

BAN-BOMB. 800 JAILED

Brize Norton was one of the places chosen by supporters of the Committee of One Hundred, in the latest demonstration of the Ban The Bomb campaign. Another big Sit Down. They knew they wouldn't be allowed in the base, but went there just the same.

More Ban The Bombers went to Wethersfield; and helping to keep watch there - and blow a lot of hot air down on them - was an outsize helicopter. The squatters believe, with Bertrand Russell, that we shall all be lucky to be alive this time next year, unless Britain gives a lead by denouncing the bomb and closing the nuclear bases. Randolph Churchill, present as a reporter, doesn't agree. So this is the latest version of the age-old argument between those who say that armaments always lead to war, and those who say that to be disarmed is to incur certain defeat. Both sides can quote history to prove their case. R.A.F. Security men had their work cut out.

Others with their work cut out were the police, who'd been brought in in large numbers. Before the day was over they'd arrested more than 800, some here, others elsewhere, at different bases. Special courts were held, and the fines, if not big enough to pay the national debt, must have amounted to a lot of money.

The sit-downers point out that this sort of thing, half a century ago, got Suffragettes the vote. Not a parallel case, perhaps but there it is. Advocates of law and order say all this is nonsense, though perhaps it's part of the price we pay for being a free country.