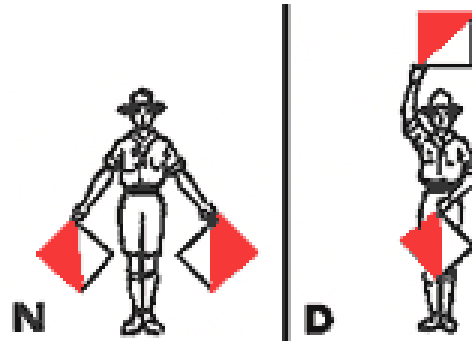


# Peace Symbol

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One of the most widely known symbols in the world, in Britain it is recognized as standing for nuclear disarmament – and in particular as the logo of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). In the United States and much of the rest of the world it is known more broadly as the peace symbol.

It was designed in 1958 by Gerald Holtom, a professional designer and artist and a graduate of the Royal College of Arts. He showed his preliminary sketches to a small group of people in the Peace News office in North London and to the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War, one of several smaller organizations that came together to set up CND. Gerald Holtom, a conscientious objector who had worked on a farm in Norfolk during the Second World War, explained that the symbol incorporated the semaphore letters **N**(uclear) and **D**(isarmament).



The Direct Action Committee had already planned what was to be the first major anti-nuclear march, from London to Aldermaston, where British nuclear weapons were and still are manufactured. It was on that march, over the 1958 Easter weekend that the symbol first appeared in public. Five hundred

cardboard lollipops on sticks were produced. Half were black on white and half white on green. Just as the church's liturgical colors change over Easter, so the colors were to change, "from Winter to Spring, from Death to Life." Black and white would be displayed on Good Friday and Saturday, green and white on Easter Sunday and Monday.

The first badges were made by Eric Austin of Kensington CND using white clay with the symbol painted black. Again there was a conscious symbolism. They were distributed with a note explaining that in the event of a nuclear war, these fired pottery badges would be among the few human artifacts to survive the nuclear inferno. (These early ceramic badges can still be found and one, lent by CND, was included in the Imperial War Museum's 1999/2000 exhibition *From the Bomb to the Beatles*)



The peace sign flag first became known in the United States in 1958 when Albert Bigelow, a pacifist protester, sailed his small boat outfitted with the CND banner into the vicinity of a nuclear test.

The peace sign button was imported into the United States in 1960 by Philip Altbach, a freshman at the University of Chicago, who traveled to England to meet with British peace groups as a delegate from the Student Peace Union (SPU). Altbach purchased a bag of the "chickentrack" buttons while he was in England, and brought them back to Chicago, where he convinced SPU to reprint the button and adopt it as its symbol. Over the next four years, SPU reproduced and sold thousands of the buttons on college campuses. By the late 1960s, the peace sign had become an international symbol adopted by anti-war protestors of the Baby Boom Generation.