerous and cold out here. He was right. But like us he also realised it was probably the only place on the entire site which could really make things difficult when it came to building the walls. In a funny sort of way our confidence was now growing by the minute and everybody's doubts began to evaporate. The anxiety began to subside. We had done the only thing we could and we were going to stick it out. We thought the worst part was probably over. We were wrong."

By 11am, an entire 30 foot section of the shuttering, the corner nearest the camp, had been occupied by a dozen peace campers and supporters. They were evenly divided between men and women, mainly from Glamorgan CND groups but one or two others from the Cardiff area and Dave from Dyfed. To relieve the anxiety and tension between workers and protesters, peace camp supporters sang and told jokes or recited poetry. A few balloons were blown up and the campaign banner "Keep Mid Glamorgan Nuclear Free" was hung from the shuttering, where it could be seen by onlookers and buses arriving and departing from the nearby bus stop. Posters read "No Bunkers For Bureaucrats", "Jobs Not Bombs", and most pointedly "The Clerk Is The War Controller".

The site was now alive with activity. A team of CND supporters not actually taking part in the direct action were busy arranging support activity, such as dealing with the press and photographers, providing hot food and drinks for protesters, and acting as observers at strategic points on the site. Senior police officers had been summoned to the site and police re-inforcements were later drawn up in police vans in the sidings nearby, though not visible to the protesters. Police officers asked to speak to the "leader" of the action. The protesters replied there was no "leader", they were all equally responsible for their actions, but they agreed to elect a spokesperson to aid communication when this was required.

One of those taking part recalls what happened then:

"The police and contractors, including the site engineer, could be seen in an anxious huddle clearly wondering what to do. The engineer and the foreman were seen going into the bunker, and we thought they had contacted County Hall, presumably to tell them what was going on and ask their advice. Apparently, they were told to get on with it—they were the contractors and they knew what they had to do.

The police and engineer called to us and couldn't seem to understand our lack of a leader. They seemed angry about this. They kept on saying what we were doing was extremely dangerous and would achieve nothing—they demanded we leave the site. We knew it was dangerous. Trade unionists who arrived said they were appalled at the conditions for the workers—the shuttering was muddy and slippery, and there weren't enough hand rails. Some of the workers wore no hard hats. But we also knew this was the one place we could not be removed so long as we stood fast. We were very encouraged by the support



Demonstrators obstruct the shuttering as contractors try to pour concrete for the blast walls.

of our own people and the interest of the TV and press, including papers like Rebecca, who were now photographing everything like mad. This was our best protection...

Suddenly everything seemed to be happening. The workers finished clearing the shuttering and brought up a compressor with a long vibrator on the end of it. The first cement mixers began arriving and transferring their load into the pumping machine. A boom about 40 foot long was swung over our heads and a long heavy tube was to be lowered into the shuttering. To prevent this happening we lay down, head to toes, and spread our bodies over the open end of the shuttering. Nobody ordered us and once again I was amazed at the calm and disciplined way people did this, without venting any hostility on the workers or the police—indeed up to this point we still had good relations with most of the workers and police officers, though they now began to look very harrassed. Soon there were mutters and strong words under their breath.

'You must not do this'; 'it is very dangerous.' 'Leave the site now', said a police officer. 'Nuclear bunkers are dangerous' said one of our number, though apart from this we now remained silent. Some of the earlier tension returned and I could see the anxious faces of Elisabeth, Steve, and some of the Porth women who had joined us. The chap from Dyfed was as determined as the Mid Glamorgan people."

At approximately 12.30pm, after a delay of almost an hour whilst further discussions took place between police and contractors, the boom was lowered over the southern end of the proposed blast wall. Its path at this point was obstructed by the bodies of Mary Russell and myself, lying head to toe. For ten minutes or so two workers, following orders from the site engineer and foreman, tried to find a way of forcing the tube carrying the ready-mix past

our bodies and into the shuttering. All this was being observed by a bevy of police, contractors' officials, press and TV, and CND supporters who were now appealing to the police to order the contractors to refrain from what looked like an assault on the protesters, as the heavy boom was constantly lowered and forced against the prostrate bodies, in effect, a human barrier. The police refused to intervene: they continued to watch as the contractors' official gave a signal and concrete was pumped into the boom and suddenly gushed out pouring over our two bodies and spilling everywhere—except into the cavity. Again the boom was lowered on to legs and several hundredweight of ready-mixed concrete spewed out.

In my notes I later described the scene:

"It seemed as though Mary and I were in a battle for life itself, though we did not wish it to become personal between us and the workers. Though she is small, Mary was very brave and tenacious. She refused to be put off by the stream of heavy, cold, wet concrete which also seemed to be burning one's flesh. What defeated us eventually was not the concrete but the weight of the heavy hydraulic boom on our legs. We moved our feet a fraction to avoid this and the boom entered the cavity commencing the infill. I don't know whether it was our failure or the sudden change in the attitude of the workers, but for the first time I felt both angry and sad, and Mary looked the same. The worker with whom I'd had good relations and a few ordinary conversations before now, swore at us and said, 'You're bloody mad, that's what you are... what's the bloody point? It's going to be built'. 'No it bloody well isn't', said Mary, still very determined.

Though we could do little else, we stayed until we began to feel ill through exposure, as our clothes were soaking wet and heavy, clinging to our bodies. Mary's hand was also injured, and it was raining. I took off my duffle coat which weighed a ton and I lost my favourite Welsh tweed hat down the shuttering. As I climbed off the shuttering, I think the police officer was annoyed because I was still smiling over the hat and wondering if it would affect the bunker. I told the TV that the Home Office must want the bunker very badly if they were prepared to allow such terrible risks in full view of the press and public. This was shown on the TV evening news with me covered in concrete looking like death warmed up."

The filling of the shuttering continued in similar fashion along the human barrier, though no further concrete was poured over people. Nevertheless it was dirty and dangerous work which went on all day, far longer than the contractors anticipated for this stretch of the wall. The workers met nonviolent resistance at every attempt to fill the shuttering. As soon as one protester was forced to leave, another took their place. (I had read about this tactic in accounts of Gandhi's salt marches at Dharasana when over 2000 people were violently attacked, but each exhausted or injured person was replaced by another (14). In all, some 25 people took part in this part of the action which persisted until 6pm.

Meanwhile, elsewhere on the site, small groups of supporters attempted to prevent the arrival of cement mixers by talking to drivers and then standing in front of the vehicles. Some of the police abandoned any pretence at neutrality by calling upon drivers to break through the picket lines. One policeman was heard instructing a very hesitant driver, "Hurry up...Back up now... Keep going...don't stop". One picket narrowly avoided being crushed between the mixer and the pumping vehicle. So upset was the driver, he made the effort to visit a CND meeting to apologise and give his side of the story: "I've been driving years, but I've never been ordered to back into people by the police. I tried to tell the copper, if someone had been injured or perhaps even

killed I would be the one responsible. How could I live with that. I'm sorry it happened."

The direct action, which had begun at 9am, continued until 6pm the same evening. By Mid-afternoon, the dangers of the site were brought graphically home, when an entire section of shuttering suddenly collapsed and concrete poured out, to the accompanying cheers of protesters and by-standers. This incident illustrated that the underlying conflict was now an open and explicit confrontation between those determined to see the bunker built and those equally determined to see it pulled down. Neither side in the "battle for the bunker" were any longer counting the costs—both sides were very determined.

By the end of the day the mood among demonstrators was a mixed one. Though depressed at the on-site practicalities—a solid corner wall of the bunker had almost been built—there was a real sense of moral exhilaration, summed up by a protester who said, 'We've shown them. From now on the council will be resisted every foot of concrete'. There was also a strong sense of solidarity and comradeship among the group who had taken part in the action, despite their lack of training for it. Some were still determined to resist, at least in a nonviolent way, since they had witnessed the fact that the work had been held up and inconvenienced for several hours. A further factor was that the council, contractors and police had been left in no doubt of this new mood of militancy. The only doubt, and it was an extremely evident one in the days that followed, was how far resisters were prepared to go.

Within an hour of the direct action terminating, the Campaign Committee of Mid Glamorgan CND were meeting to assess the action so far. They immediately called for an emergency meeting of the whole council and used the



Peace camp supporters use their bodies in nonviolent action to prevent the pouring of concrete. The concrete is poured over them.

"telephone tree" to mobilise groups to call on councillors to support CND's demand, and to strengthen the peace picket on the site. The council would also be asked to make provision at County Hall for a photographic exhibition showing the true nature of the work on the site. As part of its lobby, Bridgend CND sent ten overnight telegrams to council leaders and officials demanding a halt to the work.

Relationships between the contractors and police, and the peace camp were more strained than at any time since the occupation had begun on January 24. The contractors ordered the peace camp to leave the site within 24 hours—it was claimed that following the direct action, damage had been done to telephone lines and cables. Replying for the Campaign Committee, Paul Llewellyn denied CND were involved and said the peace camp would continue as a peaceful, nonviolent protest. "As far as we are concerned, they need a court order before they can take any action to have us evicted from the site." Pickets at the site were increased, and signs were prominently displayed stating "Think Peace, Act Peace", and "We Do Not Support Damage To People Or Property".

Among those who joined the enlarged peace picket, in an act of solidarity were women from Greenham Common peace camp, whose help and support had been of great encouragement. Within hours the eviction threat had been withdrawn by the council, expediently placing the territory outside that of the contractors' jurisdiction. This action seemed to reflect the belief among politicians sympathetic to the peace camp, that County Hall was yielding to pressure.

FORTIFICATION OF THE SITE

The bunker site now took on many of the ominous characteristics CND supporters always felt it had possessed. Floodlights were placed on the tall radio masts, casting an eerie light over the site and peace camp. CND flags were torn down. Police officers patrolled the workings day and night. Belatedly, signs were placed saying "Contractors Only On This Site", and ironically "This Site Is Dangerous!" Plain clothes CID officers began interviewing CND supporters, including the chairperson of Bridgend CND, in an attempt to identify possible "saboteurs"—people who had or might inflict criminal damage to the bunker. The effect of this was to finally end all trust between the peace camp and the supposed policy of community policing toward the camp, a policy the local commander (who happened to be the son of the council leader) was particularly proud of. In future the drop-in visits by police officers—plain clothes or not—were treated with deep suspicion by everybody at the peace camp, however benign the attitude of the community police appeared. The same attitude was taken towards drop-in visits the site foreman had been used to making since the beginning of the protest. All such visits were now seen as an indication of control and an attempt to acquire information about CND's intentions by those in authority. "From now on let's keep them guessing" was the prevailing mood expressed by a peace camper.

Apart from allegations of criminal damage to cables, oil was said to have penetrated the blast walls and was now thought to be seeping through the walls—there were even rumours that the walls were unstable and would have to be re-built. Though they did not support criminal damage, some peace camp supporters were ambivalent about it, so long as people were not hurt or put at risk.

The actions at the peace camp placed it once again in the forefront of the press, radio and TV, though most of this reportage was of a sensational nature.

"Demo: Police Called In" said the *Echo*; "Shower of concrete hits bunker protesters" said the *Western Mail* in its photostory, and most dramatically "Clashes with police at Wales Nuclear Bunker" said the *Morning Star*.

Days later the *Western Mail* carried reports of "sabotage" attempts by an unknown group signing itself "Spanner in the Works", and said to have written from Dyfed announcing it had put oil and salt in the concrete used for the blast walls (15). Experts said that if true, this could cause corrosion and could affect the structure. Peace camp members were generally unimpressed, regarding such reports as "understandable if true" or "smear tactics if false". "Our main weapons is no secret" said one, "it's called 'people power'".



Belated contractors sign, after the eviction threat ignored by the peace camp.

victory on day 50

On Wednesday March 10—48 hours after the obstruction of work and the day WANA was presenting the Declaration of a Nuclear Free Wales to the President of the European Parliament in Strasbourg—Mid Glamorgan County Council agreed to call an emergency session of the full council to consider its policy toward the bunker. This meeting was held on March 15, exactly one week after the direct action and 50 days after the occupation had begun.

Peace camp supporters who took part in the protest action at the blast walls immediately rushed out a special leaflet entitled "Mid Glamorgan Takes First Steps To Implement Nuclear Free Zone. Visit or phone your councillor, Come to County Hall, Your Support is Vital". And they did. Once again, and for the fifth occasion since the nuclear free zone resolution, councillors were lobbied at home and at County Hall. In an oft guarded moment, the leader of the council complained of "bunkeritis" and he and council officials called on CND to cease the constant stream of approaches they were receiving on this issue via letters, telephone calls, telegrams and personal approaches, which were in danger of impeding the work of the council.

As they arrived at County Hall, councillors were confronted by demonstrators in masks and radiation suits. In the plush red carpeted corridors, CND held an exhibition featuring copies of the bunker plans and large photographs of the site, including scenes showing concrete being poured over demonstrators. They also showed photographs of the inside of the bunker, similar to those which had appeared in *Rebecca* (March 81), a leading radical magazine.

Many Labour members seemed genuinely shocked and clearly wished to disassociate themselves from the entire project. "I never voted for anything like this", said one councillor. Significantly Labour Group members from the Bridgend area invited representatives of CND to lunch with them in the members dining room—it became clear that a momentous decision was pending.

Councillors also received a letter from CND Cymru, expressing concern over the work at Bridgend, offering support for the council's nuclear free policy and calling on councillors to uphold "only the peacetime uses of the bunker". CND Cymru said it recognised "the delicacy of the arrangements councillors have to make", a reference to the pressure on the council from central government, pressure which officers seemed at pains to comply with and which, in Mid Glamorgan CND's view, made clear the dilemma of divided loyalties.

The report of the officers reflected this dilemma. The Director of Land and Buildings informed the council: "I have had preliminary discussions with the contractors on possible ways of averting the complete stoppage of the contract and still fulfilling the wishes of the Public Protection Committee. We have quickly come to the opinion that it will be as economic to continue with the erection of the concrete walls to the link block and then to punch holes through the walls for windows". He recommended removing earthworks, installing windows facing concrete with ordinary brickwork and constructing a pitched roof on the bunker.

While the costs of the delay or postponement were impossible to assess, it was estimated that these would be substantial—at least £25,000 while planning permission and building regulation approval were awaited on the substantial changes to the project. The council's vote on the changes was individually recorded, since they were linked to the withdrawal from the government's War Emergency Scheme and risked legal sanctions. After a laborious process, during which CND supporters made their own notes of how councillors in the communities of Mid Glamorgan had voted, it was clear the council had swung vigorously against civil defence and the building of the original bunker by 63 votes to 4.

CND's case had won the day. Indeed, many councillors now wished to go further and side with the Campaign Committee view that the entire project should be abandoned. "N-Bunker Will Be Converted For Peace" said the *Western Mail*. "CND Claim Bunker Victory" said the local *Glamorgan Gazette*: "Work has been halted on the controversial nuclear bunker at Waterton, Bridgend and new plans are being drawn up to convert the building for peacetime use only". (March 18 1982).

On their jubilant return to the peace camp lobbies from County Hall found the bunker had been "magically" converted into a Welsh cottage with quaint windows containing lace curtains, black cats and potted plants. A sympathetic wag passing the site called over to peace campers: "I see the Welsh Wizards have been at work again and made a proper place for Mr Thomas then!"

Peace camp supporters gathered in small groups in the spring sunshine outside their caravan, where they celebrated with steaming cups of tea delivered from the small stove which carried the notice "Women Make Policy Not Tea". The site was quiet and completely inactive—at one point the foreman called by, having heard the news from County Hall on the telephone. "I never thought



Paul Flynn of WANA addresses a meeting at the bunker entrance.



County Councillor Ray Davies called for the contract to be halted and for the council to support CND policy.

you'd do it" he muttered. "To tell the truth, neither did I when I first saw them at County Hall", said a picket, "But it shows what can be done when people stick together".

That evening the Campaign Committee met at Pontypridd and unanimously agreed to end the occupation in seven days. They did so after hearing assurances that there could be no going back on the decision. A growing number of councillors wanted the entire project scrapped. There was also less than a month to prepare for the proposed CND Wales Easter march and rally, which was to converge on the government bunker at Brackla Hill. "We must now turn our energy to the future" said chairperson Paul Llewellyn.

The eighth and final newsletter was prepared for circulation to all supporters, copies of which were given to councillors. It read:

"When we occupied this site on January 24, after terrible snows, we set ourselves four objectives. These were: to get the war work stopped; to expose the realities of civil defence plans; to further the council's nuclear free zone policy; and to try to build a stronger peace movement. It is no exaggeration to claim that we have achieved each of these goals. We know that we could not have done so without the encouragement, practical support and sacrifice of many people in Mid Glamorgan and elsewhere.

"Approximately 600 people have taken part in the peace picket on the site. Many thousands of others have been active through the nuclear free zone campaigns, distributing leaflets, attending meetings, lobbying etc, and through their peace activities and peace camps giving strength and encouragement to us. The Declaration of a Nuclear Free Wales and the many visitors and delegations to our peace camp have testified to this strength. To all of these people and groups, too numerous to mention, we send wishes of peace and love and say a heartfelt Thank You.

"Peace and Democracy strengthened in Mid Glamorgan

"We congratulate our council on having the courage to change its policy and stand up to war planners, especially in a week when the arms race has been stepped up by the government's criminal decision to spend £7,500,000,000 on the Trident submarine missile, in addition to Cruise missiles at Greenham Common and Molesworth. We shall campaign against Trident and Cruise as we campaigned against the bunkers.

"As far as the Waterton site is concerned, we shall remain vigilant. There can be no retreat on this issue. Our campaign has shown that peace and democracy are indivisible; Mid Glamorgan CND pledges its support for the council's declared intention that the nuclear free zone will become a reality."

On Sunday March 21—the day of the Spring Equinox and 57 days after the occupation had begun—the peace camp at Bridgend held a "Celebration of Life" in concert with those taking place at Greenham Common and Molesworth. As peace camp representatives from Mid Glamorgan joined a blockade of the gates at Greenham, a small but moving victory ceremony was held on the bunker site, presided over by Paul Flynn of WANA. A peace garden of daffodils was planted by children, in the soil of the bunker embankments. "We hope these will flower as an affirmation of life and a permanent reminder of our struggle for peace in Mid Glamorgan" said the peace camp.

The ending of the camp was accompanied by what the *Western Mail* described as "speculation that the County Council will abandon the bunker plan" (16). At their meeting with the Home Office, council leaders had apparently convinced the government of the strength of opposition in Wales and the futility of bringing government pressure to bear to finish the project. A terse official



Children plant daffodils to celebrate victory at the peace camp. Photo: Pat Curry

statement said: "The Minister indicated that if the council were to abandon the present Waterton Emergency Control he would not regard it as a breach of the council's statutory duty".

Taken with the escalating costs of "converting" the bunker for peacetime use only (said to exceed £550,000) it was the final death knell to B6051, which those within the Public Protection Committee who had conceived the plan, had brought within an ace of success. Under pressure from within and outside County Hall, from constituents, peace organisations, the Labour movement and groups throughout Wales and beyond, the Public Protection Committee had suffered a humiliating setback, when the power of the controlling group—which had originally patronised the plan, now turned against it.

Only three days after the ending of the peace camp, the Public Protection Committee abandoned the entire project—a move subsequently confirmed by full council—instructing dejected officers "to negotiate the termination of the present contract and surrender the leasehold interest in the Waterton complex". This decision meant not only the scrapping of B6051, but the complete closure of the existing Wartime Control (which had come into being in 1961). Indeed in an apparent rejection of Home Office advice, the council decided to defer a decision on where, if anywhere, a Control Centre should be sited. From having been one of the last counties in Mid Glamorgan to show tangible support for the nuclear free zone, Mid Glamorgan became the first Welsh county to effectively withdraw from civil defence arrangements.

Six weeks later, the demolition gang were brought in and the Welsh bunker was reduced to a pile of rubble. CND's Mid Glamorgan Campaign Committee stated: "The challenge for us in Mid Glamorgan now is to construct a positive policy for peace from the ruins of the bunker" (17).

beyond the bunker

On Easter Saturday, April 10, the now ill-fated remains of the bunker were once again besieged. Over 1000 people, carrying banners representing many groups and trade unions throughout Wales, marched on the town of Bridgend preceded by three core marches: from Swansea in the West; Cardiff in the East; and the Valleys of Mid Glamorgan to the North.

They assembled around what they now saw as the symbol of a mighty victory, not only in Glamorgan but for the Wales Nuclear-Free Zone. Led by the core marchers and the bright red and green "Wales Against The Bomb" banners, the column marched from the peace camp to the government bunkers at Brackla Hill, 2 miles away. At this point there were remarkable scenes—reminiscent of the "Spies for Peace" siege of RSG 6 at Easter, 1963 (18)—as hundreds of marchers broke ranks, fanning out on to the high blast mounds and saturating the security area around the concrete and steel ramparts of the bunkers. Worried looking police watched as Paul Flynn of WANA climbed the gantry to the main blast door—which in a nuclear war would be used by the Regional Commissioner—where on behalf of a Nuclear Free Wales the march served "Notice to Quit" on government war plans in Wales. This was announced in Welsh and English and then fixed to the main entrance of the bunker amid cheers and singing from those gathered around. Only 12 months previous the bunker had been one of the best kept secrets thought to be covered by the "D" notice system (19). Now all Wales would learn about it. (The whole event was filmed by a news team.)

"What we've done at Waterton we can do again here....and get them out of Wales," said a determined ex-miner. From Brackla Hill the marchers headed through the shopping streets of the small market town to a Peace Festival at Bridgend Recreation Centre. It was the first public occasion to mirror the strength of the peace movement's achievements since the bunker victory. The local CND group had received congratulations and messages of support, recognising this fact from Labour Councillors and prominent Labour figures who wished to identify themselves with the peace movement's success, many of whom supported the rally. Councillor Vernon Chilcott, Mayor of Ogwr, was joined on the platform by Chairpersons of National CND, Joan Ruddock, and CND Wales, Gronow ap Islwyn, Welsh MPs Ray Powell (Labour) and Dafydd Ellis Thomas (Plaid Cymru), Terry Thomas (NUM), and by the ex-Mayor of Rhondda and veteran communist and peace campaigner, Annie Powell.

CAERWENT PEACE CAMP BEGINS

What the rally also showed was that far from alienating support, the campaign of direct action had produced a clearer commitment and a renewed spirit of confidence in the nuclear-free campaign. As evidence of this new mood, Joan Ruddock announced that even as the rally was taking place, a second Welsh peace camp was being established outside the gates of the US Arms Dump at Caerwent. Plans were also proceeding for a new Women's peace march through south and west Wales to the US base at Brawdy. Both these actions evidenced

the same sense of determination and a continuity with the occupation at Bridgend. The Mid Glamorgan peace caravan remained with Gwent CND during the 112 days of Caerwent Peace Camp. Both drew, though in unique ways, on the experience gained at the first Welsh peace camp.

Caerwent Peace Camp laid added stress on developing environmental consciousness about weapons of mass destruction—nerve gas was thought to be stored at Caerwent. Locals and road users were encouraged at the camp, which featured a permanent roadside peace exhibition and a "dig for peace" vegetable garden. The camp demonstrated for the alternative use of the Welsh countryside and symbolically reclaimed the land from its US military occupiers. Caerwent Peace Camp, which took place against the background of the Falklands War was physically attacked on several occasions. The camp eventually set up the first Peace Studies Centre in South Wales.

The 120 mile Women's Peace March from Cardiff to Brawdy (May 27—June 5) involved many families and communities, both in the practical arrangements for the march and in discussions en route with community leaders, trade unions and civic representatives. The march, one of the most ambitious in Wales, was especially aimed at arousing the consciousness of women using the experience gained at Greenham, Caerwent and Bridgend. After a blockade of the Brawdy US Navy base, the march ended by taking its message to holidaymakers at Newgale sands where a huge symbol of peace was made from stones on the beach. A *Rebecca* journalist summed up the experience as follows: "The march changed us—it has shown us that political action is not just a matter of meetings, speeches, resolutions, and strategies. It can be a process which engages the individual on a deeply personal level—unleashing astonishing creativity and strength." (*Rebecca* July 1982).

CIA ROUSED!

News of the actions at Bridgend, Caerwent and Brawdy began to appear in the international peace press. (20) This in turn led to new links between the peace movement in Wales and elsewhere. Representatives from Mid Glamorgan joined in meetings with other peace camps and travelled to peace conferences including the European Nuclear Disarmament conference in Belgium and the War Resisters International conference in Italy. In June 1982 the Chairperson of Mid Glamorgan CND Paul Llewellyn flew to the UN Special Session on Disarmament as an official NGO delegate, though his departure was delayed for 72 hours because of the refusal of the US Embassy to grant a visa. At one point Embassy staff explained that this was because Washington were investigating Mid Glamorgan CND; possibly the most backhanded compliment yet paid to its effectiveness!

conclusions

Six months after the bunker campaign we can begin to assess its achievements and limitations.

The successful outcome certainly lifted the spirits of the peace movement and helped sustain interest during a difficult period, marked by the Falklands War and the Government's publicity drive against CND's aims. Yet the bunker was eventually seen for what it was, a "monument to cold war folly" (21). The campaign against it had shown that where an issue can be clearly identified, frozen and polarised within peoples understanding, action can achieve success.

A great deal was learned about campaign methods, both practical and political, especially the need for careful planning and organisation, good information and research and effective publicity to accompany the action. The Peace Camp method—the first time it had been used by a consortium of CND groups—generally worked well and proved to be an effective method of focusing attention on the bunker issue. But there were weaknesses, largely due to lack of resources and experience. At the site of the occupation more could have been done to inform and mobilise people and to provide a more positive experience for pickets and supporters, not least to ease the occasional problems and frustrations that are inevitable in any long term "squat". These lessons were recorded and some of this knowledge was put into effect at Caerwent Peace Camp where there was greater emphasis on alternative projects, from horticulture to peace education.

CND also learned many political lessons. The weekly public meetings, newsletters and leaflets, etc. were essential to inform and politicise supporters, especially in a long term campaign. The balance between these and the work of the Campaign Committee, local groups and the Peace Camp was perhaps the single most tricky issue in developing a strategy which involved people. Yet considering the circumstances a remarkable degree of joint leadership and participation emerged. Certainly opponents saw the local peace movement as a powerful force to reckon with. Council leaders felt obliged first to sit down with CND, then negotiate, and finally to make major concessions, despite that most politically unacceptable syndrome—loss of face. It is possible, though by no means certain, that the bunker issue could have been settled at an earlier stage if the peace movement had consolidated its work with local Labour parties and trade unions, especially shop stewards, as well as community groups and the unemployed. Had more rank and file activity been generated, trade union and political leaders may have been more prepared to turn fine words of praise into practical support, thus averting the need for direct action. This has great relevance to the campaigns against Cruise and Trident missiles and to the consolidation of nuclear free zones. But ultimately though, there must be a determination to act when all else has been tried and found wanting. What we do know is that such determination was a considerable factor in the bunker campaign. By their own admission, councillors changed their minds when confronted by information, powerful persuasion from constituents and ultimately by direct action of a kind they were unused to (one member called it "moral coercion"). What role other

factors played, especially demands for compliance with Labour Party policy, we shall never know. The Group political process behind the doors of County Hall does not lightly yield up its secrets. (22).

Beyond the 'siege of the Bridgend bunker', the anti nuclear campaign in Wales scored other notable successes in the last 12 months, including the abandonment of the immediate threat of nuclear waste dumping and the Declaration of a Nuclear Free Zone throughout Wales. Nor were these "vain gestures": the nuclear free counties refused to participate in the Government's largest civil defence exercise leading to the cancellation of "Operation Hard Rock" in September. They began to put "flesh on the bones" of the nuclear free resolutions—by cooperating with CND's "Operation Hard Luck" and by offering to publish war planning data and opening their bunkers and equipment.

Since civil defence ideology remains an important plank in the Tory Government's nuclear policies—especially in the run up to Cruise and the elections—it will try to regain the initiative by public relations and new civil defence "duties" laid on local councils. It will be crucial for the peace movement to act in support of nuclear free policies and also to consolidate its own position and ideas. Government public relations and electoral activity provides an opportunity to further build the campaign. At the time of writing Mid Glamorgan CND are planning a major opinion survey of all elected representatives in the county, covering MPs and county and district councillors. Before undertaking this, detailed policy proposals for the nuclear free zone will have been presented to the county council. These will form the subject of a county CND conference entitled "Nuclear Free: The Way Forward in Mid Glamorgan". These cover relations with government, civil defence, peace information, use of libraries, and the setting up of peace action committees and local peace forums. They also cover the field of peace studies, which is beginning to receive support in Wales. Gwent County Council has agreed to introduce peace studies into schools and even the *Western Mail* has said the subject "should be taken seriously" and not obstructed (23).

But nuclear free local policies are a beginning not an end. As Euro MP, Ann Clwyd told the National Eisteddfod at Swansea in August: "To ensure that nuclear free Wales develops into fact is something that we will have to be watchful of every day" (24). To help ensure this development a series of CND and WANA conferences and workshops occurred in Wales during the summer and autumn. They aimed at better understanding, closer working with the nuclear free counties and the improved use of resources. The anti-nuclear journal *YNNI* (Power) has been impressively relaunched and stronger links with the broader peace and anti-nuclear movement. For example, Petra Kelly of the Green Party addressed a CND Wales conference in June. At the local level, exchanges were begun with twinned municipalities. In November 1982, Linda Matthews and Paul Llewellyn represented Mid Glamorgan CND at a peace week in Ulm, near Stuttgart, West Germany. These events, like the story of *No Bunkers Here* are part of an ongoing process of learning and renewal, which in the longer term may enable the movement in Wales to recover its radical conscience and play a confident role in the world peace and disarmament movement.

At a peace festival in the Rhondda Valley held within weeks of the bunker victory, a major lesson of the first Welsh peace camp was told. Jean Bryant, vice chairperson of Rhondda CND said, "We found it was not up to others, it was up to us. It was a victory over ourselves and our doubts that nothing could be done. We challenged authority and we won. We blew our trumpet and the walls came tumbling down. Now we must build for the future".

September 1982

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3. op cit
4. Home Office Circular ES2/1979 "Wartime Communications for Local Authorities."
5. *Western Mail* 26 January 1982
6. Based on video tapes by South Wales Video Project
7. Labour Party Wales Conference, Composite 15:
 - i. Campaign for the closure of all nuclear bases in Wales
 - ii. Differentiate between contingency plans for civil emergencies and preparations for nuclear war and to cancel all participation in the latter. District and County Councils controlled by the Labour Party in Wales will refuse to participate in any nuclear war exercise; will refuse to allocate funds to the provision and maintenance of District and County Wartime Control Centres and will remove any employees engaged in Nuclear War Civil Defence plans and preparations and re-allocate them to peaceful constructive duties.
 - iii. Oppose the transport of nuclear weapons grade materials within or through Wales.
 - iv. Publicise local effects of nuclear war and give full co-operation and practical support to the peace campaigns."
8. *South Wales Echo* 10 February 1982
9. *South Wales Echo* Geoff Wright 27 February 1982
10. *Western Mail* 19 February 1982
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20. Coverage appeared in *END Bulletin*, *Disarmament Times* (Hague), *IFOR Report* (Alkmaar), *City Limits*, *Sanity*, *The Leveller*, *Peace News*, *Rebecca* and *Cyffro*.
21. *END Bulletin* No 9, May 1982
22. Members of the Labour Group were invited (though declined) to explain how the Groups "change of mind" was brought about
23. *Western Mail* 24 September 1982
24. The full text of Ms Clwyds moving speech to the National Eisteddfod is reproduced in *YNNI*, September 1982. Obtainable from WANA, Stryd y Castell, Aberystwyth SY23 1DT

BALLAD OF THE BRIDGEND BUNKER

(Traditional Tune)

Some talk of Alexander and some of Hercules
But I've no time for murderers in times such as these
Was in the town of Bridgend in the year of '82
A victory for peace was won, a tale I'll tell to you.

A building was erected, right there in Bridgend town
Down in the Bridgend soil the walls they did go down
Elected leaders they all had a key to the front door
To save their precious skins in the event of Nuclear War.

In secrecy they planned it, when questioned they would smile
They said it was a centre built in modern style
"We're your elected leaders please don't create a fuss
We'll see you right in every way just leave things up to us."

Each day is like another day, we work, we eat, we sleep
And in amongst these crowded hours we love, we laugh, we weep
Decisions on our destiny are taken from our hands
But like the people of Glamorgan it's time we made a stand.

They finally admitted just what they'd built it for
They'd built themselves a bunker to escape a nuclear war
And places in that bunker were restricted to a few
No room for working folk or kids; no room for the likes of you.

The cry went up "No Bunkers Here" it spread like forest flame
And all across Glamorgan the answer was the same
The right to live a peaceful life to live without a fear
The lines were drawn in Bridgend, "They'll build no bunkers here."

From the towns and from the valleys they came with banners bright
They came in peace but they were not afraid to stand and fight
They camped around that building just like a Jericho
And shouted in their hundreds "that bunker has to go."

They fought against scab labour; they fought police as well
And they fought to stop them pouring concrete for that blastproof shell
And in the end the council admitted their defeat
There was singing in the valleys and dancing in the streets.

Keep watch again that bunker for lies may win you trust
For they promised it for peaceful use; their promises are dust
Be ready for the next fight, be vigilant my friend
Keep faith with the watchword "No bunkers in Bridgend."

We can't stop the world from turning. We can't stop the wind and rain
But we can stop these bloody wars, the killing and the pain
And we can stop those governments who would these wars begin
These chains are all we have to lose we have a world to win.

Here's to the people of Glamorgan and here's to CND
And here's to all those fighting to make Wales Nuclear Free
And if they tell you War must come but there's nothing you can do
Just remember Bridgend and the year of '82.

Kevin Littlewood

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H-BOMB ON OGWR

Tony Simpson and Paul Llewellyn
(Published by Bridgend CND)

THE FIRST STUDY OF A NUCLEAR ATTACK IN WALES

Subjects covered include:

- * The new nuclear situation
- * Wales and the European Theatre of War
- * Nuclear cauldron in Mid Glamorgan
- * Short and long term effects
- * The "Secret" Army in Region 8 (Wales)
- * Questions — What Can I Do?

Fully Illustrated — References — Appendix

from 28 Kensington Drive, Cefn Glas, BRIDGEND, Mid Glam.
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Peace News has been working against nuclear weapons and the nuclear power industry that produces them since they began. The paper covers anti-nuclear action worldwide—bringing you the information and discussion that's vital to making nuclear-free Wales and a nuclear-free world a reality.

Large though that task is, it's just one step to a truly peaceful world. There's the massive task of re-directing the economy from arms and destruction to human needs. Violence begins at home: peace means ending the daily violence of men against women, black against white as much as it means ending the violence of war. Peace News brings you news of these struggles, and now it brings you much more news, in a brighter format. Peace News is an entirely independent paper, produced by an editorial collective.



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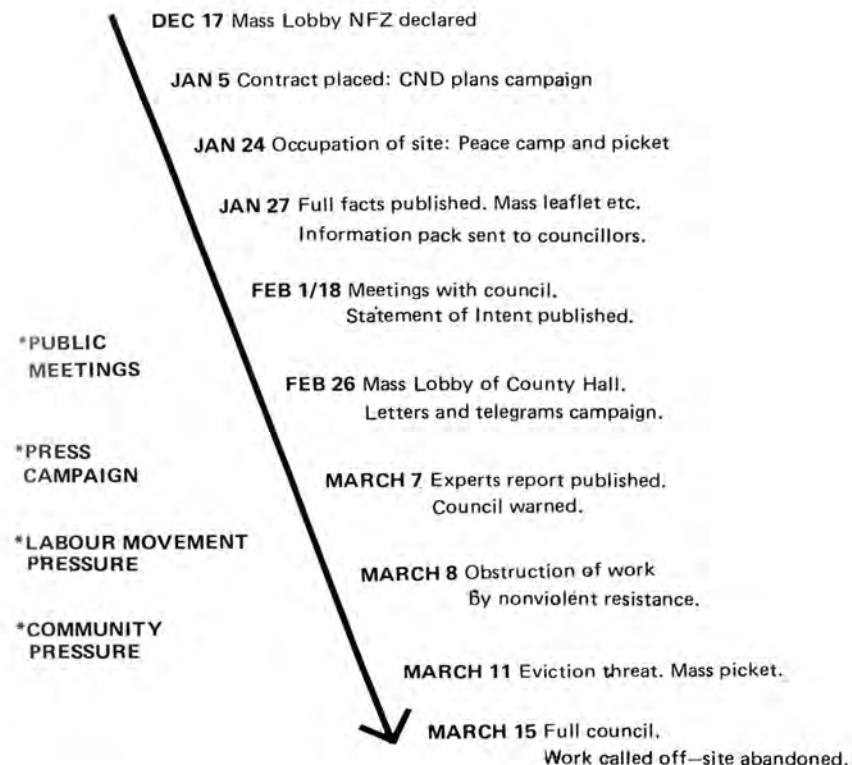
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campaign chronology

Mid Glamorgan CND's campaign of direct action against the building of a County Wartime Bunker at Bridgend, Jan 24-March 21 1982.

"The basis for tactics is the construction of constant and rising pressure."
Saul Alinsky



"The end of a satyagraha (nonviolent resistance) campaign can be described as worthy only when it leaves those taking part stronger and more spirited than at the beginning."

M. K. Gandhi

"Action which stopped the conversion of a wartime bunker at Bridgend Wales into a nuclear blast proof shelter is widely regarded in the peace movement as one of the most successful to date." Hugo Davenport, *The Observer*.

"Mid Glamorgan Peace Camp ended on a victorious note...the shell of the intended bunker now stands as a monument to cold war folly." Jane Dibblin, *END Bulletin*.

"For seven weeks members and supporters have huddled together at the Bridgend site...defeating all attempts to remove them." Mike Wilkinson, *Sanity*.

"The anti nuclear lobby in Wales has reached a peak in the last year culminating in a nuclear free declaration by all eight County Councils and the demonstrations at Bridgend (which) won an important victory." Jane Perkins, *Western Mail*.

No Bunkers Here is a unique story. It describes the achievements, hardships, set backs and paradoxes of the first Welsh peace camp. It was also the first successful action to close down a civil defence establishment.