

GLASTONBURY 1987

Three days of the Glastonbury festival in June form the most important fund-raising event in the CND calendar. In a pull-out designed to tuck in your back pocket, *Marxism Today* gives you all the information you need to rock, roll, relax and reflect, and gets the views of former and present participants.

Pop goes protest

Steve Redhead, author of *Sing When You're Winning*, writes on the ever changing moods of pop and protest.

1987 may not seem much different from 1983: mass unemployment, disintegrating public services, ravaged inner-cities and long leads for the Tories in the opinion polls. A rabidly conservative music industry still gorges itself on the last of the big spenders (the post-war baby boomers) and the tabloids throw up any old story that links pop, lust and addiction. The 80s version of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll is a particularly nasty tale far removed from the 60s counter-culture that spawned the idea in the first place. But for once in the history of pop, the middle of a decade has *not* produced an upheaval: the 50s, 60s and 70s all witnessed spectacular cultural formations which might have led us to predict new eruptions between the election of 1983 and 1987. The eruptions didn't happen, and we may have to get used to the view that there will be no repetition of them in the future. In that sense these are quite significant times for the politics of pop: post-pop politics in fact.

One of the most obvious fashions to enter the pop market-place in the four years since June 1983 is, ironically, protest. New Popsters galore have queued up to jump on the social conscience bandwagon set rolling by Band Aid - Gary Kemp of Spandau Ballet for Red Wedge, Duran Duran for



Costello: Voice of protest

Amnesty International - and the musical form itself (guitar, vocal, concerned lyrics) has experienced something of a revival. Radio One recently saw fit to broadcast a documentary history (*Rebel Yell*, commentary by John Peel) which emphasised the solid traditions of protest, rooted in folk sensibilities. But earnestness, and putting your mouth where your money is, are no longer enough - if they ever were.

At this year's Glastonbury - whether it is a wake (as seems more likely) for a Britain under a re-elected Thatcher government, or a muted celebration - the diversity of pop's link to dissent and nonconformity is on show. From 'indie-pop' through 'new jazz' to the Mancunian gloom and doom of New Order and the ethnic roots of Los Lobos, the range of musical styles is healthily wide: a testament to the myriad counter-cultures which

Thatcherism and Reaganism have helped to create.

The two most intriguing acts, though, remain the straightforward folk/punk protest of The Men They Couldn't Hang, whose rebel-rousing chorus songs like 77ie *Ghosts of Cable Street* have rightly become renowned, and the more oblique post-punk venom of Elvis Costello. It's hard to believe that Costello has been punching the pop clock for a decade now (almost as long as the Tories have been in office), but his sneering voice - it's not simply what he says but the way he *slurs* it - stands as *the* sound of pop protest in the Thatcher years. Resentful, bitter, damaged. Sure, *Shipbuilding* and *Peace in Our Time* - more conventionally protest songs in lyric and style - are well remembered, but last year's *Tokyo Storm Warning* and / *Want You* (singles from the *Blood and Chocolate* album recorded with the Attractions) are chilling in their political and personal desolation.

It was Costello, after all, who provided the savage irony at Live Aid with his rendition (electric guitar and vocal) of that old Northern folk *song* *All You Need Is Love* while all around him protested at African famine through a haze of Western affluence. The Wembley/Philadelphia 'nation' looked pretty much like an earlier incarnation in another decade with the same false dreams. What will he make of *glasnost* and Glastonbury in 1987? Book now to avoid disappointment.

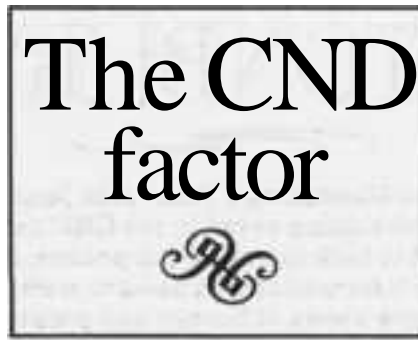


Bruce Kent, vice-chair of CND, talks to Sally Davison about the peace movement's strategy during the ongoing arms negotiations.

In the late 1980s the peace movement faces a number of difficulties. It has to maintain its momentum in the face of the deployment of cruise missiles and with little hope of governmental change. And, ironically, CND tends to boom when the international agenda is dominated by fear and disaster rather than, as at present, by talks and negotiations. Thus it needs to work out a strategy that can link into this international process.

Bruce Kent is realistic about both these problems, but not depressed. He recognises that 'CND is not in the powerful situation that it was in 1981-2 when there was an enormous national surge'. But he points out that 'CND is holding its own and changing with the changed circumstances. In its specialist groupings and constituencies - doctors, lawyers, local authorities, churches, trade unions - it is as strong now as it ever was. And I have yet to address a local meeting of less than 100 people, which is astonishing for any issue. In this business it is perseverance that counts - to keep on letter-writing, phoning, to keep increasing the general level of public consciousness, to influence the climate in which disarmament is discussed.'

He sees involvement in the international arena as a crucial part of CND's evolving strategy. 'The more we emphasise our concern



with international disarmament the better. We should not let ourselves be cornered into focusing exclusively on what does and does not happen to a particular set of submarines. I think we sometimes give our enemies a present by letting them suggest we are only concerned with unilateral actions by Britain. Initiatives in Britain and from abroad are absolutely complementary to each other.'

Kent was, for example, disappointed with the British peace movement's response to the Soviet test moratorium. He believes more imagination is needed to engage with developments overseas. The links that have been built with women peace campaigners in the Pacific have shown one way in which this can be done. He also thinks it is vital to be media sensitive, and to maintain a visible presence when international talks take place. 'And I think we should do our best to present counter-meetings, like the END convention, where alternative ideas are being expressed by people who are not in government.'

He believes that the peace movement can claim some of the credit for the existence of the

current negotiations. And any small step forward from these negotiations would be welcome: 'If we could start the process of observing a set of missiles being destroyed, it would be a unique performance. It has not happened since 1945. It would make people feel "my god, this process is possible". If half a dozen missiles were visibly destroyed it would change the entire climate about disarmament.'

He dismisses the view that it was the West's firm negotiating stance that pressurised the Russians into negotiations. In fact many of the current difficulties in the INF talks result from Soviet 'short range' deployment in response to the West's 'firm' position over Cruise and Pershing. 'But we are seeing a kind of Orwell world in which people forget all that and say Thatcher is strong and powerful... this must be why the Russians are talking. The idea that someone might have some new ideas in the Soviet Union, original ideas, better than her ideas, is difficult for people to grasp.'

Kent recognises that there has been an important change in Soviet nuclear thinking. They are clear that no-one can win a nuclear war, and have moved away from the old and dangerous notion of balance. This is especially gratifying for those who believe in the international possibilities for CND. As he says, 'What I find encouraging is that nearly everything we have said to Soviet representatives over the last six years, in endless delegations both ways, I now hear echoing back in Gorbachev's speeches.'

PROGRAMME

Main Stage

Elvis Costello, Van Morrison. The Communards, New Order, The Robert Cray Band, Los Lobos, Ben E King, Taj Mahal, Trouble Funk, The Richard Thompson Band, Courtney Pine, Hiisker Dii, Paul Brady, The Men They Couldn't Hang, The Woodentops, The Mighty Lemondrops, Michelle Shocked, Misty In Roots, World Party, Rodney Allen.

Stage Two

El Sonido De Londres, The Mekons, the Oyster Band, Gaye Bikers On Acid, The Blue Aeroplanes, Brilliant Corners, Chorcazade, The Chills, Stump, Robyn Hitchcock and the Egyptians, Andy Shepherd Quartet, Eduardo Niebla and Antonio Forcione, Ben Baddoo and the Alaha Band.

Acoustic Stage

Richard Thompson, Arnold Bolt, Jackie Evans, Nick

Picket, Prior String Quartet, The Three Caballeros, The Screaming Abdabs, Charlie Hemshaw Quintet, The Glee Club, Andy White.

Theatre

Skint Video, Attic Theatre, Theatre Rotto, Richard Cuming, Centre Ocean Stream, Jiving Lindy Hoppers, United Matrons, David Michelsen and Manna, Doctor Foster's Travelling Theatre, Panic Puppets, Malcolm Hardee and the Greatest Show on Legs, Beavers, Shikisha.

Womad Field

Ciego De Nagua (Dominican Republic), Franco and TP OK Jazz (Zaire), Gwerz (France), Tango al Sur (Argentina), Farafina (Burkina Faso), Alaap (India/UK), Krishna Murti Sridhar (India), Muzsikas (Hungary), Ait Menguellet (Algeria), Gaspar Lawal (Nigeria/UK), Selda (Turkey), Flora Holton (USA).

That was Zen, but this is now

Just when you thought it was safe to throw out those old cord flares, purple scoop-neck T-shirt with 'wizard' stars and those old buffalo sandals, along it comes again - the Dinosaur That Refuses to Lie Down - Glastonbury. The sole survivor of all the open air festivals which were thrown up at the tail-end of the 60s and dumped by the mid 70s.

I still carry images of overflowing Elsans, scorching rubber groundsheets and bearded bimbos competing to roll the longest, fattest double-barrelled joint which would later have them choking on the saltpetre of two dozen Rizlas.

So it was with some apprehension three years ago that I agreed to perform at Glastonbury to 2,000 happy lotus positions.

Heckling is rare - everyone is too out of it.

There are also makeshift stages everywhere, and you can never be quite sure whether that white-face clown doing the frantic mime is a legitimate performer or a hippy who has overdosed on purple haze and is wrestling with alligators of his own design.

When I was last there I was suffering from an agonizing back complaint, worsened somewhat when, in a narcotically-induced moment, I agreed to let this kaftanned woman idiot dance up and down my spine.

My osteopath took one look at my raddled frame and said: 'Why do you do this to yourself? You're not a teenager anymore.' I hung my head in shame and promised 'Never again.'

But that was Zen.

And this is now.

See you there
maaaaaan!
Tony De Meur

And here is your host

Why am I compering at Glastonbury? Well, I was asked very politely, and a certain sum of money was mentioned. And then there's the camping.

Now, to some people camping means a tent with three bedrooms, a fridge-freezer and a Jacuzzi, but in my experience it is usually a large black bin liner and two sticks. Still, there's nothing like snuggling down in a nylon sleeping bag and getting your thigh stuck in the zip, nodding off to the sound of camp fires roaring around your flammable tent, waking up in a large puddle and spending three whole days crying in your cagoule. Now there's a fashion item for you.

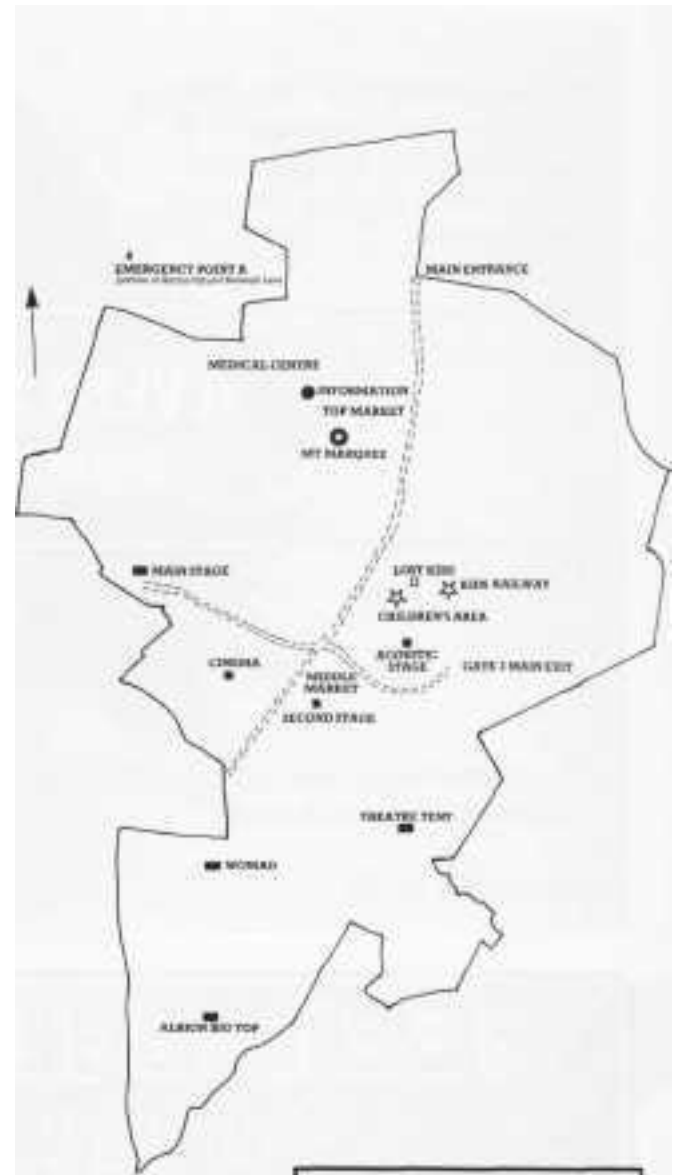
Then there's the toilets. By day two, everyone is walking around buttocks

tightly clenched, determined not to go for a number two until they are safely home. This is extremely difficult considering you spend your day eating lentil burgers and drinking lager.

I must admit, I have not done Glastonbury before, but I have done a similar event where I managed to rip my foot open on a tent peg. I then spent the next 12 hours with the St John's Ambulance Brigade, who seemed to do a wonderful job delivering babies and breaking up dog fights.

Hey ho. So why do we all go? Basically because it's in a damn good cause. There's loads of brilliant entertainment, and a jolly good time can be had by all - despite hail, sleet and horrid toilets.

Jenny Eclair



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